

Everett mayoral candidates question casino agreement - Your Town

Written by Administrator
Sunday, 26 May 2013 06:29 -

Two members of the Board of Aldermen who are running against Everett Mayor Carlo DeMaria Jr. [are questioning the impact of a community host agreement DeMaria negotiated](#) with Wynn Resorts, which is seeking to build a \$1.2 billion resort casino on vacant industrial land along the Mystic River.

Robert Van Campen, Ward 5 alderman, said a provision requiring Wynn to spend \$50,000 annually on gift certificates to Everett businesses to be distributed to casino guests “is a slap in the face to the business community. . . . I would have negotiated a drastically higher sum.”

He also said he would have negotiated a \$10 million annual payment for the Everett public schools. “That literally would have changed the game as to our ability to fund education,” Van Campen said. The schools are not mentioned in the agreement.

Millie Cardello, Ward 1 alderwoman, questioned how \$5 million earmarked for public safety would be spent. “To what degree is that going to help us?” she said. “Where is that money going? Is it going to pay for benefits or salaries?”

Wynn [proposes to build](#) a 19-story bronze-colored glass tower, with a 550-room hotel, a 24-hour casino, and upscale shops and restaurants. Hotel and meals taxes are estimated to be \$2.5 million annually, according to the agreement.

In an interview, DeMaria dismissed the criticism by his opponents in the fall municipal election.

“If someone wants to run for mayor, and tell me I didn’t do a good enough job with this agreement, I beg to differ,” he said.

DeMaria said the agreement was reached after months of negotiations by the city, its legal counsel, and Wynn representatives.

Everett mayoral candidates question casino agreement - Your Town

Written by Administrator
Sunday, 26 May 2013 06:29 -

"I think we worked very hard, for about four or five months, to negotiate this agreement," he said Tuesday [after a public meeting](#) to discuss a plan to manage traffic from the project. "I think we've got a great agreement."

The state's gambling law requires developers to negotiate a community host agreement to mitigate any potential negative impacts of a casino. The state's [gaming commission](#) is not expected to award the license until 2014, Everett officials said.

In Everett, key financial elements include a one-time \$30 million payment to the city. Annual payments, totaling \$25.2 million, include \$20 million in real estate taxes, \$5 million for police and fire, and \$250,000 in support for local businesses. These payments would increase 2.5 percent annually, according to the agreement.

Other payments, such as the \$50,000 for local businesses, would remain the same each year. Everett residents also would be given hiring preferences for the estimated 4,000 jobs the resort would create.

DeMaria said the jobs commitment would help address Cardello's concern that the casino could bring more crime.

"You put 4,000 kids or young adults to work, they won't be committing crime, because they'll have a job," he said.

But Cardello would like to see more proof that the casino won't affect crime or property values. "I'd want to see something concrete that proves property values don't go down," she said.

Van Campen was an early critic of the agreement, issuing a press release on April 26, the day after DeMaria announced the deal. He wrote that agreement was "good . . . but that it could be a lot better."

Everett mayoral candidates question casino agreement - Your Town

Written by Administrator
Sunday, 26 May 2013 06:29 -

His campaign has taken to social media via its Twitter account, [@VanCampen4mayor](#) .

One Tweet read, “Mayor didn’t negotiate Host City Agreement. A lawyer from Mintz Levin wrote it and handed it to him. How’s that for due diligence?”

Van Campen said he didn’t write the Tweet, but that he approved the content. DeMaria’s early support for the casino development gave Wynn Resorts, represented by the Boston law firm Mintz Levin, the upper hand in negotiations, he said.

“The mayor was in a weaker position,” Van Campen said. “He was effectively cheerleading, not serving people as their mayor. The deal was rushed, so that he could declare mission accomplished.”

DeMaria said he never rushed negotiations. “I was very honest with them [Wynn representatives],” he said. “I said, ‘If this development is right for our community, at that point, we’ll make a deal.’ . . . We were able to negotiate a great host agreement.”

The state’s gambling law requires that the host agreement be finalized before a local referendum can be held for residents to vote on whether they want a casino in their community. The law also requires that casino developers pay the cost of the election.

Everett will hold a special election on [June 22](#) . The ballot question will ask for a “yes” or “no” on whether voters want Wynn Resorts to develop the casino at the former Monsanto chemical factory located off Routes 16 and 99. [Continue](#)
[d...](#)

Read more <http://news.google.com/news/url?sa=t&fd=R&usg=AFQjCNEv-8TRo6r75o18BtNvhzBah9kOrA&url=http://www.boston.com/yourtown/everett/2013/05/25/everett-mayoral-candidates-question-casino-agreement/FqojhzKeprBm7B5Tq8w8uJ/story.html>