

Blakeman endorses a potential casino at the Nassau Hub

Written by Administrator
Friday, 06 January 2023 17:44 -

Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman said Friday that he supports a full-scale casino coming to the Nassau Hub, though he wants nongambling activity to dominate any potential development project.

"It's got to be primarily an entertainment center and hospitality business with the casino as an ancillary use there ... I think that an entertainment center would be consistent with the Coliseum site," Blakeman said in an interview before a business event in Woodbury.

The county executive's comments came in the same week as New York State opened the window for casino operators to submit bids for three licenses **downstate.** **The New York Gaming Facility Location Board is expected later this year to award the licenses for facilities that offer traditional card games as well as electronic gambling.**

Blakeman will have a limited role in the fate of any casino bid.

He will appoint one of the five members of a Community Advisory Committee for each casino proposal in the county. The location board will not consider a bid if it doesn't garner the support of two-thirds of the committee members, according to state officials.

Blakeman told Newsday that he's had conversations with casino operator Las Vegas Sands Corp. about its interest in the Hub. **Later, in a video address to the Long Island Association breakfast, Blakeman said he plans "in the next couple of weeks to present a plan" for the Hub's redevelopment.**

Las Vegas Sands also has looked at the UBS Arena/Belmont Park area as a casino site, according to sources who requested anonymity. The company was among the sponsors of Friday's LIA event.

Nearly 25 years ago, also at an LIA event, Blakeman, then the presiding officer of the Nassau Legislature, said, "My mind is absolutely closed to casino gambling in Nassau County."

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On Friday, Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone, responding to a Newsday question, said it was too soon in the casino licensing process for him to take a public stance.

Schumer, Bellone speak

Separately, Sen. Chuck Schumer told the LIA crowd of 1,200 people that the region can speed up the creation of businesses and jobs that are based on inventions from research institutions, such as Brookhaven National Laboratory and Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory — and there's federal money to help achieve that goal.

Schumer, the majority leader, said ongoing research in clean energy, semiconductors, medicine and physics can lead to "hundreds of jobs on Long Island."

The Democrat from Brooklyn said recently adopted federal spending bills include funding for more domestic production of computer chips — and there's an opportunity for the region to play a role.

LIA CEO Matt Cohen agreed, saying, "The new federal investments secured by Leader Schumer will continue to elevate Long Island's national profile" for research and technology.

Bellone, in his speech, said Suffolk County residents "are willing to pay more to enhance water quality" by stopping sewage from seeping into bays and streams.

He said he's working with other officials and environmental groups to identify "a recurring source of funding to pay for" Suffolk's new wastewater plan.

James T. Madore writes about Long Island business news including the economy, development, and the relationship between government and business. He previously served as Albany bureau chief.

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