CASINO REVENUE FUND ADVISORY COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING ON NOVEMBER 14, 2014

MINUTES OF MEETING

The regular monthly meeting of the Casino Revenue Fund Advisory Commission was held on Friday, November 14, 2014 at the Casino Control Commission in Atlantic City. Those in attendance were:

Commission:

James Thebery, Chair

Enid Torok, Vice Chair

Chris Brown, Asm. 2nd District

James Whelan, State Senator, Atlantic City

Tina Zsenak, DHS. Div. Aging Service

Jim Carney, Seniors

Joe Tyrell, CANJ

Michelle LeBlanc, on behalf of David Rosen, OLS

Support Staff:

Judith Moore, Dept. of Treasury, Fiscal/Resources

Karen Storcella, Dept. of Treasury

Guests:

Ryan Reilly, Ocean Cty Trans.

Sharon Harrington, CCC

Daniel Heneghan, CCC

Michael Soliman, Senator Whelan’s office

Tim Sharp, NJ Transit

Kevin Ortzman, Caesars Entertainment

The meeting was called to order by James Thebery at 10:30am, followed by the Flag salute led by Joe Tyrell. James Thebery welcomed commission members & guests and thanked them for attending. The minutes of the September 5, 2014 meeting were approved.

Kevin Ortzman, senior vice president and general manager of Caesars’s AC and Bally’s AC, and also president of the CANJ, shared his thoughts on the changes in Atlantic City. He wants to express his gratitude to the Casino Redevelopment Authority (CRDA) for everything they are doing to transform AC. The CRDA is transforming AC environment from what is historically was in gaming to a more regional destination. Harrah’s, in particular, with the new meeting facility will bring in more corporate meetings. The meeting facility should be completed late August early September 2015, which will coincide with the opening of Bass Pro Shop. Which will hopefully bring in up to three million visitor to Atlantic City each year. Bally’s brought in Guy Fieri’s restaurant and Caesar’s will be bringing Gordon Ramsey’s restaurant close to President’s day weekend. Resorts has also benefited with Marguaritaville . Tropicana is planning a spa/fitness center Kevin believes it is called “the Life Center” which will also be beneficial to guests. Kevin also mentioned that Bally’s has done the boardwalk. It looks more sophisticated and the changes will have an effect on everyone.

Senator Whelan asked about the ShowBoat/Stockton situation? Kevin stated they have entered into a Letter of Intent to sell the Showboat to Stockton College. All of the details are not complete, however, he explained it will be a satellite campus with the intent of providing a hotel/school in AC. This will, hopefully, bring 10,000 students a year, their families, so the local businesses will be benefited by the changes. Jim Thebery distributed an article from The Record (dated 11/14/14) regarding the Showboat used as college dorm. Quoted from Assemblyman Vincent Mazzeo (the addition of a college campus on the boardwalk could be a great asset as the city looks to build a future with less reliance on gaming”.

In closing, Kevin Ortzman expressed his deepest concern regarding the people who were affected by the closure of the Showboat. “It was the absolute worst unfortunate task I’ve ever had to do in my professional career”. They were able to replace approximately 600 people within market or other assisted properties.

Jim Carney commented,” since the beginning of casino gaming in Atlantic City, the Casino Revenue Fund has benefited billions and billions of dollars to the disabled and the seniors. Without those funds, the state would have been taxed even more. Your property has played a major role in that. We certainly appreciate it.

Assemblyman Chris Brown suggested we start working on long-term serious solutions, rather than short-term gimmicks. We all need to work together – not compete.

Joe Tyrell stated that people are spending differently than they were several years ago. Gaming spending is down, however, entertainment and the retail end at the same time is up. When you look at some of the casinos, whether it’s Borgata, Harrah’s or Tropicana, there’s a different revenue stream. That’s why diversifying the City’s other interests, besides gaming, is so important. Bringing in education and other attractions into Atlantic City will benefit the local businesses and AC will grow from this change.

Meeting adjourned at 12:30p. Next meeting will be held in on Friday, January 23, 2014 at the State House Annex Room 1, Trenton, NJ.