

**MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC COMMENT MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN
CITY OF BRANSON, MISSOURI, JULY 26, 2004**

The Board of Aldermen of the City of Branson, Missouri, met in the Public Comments session in the Council Chambers of the City Hall on July 26, 2004 at 9:15 p.m. with the following members present:

Mayor Schaefer presiding, with Dick Gass, Stan Barker, Beverly Martin, Ron Huff, David Edie, and Jack Purvis present.

Also in attendance from the City were: Administrator Terry Dody, Assistant Administrator Frank Schoneboom, City Attorney Dan Wichmer, City Clerk Sandra Williams.

Mayor Schaefer called the Public Comments meeting to order and stated the Board would hear citizens that signed up to speak in the order of the first person signing the sheet, and there were four persons signed up to address the Board.

City Clerk Williams called the first name on the list of John Logan.

John Logan, 2277 Lakeshore Drive, Branson, addressed the Board and read a portion of a resolution passed by the Branson Board of Aldermen stating, "Be it resolved the Board of Aldermen hereby states its emphatic opposition to any type of gaming interests being established in the Tri-Lakes area. The Board will direct all of the energies of the city to prohibit the establishment of such interest in the area should they ever be considered." Mr. Logan then said he was appalled that the City has not abided by this resolution.

Chris Myer, 3601 Shepherd of the Hills Expressway, addressed the Board to speak on gambling also. Mr. Myer indicated he was on the Anti-Gambling Task Force and wanted to update the Board on this subject. He indicated they had two educational meetings set up that are free and open to the public and would encourage everyone to attend, including the Mayor and Aldermen, because once the community is educated they will make the right decision when voting. He said he was very concerned and had done considerable amount of research regarding the problems that occur with gambling as he believes the effects of this could be devastating, and just wanted to inform the Board of some of these concerns because as leaders it is important that they have a good grasp of the situation. Mr. Myer then outlined for the Board several of the concerns and problems that occurred in other areas where gambling was set up, and finished by saying that motels can't compete with "free". They cannot give away free lodging; businesses can't give away free theater tickets, because they are all not in the business of giving things away for free. We need to focus on our "Brand". Our "Brand" is not gambling, we need to be family friendly, and we don't need to try to be like Las Vegas.

Tom Gray, 2403 Sierra Vista Drive, Rockford, Illinois, addressed the Board saying he was invited here by the Anti-Gambling Task Force to do some informational meetings.

His organization, the National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling was here in 1994 because they feel it is readily apparent that this is the targeted area and has been for some time. It is where gambling interests wanted to get in when they penetrated St. Louis and Kansas City, and it was just a matter of time before they came here because of the demographics of the existing tourism base. You have seven days to show the polls how we feel, because what has happened is that there has been silence out of this region. There has not been the type of stories written that says this region is in a battle, and if this passes, "Branding" wise they are going to brand you, and you will no longer have the power to direct your own destiny. Mr. Gray then provided several of the problems in areas where there is gambling, and indicated that what is at stake here was the future of a peaceful place to visit and live.

Chuck Pennel, 353 Quincy Road, Kirbyville, Missouri addressed the Board indicating he has taken some criticism for opposing this issue of gambling but he was honored to be asked by the Chamber to be with them on the Anti-Gambling Task Force. Mr. Pennel asked the Board to draft a letter in opposition and send it to the St. Louis, Kansas City, and Jefferson City newspapers explaining why gambling would not be good for Branson. It is all the way to Hawaii, in the newspapers there, that Branson is considering gambling. Rockaway will be the first step then somebody will try to bring it to Branson or Kimberling City. County Government will be harmed, this hurts all of Taney County and this hurts all of Branson. If we are damaged here then the whole area of southwest Missouri is effected. Mr. Pennel again asked the Board to write a letter to the newspapers in Kansas City, St. Louis, and Jefferson City, and to call friends and neighbors across the State.

City Clerk Williams stated that completed the list of citizens requesting to speak.

Mayor Schaefer then stated, that concluded the Public Comments section and entertained a motion to adjourn to Executive Session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Alderman Huff moved to go into closed Executive Session pursuant to Section 610.021.1 RSMo for litigation, 610.021.2 for real estate, and 610.021.3 for personnel. The motion was seconded by Alderwoman Martin. Voting aye: Gass, Barker, Martin, Huff, Edie, and Purvis. Nays: none. Motion carried.

ADJOURN:

Mayor Schaefer entertained a motion to adjourn. Alderman Barker moved to adjourn, seconded by Alderman Purvis. Voting aye: Gass, Barker, Martin, Huff, Edie, and Purvis. Nays: none. Motion carried. Meeting was adjourned at 9:52 p.m.