

In any bet there is a fool and a thief. Which one are you?

GAMBLING - FUN TIMES OR RUINED LIVES?

Brian Chiasson

In April, City Council voted to, "participate in the Charitable Bingo and Gaming Revitalization Initiative ..."

What does this mean? Here are some explanations:

- "Charitable Bingo" means you pay to play. The more money a person loses, the more the charity gains. If people win, the charity loses. If lives are ruined financially, the charity wins big time.

- "Gaming" is "gambling" except it's licensed. It's "gaming" when licensed and "gambling" when it's not.

- "Revitalization Initiative" means Mississauga City Council is breathing new life into gaming.

I normally support Mayor Hazel McCallion but she's wrong here. She said, "It is about giving local organizations the ability to grow in a declining market."

I'm disappointed she says, "giving local organizations the ability to grow" is good even if that growth can only happen by taking funds from people who won't or can't give charitably, which is why the market is "declining."

In other words, needy people are encouraged to lose. After all, rich people aren't playing Bingo.

Creating Compulsives

Also, gaming directors will introduce other addictive options to enable compulsive gambling. Stats claim 1/3 of all gamblers were originally healthy and became compulsive. That's like putting two bullets in a six-shooter, spinning the revolver and lining up six human targets.

In fact, when you include the entire population, not just those who gamble, 2.7% of American adults are pathological or problem gamblers according to the American Psychiatric Association's standards and 7.7% are at risk of developing a significant gambling problem.

In Mississauga, with a 700,000 population, 2.7% represents 18,900 residents and 7.7% represents 53,900. When you add them together, 72,800 will be affected.

Can any charity reasonably care for 72,800 problematic people with little or no impulse control? They would need thousands of case workers and experts for medication and hospitalization. They will also overwhelm the police and courts with vandalism, violence and theft.

The need for jail cells, hospital beds or psychiatric stays will sink political budgets. Two years ago Dalton McGuinty warned health care will eventually cost 70% of the entire provincial budget if things don't change.

People Vs Charities

Where are our priorities? People are more important than charities so I'm disappointed any charity would consider gaming. Debt and inflation are bad enough without encouraging the impoverished to lose funds.

It's also remarkably ironic to take money from needy people and claim to help needy people.

It's unfathomable, especially when the process creates needy people - remember, one in every three gamers becomes uncontrollable. Perhaps by creating needy people they can heartlessly justify existing.

Additionally, according to a Mississauga News story, there are efforts to put a casino in Mississauga. They reported responses from City Councillors on the matter:

- Councillor Ron Starr wants a casino because the money could come in handy, but wants a referendum - 2/3 of Mississauga residents oppose a casino.



People are expected to lose money, otherwise charities lose. If people win, they harm the charity.

- Councillor Sue McFadden also likes the idea.
- Thankfully, Councillors George Carlson & Jim Tovey seem to be against the idea, while Councillors Pat Saito and Bonnie Crombie appear to have reservations and Katie Mahoney and Chris Fonseca want to learn more.

- Councillors Patricia Mullin, Frank Dale, and Nando Iannicca were not cited in the report.

City Politicians

I sent a survey "Charity Bingo, Gaming & Casinos" with five questions to each of Mississauga's City Councillors.

1) Did you vote for or against the Charitable Bingo and Gaming Revitalization Initiative?

2) If people must lose money for charities to gain, and conversely, if charities must lose money for people to win, which one is a higher priority: People or charities?

3) Do you favour or disapprove of a casino in Mississauga?

4) Have you already considered the social costs (newly created compulsive addicts, case workers, medication, hospitalization, psychiatric services, policing of vandals, theft, violence, prostitution, a greater difficulty with human trafficking, and finally the courts)?

5) If a casino is built, is there any reason or none at all, to be concerned about the pushing of prostitution and drugs among Mississauga students?

Here is the result:

- Patricia Mullin, Ward 2, avoided transparency as if neutral. For example, she wrote, "People and charities are



Gaming helps pimps and predators harass students.

both important." She is free to correct my interpretation of attempting to be neutral anytime she chooses.

- Ron Starr, Ward 6, supports charity Bingo. A casino could be dangerous but could be helpful financially. He'll back the people in a referendum - which is expensive.

- Patricia (Pat) Saito, Ward 9, supports charity Bingo and believes people are a priority over charities. She is against a casino "at this time" (her view could change). She's well informed on crime and is not convinced an increase "would be a given."

- Sue McFadden, Ward 10, supports charity Bingo and believes people are a priority over charities. Her Ward residents are against a casino but she says "new jobs" are also a consideration. "Casino or no casino, there is always reason to be concerned about the pushing of prostitution and drugs among not just students but adults as well." (I guess it's already a problem.)

No other Councillor responded, even with extra time to do so. Mayor Hazel was out of the country but they all still have time for a follow-up feature in the next edition.

The Councillors who didn't respond yet: Jim Tovey, Chris Fonseca, Frank Dale, Bonnie Crombie (a Crombie staffer said she might answer by the end of May 9), Nando Iannicca, Katie Mahoney and George Carlson.

Crime

Casinos, for the record, invite crime.

Mississauga has (1) the University of Toronto Mississauga and (2) Sheridan College. There are also dozens of high schools. Undercover pimps and predators will offer students money to gamble with no strings attached. After losing, they'll be forced to work off their debt.

Also, students will be offered drugs for free to relieve the stress and develop an expensive addiction.

Mississauga already has a huge problem with human trafficking. It's rampant. Joyce Smith, a Manitoba MP, says human trafficking "is Canada's dark secret."

Impoverished men, who work hard overseas, pay thousands of dollars (illegally) so their daughters can live in Canada. Traffickers offer freedom for cash.

However, all these girls are forced into prostitution as sex slaves and become exotic dancers, including in Mississauga strip clubs, among other municipalities.

So, it's not like we need gaming to exacerbate the problem for local students.

Additionally, there are rumours that organized crime is involved in the security at Pearson airport. How long before gambling is infiltrated?

Residents Against Casino

More than a decade ago, Councillors voted against a casino because residents didn't want one.

The Mississauga News supports a casino and admits their recent online "poll indicates two-thirds of residents oppose ... a new casino.... Only 24 per cent approve."

The Mississauga News and the Toronto Star (which owns the Mississauga News) will make lots of money from all the newly created compulsive gamblers when the casino buys advertising.

(To understand casinos, see the feature below.)

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CASINO OWNERS GAS YOU INTO DEBT

Brian Chiasson

US casino owners are targeting Toronto. The goal is to profit by deliberately pushing all patrons into debt.

Here are some psychological tactics to encourage you to gamble everything:

- Casinos offer a Player Card to remove your awareness of spending. If you don't touch cash, you might lose the realization that you're getting into debt.

- Some casinos pump synthetic pheromones into air conditioners to stimulate aggressive gambling habits. Pheromones are a natural human hormone that causes stimulation. The synthetic version enhances the air for a false sense of comfort and security, avoiding the normal stress associated with going into debt.

- This artificial atmosphere induces a trance-like behaviour so you continually invest without thinking.

- Now that you're in a suggestible state, feeling intimate and euphoric, you have a strong desire to stay and continue, hoping your feelings won't fade away.

- Also, many casinos don't have clocks or windows. You can't tell when day passes into night. The lighting is also arranged so you think it's always daytime.

Casino owners intentionally encourage the distortion of time perception. If you don't realize that time and money is disappearing, you continue to spend each.

- The music is mild and continuously looped to reinforce the trance-like state.

- Customers are lavished with free alcohol and food so they are less inhibited and more likely to spend without getting hungry. Sometimes energy drinks are offered to effectively remove sleepiness.

- Machines are pre-set to regularly offer near-misses at a jackpot so you over-estimating your chance of winning and feel strongly encouraged to keep spending.

- And, if gassing the air is not enough, casinos lobby politicians for slots - the Crack Cocaine of gambling. Doug Holyday, the Deputy Mayor of Toronto, now wants to ban all councillors from being lobbied about a casino.

Casino owners want to implement every possible manipulative process with the specific goal to motivate you to (1) go into debt, and (2) after doing so, keep going.

Each tactic is designed to stimulate Ludomania (problem gambling), which is, according to Wikipedia, "an urge to continuously gamble despite harmful negative conse-

quences or a desire to stop." If ludomania reaches a point of severity, it is "diagnosed as ... pathological".

That's how they profit the most from each individual, particularly in a declining market.

The Mississauga News claims Mississauga Councillor Ron Starr heard a casino could bring in anywhere from \$10-\$30 million to help alleviate tax pressures.

If true, it means \$10-\$30 million is only a percentage, since a casino won't give all its income to the City. The casino revenues would far outweigh the City's cut.

This means all revenues combined will be taken from people who would be safer without a casino.

With such a potential nightmare ahead, you'd think that political officials would be completely against it.

The Mississauga News reported that Ward 5 Councillor Bonnie Crombie made a stand, "I'm certainly not in favour of anything like that in Mississauga."

Wow. Was this accurate? She didn't respond to my survey yet. (I will publish all results in a future edition.)

If a girl will cave to be a prostitute to relieve the stress of her gambling debt, how much easier for a politician to want her debt to relieve theirs? (See feature above.)