

Foxwoods lays out plans for Milford casino

Written by Administrator

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Two months after the community raked them over the coals at a board of selectmen meeting, Foxwoods casino officials tonight are returning to Milford with architectural plans for the \$1 billion resort casino development they want to build.

The plans were the result of “extensive, ongoing studies on traffic, water and other concerns raised during several months of meetings with town, state and federal officials,” said Foxwoods CEO Scott Butera.

“By pursuing a collaborative and open process, we have listened to the citizens of Milford and worked hard to address concerns,” Butera said. “We have learned we can develop a unique, world-class resort that meets the needs of this community and will integrate well with the beauty and history of Milford and the surrounding area.”

The development would provide 3,500 permanent jobs with local hiring preference, approximately \$20 million per year in tax revenue to the town and about \$50 million a year spent with local vendors and suppliers, Butera said.

To minimize development impact, Foxwoods would restrict building on the site’s 187 acres, preserving large portions of forest and wetlands, Butera said. Structures would occupy less than 10 percent of the site, leaving more than 90 percent as open landscape, he said.

Existing overhead transmission lines would be relocated away from residential areas to provide a large buffer zone between the project and adjacent neighborhoods, Butera said. Buildings would be in scale to the natural landscape, maintaining connections to the outdoors, he said, and the site would feature ecological zones, native vegetation, expansion of existing recreational trails and would employ environmentally sustainable methods throughout.

Traffic considerations currently under discussion include safe and efficient access while minimizing traffic disruption and impacts to local roads, Butera said. After meeting with transportation officials, Foxwoods has proposed construction of a two-lane frontage road off Interstate 495 serving existing interchanges at Routes 85 and 109, plus a proposed new interchange to Route 16. These routes, all coming from Interstate 495, are expected to

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accommodate more than 92 percent of traffic to the facility.

Studies to date indicate water and sewer demands of the development would be largely accommodated by existing infrastructure, and that capacity exists under current permitted water withdrawal limits to service the resort. Expansion of the sewer system will be required to connect the facility and Foxwoods,

Foxwoods is studying the potential to extend the service to connect unsewered residential areas east of the site. Depending on final assessments, Foxwoods is in discussion with local utilities on additional mitigation efforts such as paying connection fees, building a new water tank on-site and a possible high-user surcharge for the casino resort.

Improvements in public safety as well as school technology and athletic fields also are under consideration.

In April, Butera faced an angry audience as he pitched the idea of a casino at a Milford selectmen's meeting.

The same wall of community resistance derailed Steve Wynn and New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft in Foxboro.

Wynn has a second chance in Everett, but both he and Foxwoods face competition from Suffolk Downs/Caesar's Entertainment for the sole Greater Boston resort casino license.

Each of the companies' casino plans must be included in their site-specific, phase two applications to the Massachusetts Gaming Commission that are due by December.

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