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!mso]> st1:*{behavior:url(#ieooui) } <![endif]-->Black Bear Entertainment, the company behind the Oxford County casino project, held its first public meeting Tuesday to share details of its planning process with Oxford County residents.

The meeting was mandated by the Department of Environmental Protection. The group, like any other developer, has to go through a rigorous state approval process before anything is built in order to ensure there are no negative impacts on the environment.

Close to 200 people gathered at Oxford Hills Community High School to speak with the developers, take a close look at the site maps of the proposed casino, and get their questions answered.

Many wondered if the casino would affect the watershed and the well water. Black Bear says no, but some aren't so sure.

While the meeting focused on the environmental issues, many couldn't stop talking about the jobs. Black Bear says it has received 4,000 employment inquiries on its web site so far, even though a recount into the referendum is still underway.

Black Bear expects the recount to be complete by Monday, saying the process actually gave their side 53 more votes than it had before.

The group also expects to announce a gaming partner in the coming weeks as the planning phase continues.

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