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East Greenbush casino opponents to hold forum

By Danielle Sanzone, Troy/The Record

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EAST GREENBUSH, NY - A forum to discuss the effect of a proposed casino development in East Greenbush is slated for 7 p.m. Thursday, May 29 at the First United Methodist Church, said officials with a citizens group against a casino in the Rensselaer County town.

“Save East Greenbush”, a grass-roots citizens group against the development of a casino in East Greenbush, is sponsoring a local forum with national speaker Les Bernal to help raise awareness about the effect of a proposed casino development in the town, according to a press release Tuesday.

Les Bernal is the national director of Stop Predatory Gambling. He has spoken and written extensively about how casinos create unfairness and inequality in communities. He has testified before Congress, appeared on national television and radio including 60 Minutes, CNN, Fox News Channel, MSNBC, National Public Radio and the BBC and has been interviewed by national newspapers and magazines.

“Save East Greenbush” is encouraging all residents to attend in order to learn more about the issues involved, no matter where they stand on the proposed development.

“This is a big decision for our town,” said SEG member Dwight Jenkins. “We want to provide an opportunity for the community to learn as much as it can during this process.”

The forum will be held at 1 Gilligan Road in East Greenbush. Saratoga Casino and Raceway and Churchill Downs Incorporated have proposed to build a resort casino in the town. As proposed, The Casino at East Greenbush is an approximately \$300 million proposal that will create approximately 1,700 construction jobs, 1,700 permanent jobs with benefits and thousands of additional jobs in the community and region. It will also help to keep taxes low and support local needs with \$24.1 million annually for the Capital Region, in addition to \$5.7 million annually for both the Town of East Greenbush and Rensselaer County.

Located on East Greenbush’s Thompson Hill, the casino will feature gaming, dining and entertainment options, including a 300-room resort style hotel, dining options, multiple entertainment venues and 20,000 square feet of high-end retail.

Meanwhile, there is a coalition of businesses in favor of such a proposal including the Habana Premium Cigar Shoppe.

“This kind of project doesn’t come around very often, and it has real potential to boost local businesses like mine,” said Shoppe owner Scott Bendett.

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