



STAR LAKE TOWNSHIP E - BULLETIN # 13

SUBJECT: Star Lake Casino Update

DATE: 7/13/17

The following provides an update regarding the proposed Star Lake casino development to best of our knowledge at this time.

The OTC Board of Commissioners met on July 11, 2017 to review the many written & oral comments submitted regarding the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) for the proposed Star Lake Casino Development. The announced purpose of the meeting was for the board to render their decision as to whether to accept the EAW as submitted, or to request more information, or to order the developer to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). An EIS is a more stringent level of environmental review vs. that of an EAW.

While meeting was open to the public it was not to solicit additional public comment/input. In addition to the OTC Commissioners/Board attending were representatives from Houston Engineering, various OTC Staff, representatives from the developer, Lake Region Electric Cooperative, the OTC Coalition of Lake Assoc's., Star Lake Property Owners Assoc. and Concerned Citizens Group, as well as Star Lake Township.

Houston Engineering (HE) is the firm hired by OTC to review, research, and verify the public/agency input, and to develop recommendations for the OTC Commission to consider in determining their decision. HE was really the only "presenter" at the meeting, and shortly into their presentation advised that they would be recommending OTC to require the developer to complete an EIS to address two "mandatory EIS threshold" issues. Those being:

- 1- The commercial square footage threshold,
- 2- The combined & related cumulative effects of a resort development,

HE then requested a 30-day extension to allow them more time to thoroughly review the data submitted so they could develop more specifics on exactly what the "scope" of the EIS should be. They also advised that the developer had requested a 30-day extension to allow them more time to develop their responses to issues raised in the public comment period.

After much discussion, the OTC Board voted to approve a 45-day extension to request additional information and continue to review/analyze the multitude of comments received. The 45-day extension was accepted by representatives of the proposer.



Meeting observations: Based on their review of the comments thus far, Houston Engineering indicated they would recommend an EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) but the decision rests with OTC. The Board, without officially making a positive EIS needs determination, acknowledged that an EIS would likely be their decision. In addition to some mandatory EIS triggers, there are several issues, or themes of issues, indicating the potential for significant environmental impacts that need further analysis. Some of those themes voiced by OTC officials, as well as Houston Engineering, include (but are not limited to):

- Protection of wild ricing
- Wastewater and storm water issues
- Wetland mitigation
- Visual impact and compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood/community
- Social issues (traffic, safety, workforce issues, etc.)
- Financial sustainability of the project
- AIS issues as identified by DNR (water and land)

Next OTC Meeting Date to Address EAW-EIS: August 22, 2017 at 1 pm; Gov't Services Center, Fergus Falls MN

The Star Lake Concerned Citizen Group (SLCCG) prepared a document for OTC officials to assist them in identifying the wide range of issues they believe need to be included in the scope of an EIS. The document represents extracts and summaries from the public comments submitted to OTC. This document, plus a copy of all submitted comments are available on the OTC website:

SLCCG Proposed Findings: <http://www.co.otter-tail.mn.us/DocumentCenter/Home/View/10202>

OTC Casino Page: <http://www.co.otter-tail.mn.us/1263/Proposed-Shooting-Star-Casino-Resort>

Several agency inputs of significant note are:

- US EPA objecting to the wetland replacements being from outside the Star Lake watershed,
- MN DNR recommending OTC postpone any decision until the EAW can be augmented,
- US Army Corps of Engineers requesting the developer respond to 13 specific issues by 5/21/17, to which no responses have been made,

Respectfully,
Star Lake Town Board