

Husman, Karen

From: Husman, Karen
Sent: Monday, May 21, 2018 2:52 PM
To: 'Erika Smith'
Subject: RE: not another casino!

Erika,
Thank you for your input. I will forward your concerns to the Zoning Commission, and City Council. As Staff, my job is to research the property and request and forward a recommendation to the Commission for review. I do not have the ability to approve or deny an application. I will print your email and include it with my staff report for review.

Thank you again,

Karen Husman
Planner I
City of Billings & Yellowstone County
Planning Division
2825 3rd Avenue North, 4th Floor
Billings, MT 59101
(406) 247-8684
husmank@ci.billings.mt.us

From: Erika Smith [mailto:ErikaAnne@msn.com]
Sent: Monday, May 21, 2018 2:09 PM
To: Husman, Karen <husmank@ci.billings.mt.us>
Subject: not another casino!

Ms. Husman,

I am writing to voice my concern over the continued effort and possible approval of yet another casino in Billings, particularly on the West End. Billings is saturated by casinos and to use the argument or logic that Billings "needs" another casino is preposterous! Please deny the request for a casino at Zimmerman and Grand, or for that matter, anywhere else. Let's keep our West End neighborhoods and community free from that dubious business and clientele. Thank you for your consideration.

Erika Smith
661-2848

Husman, Karen

To: Kassie Oram
Subject: RE: West End Casino

Kassie,

Thank you for your input. I will forward your concerns to the Zoning Commission, and City Council. As Staff, my job is to research the property and the applicants request, and then forward a recommendation to the Zoning Commission for review. I do not have the ability to approve or deny an application. I will print your email and include it with my staff report for review. The City Council will hear the recommendation from the Zoning Commission at their meeting on June 25, 2018.

Karen Husman
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From: Kassie Oram [mailto:kassieoram@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, May 21, 2018 2:14 PM
To: Husman, Karen <husmank@ci.billings.mt.us>
Subject: West End Casino

Ms. Husman,

I am part of a group that is trying to stop the spread of casinos on the West End of Billings. Recently, a member of this group made us aware that there is a plan to build a gas station with a casino and bar on the West End, and I would like to ask you to oppose this plan (and all future plans.) These businesses do not provide true benefits to the community. I believe the following professional information will show that a bar/casino is only going to negatively affect the surrounding area and will not help the city to prosper.

According to a study done by the Institute for American Values released in 2013, casinos harm health, drain wealth, and contribute to income inequality. The report cites another study that showed that 96% of casino revenues came from only 25% of players – meaning that it is the problem gambler that most frequents the casino. According to the California Council on Problem Gambling, those with gambling addictions often have other family and professional issues. Problem gamblers are “3 to 4 times more likely to be arrested and spend time in jail for domestic violence, child abuse, theft, and fraud.” They are also “2 to 7 times more likely to use illegal drugs, drink and/or binge alcohol, and smoke cigarettes.” The study from the IAV also showed that “Those in the upper ranks of the income distribution rarely, if ever, make it a weekly habit to gamble at the local casino. Those in the lower ranks of the income distribution often do. Those in the upper ranks rarely, if ever, contribute a large share of their income to the state's take of casino revenues. Those in the lower ranks do.” This is obviously not the type of business that will encourage a prosperous city, neither will it fit in or benefit the currently family-friendly area on the West End, especially so close to churches and schools and neighborhoods with lots of children.

Some may argue that a bar & casino is just another business that will bring more foot traffic and revenue to the surrounding businesses, thus improving the overall financial health of the area. A CNN article from 2013 details the efforts to use this logic to improve Atlantic City, NJ. While the legalization of casinos did bring jobs and tourism, the

overall effect was extraordinarily negative: increased crime, more liquor stores, and higher poverty rates. Casinos are not the type of business that improves an area, even if they provide jobs.

Finally, property values suffer when a casino is nearby. According to the National Association of Realtors, the impact of nearby casinos on home values is "unambiguously" negative. Problem gambling leads to financial distress that can manifest in home foreclosures and higher rates of domestic violence. Besides the casino, a bar would lead to greater numbers of drunk drivers and accidents that can lead to serious injury, damage, and deaths. This is not the type of business that will improve the West End, especially near schools and neighborhoods.

Please oppose this attempt to build a casino and bar on Grand & Zimmerman. A casino (especially combined with a bar), will not fit in with this area of town. Many people move to the West End because it is family-friendly. A casino brings with it more problems than it solves, and takes more away from a community than it provides. Let's leave at least one area of Billings untouched by the negative affects of casinos and make it a safe, comfortable place for families and children.

Thank you,

Kassie Oram

References:

<http://www.cnn.com/2013/09/24/opinion/frum-casinos-harm/index.html>

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/06/11/atlantic-city-casinos-money-squandered/2412791/>

<http://www.americanvalues.org/search/item.php?id=1981>

<http://www.calpg.org/societal-impact-of-problem-gambling/>