

Dec. 3rd 2012:

Casino Concerns: Friendly to Seniors – Sudbury Position:

Questionable Economic Benefit – Danger to Seniors

A number of our members and many other citizens in the community are annoyed and more than just a bit puzzled over Ontario government plans to open a casino in Sudbury, dissolving the long standing arrangement between the Lottery Corporation, Sudbury Downs, the city and the horseman that seemed to be “win-win” for so many years and all solely for the stated potential of increased gaming revenue for the province without regard to the negative implications for this decision.

It has been said that letting a casino into a community is the same as inviting a thief into your home. The city through its economic development department would be well advised to do the math involved with respect to the net gain of a casino in our midst. It has been reported that the city “take” would be increased to something slightly more than the current 5 percent received from the Sudbury Downs operation. Even so, a simple calculation would suggest that regardless of the creation of a number of relatively low paying service jobs at the facility and some doubtful spinoff benefits, upwards of 90 percent of all “revenue” would be leaving the community, hundreds of millions of dollars yearly.

There is very little obvious value for money “spent” at a casino, even considering the recreational factor, after whatever winnings might be realized, but the “house” always wins in the end, and we know the evils of gaming addiction, something that can be of particular concern for seniors, a group represented by Friendly to Seniors in Sudbury. Money spent gambling is not spent on tangible items, whether the necessities of life or less essential amenities. It remains to be proven what value added benefit there might be attributed to a casino in our midst including possible convention and/or theatre facilities which would not in any case replace the loss of hundreds of local jobs in the horse and agricultural sector through the closing of the Sudbury Downs operation.

I am sure that many citizens would agree that a very careful cost/benefit examination needs to be undertaken plus social and other factors have to be evaluated before any decision is made with respect to even consideration of a casino anywhere in our community and that full public involvement needs to take place in these deliberations. Nothing less would be totally unsatisfactory and irresponsible.

John Lindsay, Chair, Friendly to Seniors – Sudbury 705-920-5177 – www.friendlytoseniors.ca