

SEARCH

FIND A BUSINESS

- Home
- News+Biz
- Travel
- Sports
- Forums
- Cams+Radio
- Living
- Entertainment

Muskegon Chronicle

More From The Muskegon Chronicle | [Subscribe To The Muskegon Chronicle](#)

Indian casino case troubling, about fairness

Sunday, April 02, 2006

The issue of the proposed Gun Lake Tribe casino shouldn't really even be on our editorial radar screen. Then again, we don't think it should have been on U.S. Rep. Pete Hoekstra's radar screen, either. So it has wound up on both of ours, and it's impossible to ignore because this is a matter of fairness.

Hoekstra, who championed the cause of Grand Rapids-based anti-casino organization 23 is Enough by aiding that group's lobbying effort to stop the Allegan County tribal casino from being built, clearly believes that stopping this casino is a legitimate concern for his constituents. He has told us so in no uncertain terms.

Yet the Holland-area congressman's work on this issue, as well as that of other Michigan congressmen, and that of the 23 is Enough group itself, is troubling in the sense that some of the tactics used to stall the Gun Lake casino from being built appear to share similarities to other anti-casino efforts by groups and individuals acting at the behest of just-convicted Washington, D.C., lobbyist Jack Abramoff.

In 2002, Hoekstra wrote then-Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton a letter requesting an extension of a public comment period during the time the tribe's trust application was being reviewed by the government. The 30-day comment period was extended by Norton to 75 days, during which, tribal officials told us, no additional comments were received. That delay represented another frustrating setback in the tribe's quest to establish what it sees as its legitimate right to do business like all the other federally recognized tribes in the state. The application, though later approved, still hasn't resulted in a new casino, as efforts to block it remain ongoing.

Gale Norton has since resigned her post. Abramoff, meanwhile, was sentenced this past week to federal prison for fraud. He is currently working with government prosecutors who are seeking information about any of his accomplices who might be guilty of accepting bribes to influence legislation favorable to Abramoff's clients, efforts that included blocking new casinos from encroaching on the territory of existing ones.

Frankly, we don't think this casino issue was any of Hoekstra's business. But since he stuck his nose in, we'll put in our two cents also to suggest that the Gun Lake Tribe hasn't been treated fairly, and still isn't.

The Chronicle has consistently opposed using a casino as an economic engine to drive downtown Muskegon development, and we adhere to that position. However, we have not opposed casinos or legalized gambling as a matter of policy and in this case, we fail to understand why the Gun Lake Tribe has to be penalized when gambling now runs rampant in this state, and every other federally recognized tribe has its hand in the game.

What's fair is fair.

Burns firing allows a fresh start for Heights

A scurrilous and despicable political attack on Muskegon Heights Mayor Rillastine Wilkins and newly elected Councilwoman Bonnie McGlothlin has, ironically, opened the door to a fresh start and a new beginning for that city's government. The mayor, blessed for the first time with a council majority that favors her progressive approach, now has a free hand to shape city policy.

- INSIDE NEWS
- » MU News
 - » MU Business
 - » MU Opinion
 - » Muskegon Forum
 - » Auto News
 - » NewsFlash
 - » Paid Death Notices
 - » Weather
 - » Newspapers

Site Tools

- E-mail This
- Print This
- Search Site
- Newsletters

Speak Up!

- [Newstalk forum](#)

[Get Your Local Edition](#)

CLASSIFIEDS

Get The Best Local...

[Jobs](#) | [Autos](#) | [Real Estate](#)

[All Classifieds](#) | [Place An Ad](#)

» [Contests & Games. Click here!](#)

FROM OUR ADVERTISERS

• [Advertise With Us](#)

OUR AFFILIATES


ANN ARBOR NEWS

One who won't be shaping policy in the near future, though, is ex-city manager Melvin C. Burns II, booted out of a job by the council last week. For Wilkins, Burns was an unwanted appointive legacy from the Robert Warren administration that she inherited upon assuming office following her defeat of the late Warren in 1999.

The former city manager is the son of a close Warren associate, the late Melvin Burns Sr., and was hired over Wilkins' objections in 1993. His administrative skills have been repeatedly called into question by critics as the result of serious financial difficulties the city has suffered through in recent years.

We hope Heights citizens will stand up with the mayor and the council at this season of renewal and time of transition, which promises a rebirth of energy and new ideas. We wish the mayor and her team the best of luck in their efforts to improve the great city of Muskegon Heights.

 Print This

 E-mail This

MORE NEWS

- A sign of county times: Commissioners seek more state money for roads
- Less 'choice' in area high schools next year
- This time, it's official: Heights DDA director fired
 - [More Stories](#)

© 2006 Muskegon Chronicle. Used with permission.

[Jobs](#) | [Autos](#) | |

Special Home Delivery Offers!



[About Us](#) | [Help/Feedback](#) | [Advertise With Us](#)

Use of this site constitutes acceptance of our [User Agreement](#). Please read our [Privacy Policy](#).

©2006 [MLive.com](#). All Rights Reserved.

