



The Honorable Alderman Brendan Reilly
City Hall
121 N. LaSalle
Room 200
Chicago, IL 60602

July 26, 2022

Re: Bally's Interim Casino Site, Medinah Temple

Dear Alderman Reilly,

Thank you very much for the opportunity to meet with representatives of Bally's and their legal counsel. We had a productive discussion with Mr. Ameet Patel-Senior Vice President and Regional General Manager-West, Mr. Christopher Jewett-Vice President of Corporate Development and Ms. Meg George, their attorney to review the plans for the proposed interim Bally's casino at Medinah Temple. In attendance from SOAR were Judith Aiello, Derek Brewer, Joel Brosk, Malek Absulsamad and myself Deborah Gershbein. During the meeting, we also received an overview of the proposed permanent Bally's casino at Halsted & Chicago Avenue.

The SOAR board of Directors discussed this project at their July 19th Board Meeting and voted unanimously to oppose the interim casino location at Medinah Temple. This location is a mixed use neighborhood with a very strong residential focus. Traffic congestion and public safety are two major concerns for this area.

Bally's does not have experience operating a casino in a major metropolitan city. This would be their first casino in the heart of a major city. If the Illinois Gaming Board and/or the City of Chicago approve any permits for such an interim location then SOAR strongly suggests the following restrictions be attached to any licensing and/or permits. Our suggestions follow.

- Reconsider 24/7 operation and suggest closing from 2AM-6AM
- There is no available public parking near the interim site. Current available public parking is taken up by residents and workers. We suggest off-site parking near the permanent site and a free shuttle for visitors and or employees of the casino. Parking and traffic are very congested; so every consideration should be given to resident concerns.
- Create a designated drop off location on Wabash along with traffic aides, funded by Bally's to provide traffic control assistance during all hours that the casino is in operation. Wabash is a very narrow street.
- Establish extra security patrols outside of the site given the current crime situation in River North due to late night bars.

- Protect surrounding business from losses as a result of the impact of the casino on existing business in the community making sure that crime and traffic do not negatively impact the area's businesses.
- Create a community engagement program that is in operation prior to the opening of the interim casino.
- Periodic meetings (but no less than quarterly) with community groups to address any issues that may arise due to the operation of the interim location.

Finally, SOAR would like a representative on any committee created to address the planning and execution of the interim Bally's Casino project. Again, we thank you for providing us the opportunity to meet with the representatives of Bally's and for all you do for Streeterville and the 42nd Ward.

Sincerely,



Deborah Gershbein

President

cc: Alderman Brian Hopkins
SOAR Board of Directors
Robert Kearney
Joanna Angarone