

Saratoga Springs City Council adopts resolution urging state to restore VLT host funding

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SARATOGA SPRINGS — At its inaugural meeting of 2011 held Tuesday night, the Saratoga Springs City Council adopted a resolution urging state legislators to restore funding for hosting video lottery terminals (VLTs) at Saratoga Casino and Raceway.

“The entire elimination of VLT host community revenue by the state seriously questions the wisdom of essentially penalizing a host community for successfully producing revenue to (the state),” said Mayor Scott Johnson, reading the resolution into public record before it was unanimously approved.

The two-page document — which will be forwarded to Gov. Andrew Cuomo, state legislators and the county clerks of other VLT host municipalities — also calls for state legislators to immediately address the recent closure of New York City Off Track Betting Corp. and calls the proposal for casino gambling in the Catskills detrimental to state’s racing industry.

“If that suffers, so does racing, and so does Saratoga,” Johnson said, referring to the plan approved by outgoing Gov. David Paterson to allow the Stockbridge-Munsee Tribe of Wisconsin to operate a full-scale casino near Monticello.

During discussion of the resolution, which included a tabled amendment that would’ve included opposition to any potential casino gambling plans in Suffolk County, Public Safety Commissioner Richard Wirth said he feels it appropriate for city residents to write letters to Gov. Cuomo urging action on these issues.

“If we don’t speak out, who else is going to speak out?” Johnson asked.

The City Council is scheduled to next meet at 7 p.m. Jan. 18 in the council chamber of City Hall.

In other business:

The council unanimously voted to accept the donation of a sculpture, titled “Tempered by Memory,” constructed from five pieces of steel recovered from the World Trade Center towers.

“I have not received any objection from any constituent to date,” Johnson said of plans to erect the work, which will be donated by Saratoga Arts and placed in front of the City Center at Broadway and Ellsworth Jones Place.