



In The News...

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Another voice / Obstructionist thinking
Casino opponents are the ones hurting the city
By JOHN M. MCGOWAN

It amazes me with each passing day that people continue to rail against a casino in Buffalo.

I can understand those who are morally opposed to such an establishment, although I do chuckle at those who cite moral convictions as their churches encourage the bingo addictions of their own parishioners.

I can even understand those who don't want a casino in such a historic neighborhood, even though its use in the future is not a realistic possibility. But it is the attitude of some people like Dianne Bennett that irks me the most.

"I think it will suck all life out of Buffalo, and it just appalls me," she said. The life out of Buffalo? Where has she found a pulse?

By no means am I insinuating that we live in a dead city. On the contrary, I moved back to Buffalo because I think it is anything but dead. But let's face it, development isn't exactly booming throughout our fair city. It is coming, in a stagger here, an isolated investment there. A casino will not be a panacea, but it will be one more piece of the puzzle.

I think we need to concentrate on the positive here. Let's look at the location. It is not in a residential area, nor is it replacing any business that is currently doing anything for this city. The proposed area to be used is isolated and away from our bustling areas such as Chippewa, Elmwood, Allentown and Hertel.

It is close to HSBC Arena, which puts it into a great position to be marketed as a dual attraction. (I can see it now: Come see a game and stay at the casino next door! While

you are here, you can take the train up to Chippewa and have a great meal and enjoy the nightlife.)

It would not be tearing the heart out of any location or influencing property values for those on the waterfront. Location shouldn't be an issue. I would think that those against the casino would at least count their blessings that the Statler or Cheektowaga were not chosen.

The next criticism is that it will not bring in any tax revenue. At least it would bring people to the area, which is more than can be said for the location now. Once here, it would be our responsibility to convince people that there is more to do than just gambling in this town.

That doesn't sound like it would be too hard, what with chicken wings to salivate over, bars open until 4a.m. and, of course, all the Frank Lloyd Wright you can handle. (Yes, insert snide chuckle here.)

The bottom line is this – at least the Senecas are willing to build something, do something – not just criticize from the sidelines. Get out of their way. If you don't like the casino, don't go when it opens. Please, for the sake of the rest of us, let it go. If people were this adamant about solving our problems instead of nay-saying development, perhaps we wouldn't be in this position.

John M. McGowan lives in Buffalo