

Detroit readies for showdown on three casinos

Special to Sentinel-Voice

DETROIT — If it approves a controversial development plan, Detroit could become the largest American city with casino gambling, and, city officials say, begin to reverse the effects wrought by the migration of businesses.

Several hundred people turned out for a public hearing Monday afternoon on Mayor Dennis Archer's plan to build three casinos in a warehouse district near downtown.

The City Council is scheduled to vote on the \$1.8 billion plan Friday.

Opponents are angry that none of the three proposed casinos would be black-majority owned and that the plan will not live up to expectations.

Supporters disagree.

"We see this as the biggest employment opportunity of the 20th century," Archer spokesman Greg Bowens said Monday. "Since

World War II, when Detroit was the Arsenal of Democracy, there has been nothing like this."

Archer, once an outspoken opponent of casino gambling, now is the plan's biggest backer. He and his supporters—including local unions—say casinos would help jump-start the city's economy.

"More than 11,000 construction jobs and 15,000 full- and part-time permanent jobs will be generated as a result of casino gambling," Metropolitan Detroit AFL-CIO President Ed Scribner said Thursday.

The demand for casinos is evident.

Indian tribes have opened casinos on reservations across northern Michigan and two casinos across the Canadian border in Windsor, Ontario. Business is booming; an expansion already is in the works.

But Archer faces a tough fight to convince a majority of the nine-member council to approve

his plan as opponents warn of crime, gambling addiction and other social problems and say casinos have been a disappointment as a development tool in cities such as New Orleans and Atlantic City, N.J.

Others support casinos but are angry that despite a population that is 80 percent black, none of the three casinos would be black-majority owned.

Archer, who is black, drew harsh criticism when he rejected black businessman Don Barden for one of the three casino franchises.

Blacks hold shares of up to 18 percent in the three winning bids — Atwater/Circus Circus, Greektown/Chippewa Indians and MGM Grand. None has majority-black ownership.

The council vote would clear the way for the project, although a ballot initiative in August seeks to force the city to create a black-owned casino.

Whatever their misgivings, council members probably will end up going along with the plan because they fear letting the project die, one observer said Monday.

"I don't think there are a total of five members with the guts to say no to casino gambling," political consultant Mario Morrow said.

Supporters see the plan as a major step in the city's revival.

In the late 1950s, Detroit had nearly 2 million people, many employed by the Big Three automakers.

In a long slide since then, most of the city's jobs and nearly half its people have left.

As the nation's largest city with casinos, Detroit would have a leg up on the competition for visitors and the money they spend, Bowens said.

But that opportunity will not last for long, he added.

The Rev. Jesse Jackson seeks federal probe into King slaying

Special to Sentinel-Voice

NEW YORK — The Rev. Jesse Jackson has called on the Justice Department to investigate whether the government played a role in the death of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

"Our government was actively involved in destroying Martin Luther King Jr. Now, did they do it directly or were they a part of hiring someone,

we don't know," Jackson said Sunday on NBC's "Meet the Press."

Jackson, whose comments came a day after the 30th anniversary of King's death, said he thinks convicted assassin James Earl Ray was not solely responsible.

"Ray neither had the motive, the money, nor the mobility to have done it by himself," Jackson said. "The

haunting question is how deeply did the assassination go into our government?"

Last Thursday, King's widow, Coretta Scott King, called on President Clinton to establish a national commission to investigate the assassination.

The King family has said in recent months that Ray was a scapegoat who did not act alone.

Ray, 70 and seriously ill from liver disease, pleaded guilty 11 months after the April 4, 1968, assassination, but immediately recanted and has maintained his innocence ever since. He has sought a trial.

Jackson, who was with the civil rights leader when he was gunned down in Memphis, Tenn., also said: "Our government was very involved in discrediting, disrupting and

destroying Martin Luther King."

The FBI undertook a campaign in the 1960s, under then-Director J. Edgar Hoover, to harass and spy on King and other civil rights leaders. The FBI campaign, not disclosed until years later, included sending letters and tapes to Coretta Scott King in an attempt to discredit her husband.



CORETTA SCOTT KING

Newspaper editors shoot for racial parity in 2010; toss old plan

Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (AP) — Newspapers need an extra 10 years to get their staffs to reflect the ethnic and racial mix of the country, says a draft proposal from a group representing newspaper editors.

In a proposed statement on newsroom diversity, the board of the American Society of Newspaper Editors says the industry should abandon its previous goal of having newsrooms reflect the nation's ethnic mix by 2000.

The new goal would be to have African-Americans, Hispanics, Asian-Americans and American Indians account for 20 percent of journalists by 2010.

Also, individual newspapers' staffs would try to reflect their community makeup "as soon as possible," according to a draft released to members last week.

The organization set its original target two decades ago. But a survey for the organization found that minorities accounted for only 11.5 percent of newsroom employees, compared with 26 percent of the general population.

The proposal, to be voted on in October, disappoints minority journalists.

They say the industry has given minority placement a back seat to investments in technology, even though diversity makes newspapers more credible to the public.

"They treat it like it's a problem to be dealt with, as opposed to an opportunity for expanding readership and practicing good journalism," said Vanessa Williams, a reporter for The Washington Post and president of the National Association of Black Journalists.

But the editors' group says the draft makes a more ambitious and inclusive statement about newsroom diversity while bowing to the reality that the original goal cannot be met in the next two years. Part of the reason is the explosion in the country's minority population.

"I don't think anyone anticipated the remarkable change in the texture of the American population," said Richard A. Oppel, editor of the Austin (Texas) American-Statesman and secretary of ASNE, which has 870 members.

Minority group members represented just under 4 percent of newsroom employees in 1978.

In 1980, blacks constituted 12 percent of the population and Latinos were 6.4 percent, while Asian-Americans and American Indians together

accounted for 2.2 percent, for a total of 20.6 percent.

"My belief is it actually raises the bar," said Edward L. Seaton, editor-in-chief of The Manhattan (Kan.) Mercury and president of ASNE.

The language on local communities means papers in areas with a large minority population would need to hire more instead of settling for a number reflecting national percentages.

Moreover, he said, all newspapers would be encouraged to hire minority journalists, regardless of local population.

And he noted the proposal also broadens diversity to include women, people with disabilities and homosexuals, even though these people would not be counted.

But Paul DeMain, president of a coalition of minority journalist groups, says

emphasizing local minority populations will encourage many newspapers to do nothing.

"I think that's leaving people off the hook," said DeMain, managing editor of news from Indian Country, a newspaper published in Reserve, Wis.

Rick Rodriguez, managing editor of The Sacramento (Calif.) Bee and an ASNE

board member, said he believes newsrooms should aim to fully reflect the country's diversity but it's important to put the industry on track first.

"What I want to do is make a realistic standard, keep the industry's feet to the fire, and then establish parity after we've made that 20 percent benchmark," said Rodriguez, who served on ASNE's diversity committee.

Cops

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Giuliani said if there were a legitimate way of helping the Cato family, the city would, but he added that the deaths of Gavin and Rosenbaum could not be equated. "One is a terrible, horrible accident and the other was a very deliberate crime."

Giuliani dismissed the black officers' complaint as "absurd," claiming a 1993 report by state investigators backs him up.

Klan

(Continued from Page 1)

for many, many years we didn't think we'd ever have the opportunity for justice."

Prosecutors reopened the case in 1991 and began looking for new clues that might bring a resolution to the case.

"Recently we seem to be making a little headway," District Attorney Lindsay Carter said. "If a few more things fall into place, I think we might have a good shot at going back into court with it."

Carter said investigators are reviewing "a mountain" of paperwork and that the Bowers

interview transcripts and the commission records could be helpful.

This is the first attempt to revive a Mississippi civil rights case since a jury in 1994 convicted white supremacist Byron De La Beckwith in the 1963 murder of civil rights leader Medgar Evers.

Mississippi law provides no statute of limitations on murder, and Carter said he may bring the case before a grand jury this summer. Another option would be resurrecting a 30-year-old indictment against Bowers to avoid taking the case to the grand jury.

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