



MEDIA RELEASE

May 26, 2020

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Norfolk City Council Reaffirms Pamunkey Tribe as Casino Operator

Pamunkey Tribe Reservation – The Norfolk City Council tonight voted overwhelmingly to select the Pamunkey Indian Tribe (the “Tribe”) as the preferred casino gaming operator for the proposed waterfront resort and casino. The vote comes after the City Council first approved entering into an agreement with the Tribe in September of 2019.

This vote was necessary as part of the required process that the Virginia General Assembly prescribed this past Session for approved gaming cities to select their preferred operator. The next step for the City is to notify the Virginia Lottery of its selection of the Pamunkey Indian Tribe as their preferred casino gaming. The Virginia Lottery will then take up to 45 days to conduct a preliminary review to determine if the Tribe and the City can move forward to seek a citywide public referendum in November.

The City and the Tribe have been working together for nearly two years on this project, which will provide significant revenue and an economic boost to Norfolk. The City is expected to receive \$26-\$31 million per year in gaming and sales-related taxes from the project. These funds can be used to fund key priorities of the City, including improving schools, supporting first responders, repairing streets and sidewalks and other core city services. The City is also expected to receive state revenue from casino gaming which the Governor and General Assembly recently earmarked for much needed local school construction. The City will also benefit from the estimated 6.2 million visitors annually to the resort and casino – 4.8 million of which are expected from outside of Norfolk. This increase in tourism will further support local businesses that cater to visitors.

As part of the Agreement between the Tribe and the City, the Tribe is responsible for paying for infrastructure, flood mitigation and utility improvements needed for the construction of the resort.

The \$500 million resort will include a four-diamond, 300-room full service hotel with a variety of onsite restaurants and other dining options, a luxurious spa and an entertainment venue that will be able to seat 2,500. This project will represent the largest private economic investment in the City and guarantees a new annual revenue stream for the City without any state or local tax incentives or government grants. The project will create more than 2,000 construction jobs and provide nearly 2,500 ongoing, full-time jobs when fully operational. Once fully open, annual employee earnings will reach \$100 million, with an additional \$15 million in annual employee benefits. The project will have a total economic impact of \$850 million for the Commonwealth, including \$754 million for the City of Norfolk.

“As we look ahead to what will be a long economic recovery from the pandemic, this project will be a huge shot in the arm for the local economy,” said Jay Smith, Spokesman for the Pamunkey Resort and Casino. “The jobs, investment and general infusion of money into the local economy will have a ripple effect across the City and the region. At a time now when we can likely expect to see a drop in local revenue for the City, this new stream of money – to the tune of tens of millions of dollars annually – will be an important part of the City’s ongoing ability to provide city services to its residents.”

The Tribe is committed to providing extensive job training, a living wage, healthcare for employees and excellent career opportunities. Their hiring program will include special outreach to members of Virginia tribes and other minority communities. Once open, they plan to reinvest money into the local community, consistent with goals and principles of the Pamunkey Tribe.

The Tribe has set up a Facebook page called “All In for Norfolk Casino” for supporters and interested people to learn more about this exciting project. Visit www.facebook.com/AllinforNorfolkCasino

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