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Campaign to Open Resort & Casino in Norfolk Kicks Off - Tribe announces donation to open grocery store in St. Paul's neighborhood -

NORFOLK – Today, City leaders and leaders of the Pamunkey Indian Tribe shared the stage to officially kick off the campaign in support of the referendum on November 3rd to open a world-class resort and casino in Downtown Norfolk. Pamunkey Tribe Chief Robert Gray was joined by Norfolk Mayor Kenneth Alexander, Delegate Jay Jones, and others to express their support for the project that will bring more than \$30 million annually to the City in taxes that can be used for education, neighborhoods and other city priorities. Gaming revenue is also expected to provide an additional \$50 million to the state to be used for building new and renovating existing schools.

However, the big news of the day was not about the resort and casino. The Tribe announced its commitment to provide \$150,000 in financing to open a much-needed grocery store in the St. Paul's neighborhood. That area is now considered a food desert after the Save A Lot grocery store closed in June. The Tribe is partnering with the City to address this important issue and the City is currently looking for a grocery store operator.

"Lack of access to food is not a new concept to the Pamunkey Tribe. That's why we have chosen this issue as a key priority in our commitment to the community," said Chief Robert Gray. "This is just an example of what we mean when we say that we will be a strong partner with the City and an active supporter of the people who call Norfolk home."

The Tribe has also been working with eight area churches and non-profit organizations over the past two months to provide funding for food pantries and hot meals for those in need. The Tribe plans to continue this food assistance program through the Fall with other area places of worship and non-profit organizations.

"The Pamunkey Indian Tribe will be a great partner for the City and I am excited to support this private investment," said Mayor Kenneth Alexander. "This project will provide tens of millions of dollars each year directly to the City which will help fund successful schools, strong neighborhoods, and resilient infrastructure. It will also allow us to make additional investments in our residents. This project will not require taxpayer support and will be the single largest private investment in the City of Norfolk."

The November 3rd referendum is the result of legislation passed during the 2020 Session of the Virginia General Assembly that legalized casino gaming in Virginia. The bill, which was signed

into law by the Governor in April, also outlined robust requirements for minority participation in contracting and operations of the casino.

“I’ve been a supporter of this project since it was first presented to me two years ago. I’m proud to be “All In” on a project that will bring not just jobs – but career opportunities – to this community,” said Delegate Jay Jones. “But we can’t take all of this for granted; we need to get out and vote ‘Yes’ on November 3rd.

Excitement for the project has been growing since plans for a resort and casino were first announced in 2018. The resort and casino will be built on 13.4 acres of undeveloped waterfront property currently owned by the City. The Tribe will purchase that land for a full-market price of more than \$10 million, and the City has decided that 100% of proceeds from the property sale would go directly to the renovations of Maury and Booker T. Washington high schools.

Unlike a casino operating under the oversight of the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs as was first considered, the casino will now be regulated by the Virginia Lottery as a commercial casino. This type of casino is treated much like any other private development and subject to all applicable state and local taxes, including local real estate taxes, business personal property taxes, food and beverage taxes, admissions taxes, sales taxes, lodging taxes, business license tax, utility taxes and a number of local fees, as well as a gaming revenue tax. In total, once fully operational, taxes to the City will exceed \$30 million annually and taxes to the Commonwealth will exceed \$50 million annually.

Expected to attract 6.2 million visitors a year, the resort and casino will provide an economic boost to the shops, restaurants and tourist attractions in the area. The resort’s hotel is purposely being built smaller than needed in order to encourage some visitors to utilize other hotels in Norfolk, which will also encourage visitors to explore all that Norfolk has to offer.

“This project isn’t just about jobs at the casino; it’s about supporting the businesses that already exist,” said Tommy Posilero, owner of Mona Lisa’s Restaurant and Bar. “I know that bringing more people to Norfolk will only help grow my business.”

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To learn more about the Norfolk Resort and Casino, visit www.AllinNorfolk.com or check us out on Facebook at www.facebook.com/AllinforNorfolkCasino, on Twitter at www.twitter.com/AllinNFK and on Instagram at www.instagram.com/AllinforNorfolkCasino.