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**Councilman Frank DiCicco**  
**Remarks Concerning Bill No. 090295**  
**June 11, 2009**

Thank you Madame President.

This legislation rezones 801 Market Street as a Commercial Entertainment District and is a step towards making a Market East casino a reality. For clarity, the developer must still present a Plan of Development – including traffic, parking and architectural plans – to the Planning Commission prior to final approvals.

This is a significant step forwards for Foxwoods, but it is not their final hurdle.

Over the past four years, my staff and I have lived and breathed casino gaming. I understand the problems associated with gambling – traffic, addiction and safety concerns. I also understand the economic benefits that can be derived from casinos – tax revenue, jobs and a potential uplift for the surrounding area.

Working with and observing this administration has made me confident that we can address the problems associated with these developments. Struggling through this year’s budget and through this recession – some would argue depression – it is clear how desperately we need the economic benefits.

While this legislation removes most city obstacles that remain for the Foxwoods development, there are still obstacles. The developers are facing the worst credit market in decades. By passing this zoning bill, Foxwoods potential creditors should feel confident about the City’s support.

Foxwoods must still gain site control. Their negotiations with their landlord – Pennsylvania Real Estate Investment Trust – have progressed well, but all of us are also aware that another owner of the building – Gramercy Capital – has expressed concerns about this development. Neither City Council nor the Mayor can solve those problems.

We will not allow what little power we have to be used as leverage for a private party. We're confident that PREIT, Foxwoods and Gramercy will resolve what issues exist.

Finally, the City is actively negotiating a re-siting agreement. You may recall that the developers signed a tax settlement agreement with the City at their previous location. That agreement must be renegotiated – some of its provisions are no longer relevant. However, some of the agreement's provisions will provide long-term security to the City and to the surrounding neighborhoods. Over the past several weeks, my office has accompanied the Administration in these negotiations and significant progress has been made.

In conclusion, I want to send a clear message to Foxwoods, to the Gaming Board and to the State legislature. Frank DiCicco, City Council and the City of Philadelphia support Pennsylvania Entertainment and Development Partners. The City, the State, PEDP and PREIT all have a significant economic interest in this project.

As such, we're committed to working as partners to make this casino a reality. As partners, we may not always agree, but, as partners, we will be working towards the same goal.

On one final note – I believe that Market East is the right site for Philadelphia's second casino. If Foxwoods attempts to return to the river, I'll fight like hell to stop it. While I may fail in that battle, I can guarantee a difficult road.

If this partnership should fail, if the credit markets are simply too difficult or if the Gaming Board, for whatever reason, decides to rebid this license, I hope they recognize that Philadelphia has made a choice. Market East can work. Give us the opportunity to make it happen.

Thank you.