

Casino Expansion

Business Challenge/Environment

Our client owned and operated a horse racing facility and sought to expand to include a 4,000-machine slots parlor, restaurants and a private club. Before the gaming license could be awarded, he needed to win approval of his development plans including a 1500-car parking garage and demolition and construction of a waste water treatment facility.

Outcome

At the final hearing, the municipal board voted 3-2 to approve our client's land development plans.

Our Approach

The municipal board, once a supportive body, turned against our client's interests in the face of NIMBY opposition. The primary challenge was to convince residents that this expansion would be good for the town and would not cause additional burdens on the municipality or local taxpayers.

We focused on the abutting homeowners collecting petition signatures and letters of support and holding one-on-one meetings with residents to directly address their concerns. Our message was simple, and focused on three important issues:

1. Forcing the racetrack to tie into the waste system will overburden the existing township infrastructure.
2. Traffic from the new entertainment facility will be better managed if the parking situation was resolved.
3. Additional tax revenue from the expansion would allow the township to address other issues like road improvements, ball field upgrades and sewer improvements in other areas of the township.

CASE STUDY