

November 30, 2012

**The Ancaster Ministerial Association**

Re: Downtown Casino Discussion

To Mayor &amp; Members of Council,

On behalf of the Ancaster Ministerial Association, we the undersigned express to you our strong opposition to any proposals to bring a casino into downtown Hamilton.

The Ancaster Ministerial believes in a strong downtown core and applauds any new ventures which seek to contribute to that end. However, after reading the reports from Ward 2 community groups such as the Beasley Neighbourhood Association and hearing from other communities which have invited casinos into their downtowns, we strongly believe that the pursuit of a casino in downtown Hamilton would lead to net negative effects within the community.

Gambling, though socially accepted and undoubtedly a source of great income for local governments, does not affect all equally. **A casino in the downtown core would have adverse effects on the most vulnerable in our society.** Sarah V. Wayland comments in her report, *Casinos and Low-Income Households: Research Review*, prepared for the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, "If a casino is built downtown, Hamilton's low income households are likely to bear significant social, economic, and other costs, in exchange for an increase in mostly lower-paying jobs."<sup>1</sup> Wayland provides an extensive and in-depth examination of the affects of casinos on local economies and the most vulnerable. Wayland's research points to one conclusion: it would be a gross mistake to invite a casino into Hamilton's downtown.

If council decides that the revenue from a casino is irresistible, we strongly encourage council to look at other sites.

We hope that you will consider our comments before the OLG's imposed deadline.

Sincerely,

Rev. Aaron D. Gerrard

On behalf of the Churches of the Ancaster Ministerial Association

Ancaster Alliance Church, Alberton Presbyterian Church, Ancaster Christian Reformed Church, Bethesda United Church, Turning Point, Heritage Fellowship Baptist Church, Jerseyville United Church, Marshall Memorial United Church, Meadowlands Fellowship Christian Reformed Church, Ryerson United Church, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, St. Ann's Roman Catholic Church, St. John's Anglican Church, St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, & The Salvation Army Meadowlands Church

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<sup>1</sup> <http://raisethehammer.org/article/1703>