

# In The Cards

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## Gaming Commission staff finds MGM Resorts 'suitable' to build Springfield casino and resort

By [Mark Arsenaault](#) / Globe Staff

MGM Resorts International was given the seal of approval today by staff investigators for the Massachusetts gambling commission, marking a step forward for the single applicant for the sole Western Massachusetts casino license.

[The conclusion by staff](#), however, is not binding on the five full-time commissioners themselves, who will issue a written decision within the next several days. This follows today's public hearing, where MGM's chief executive, Jim Murren, is detailing the company's plans.

MGM owns 99 percent of the Springfield venture and Paul Picknelly owns 1 percent. Paul is the brother of Peter Picknelly, the owner of the Springfield-based Peter Pan bus line. Springfield voters endorsed the casino in July.

Last week, Murren told the Boston College Chief Executive's Club that MGM plans to hire 3,000 people in Springfield, and another 2,000 to build an \$800 million gambling and entertainment facility.

As the hearing began at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, Commission Chairman Stephen Crosby did not respond directly to a Globe story on Sunday that raised questions about his ties to Paul Lohnes, co-owner of land in Everett where Wynn Casinos wants to build a \$1.5 billion casino.

[The Globe reported that Crosby](#) has known since at least November 2012 that one of the people involved in the Everett casino bid was Lohnes, a former business partner, but did not publicly disclose the tie until late this year.

Crosby has announced he will not particulate in the commission's Dec. 23 vote on the Everett casino land deal.

Crosby today joked that he was thrilled to read in the Sunday newspaper that Boston Red Sox first baseman Mike Napoli is returning to Boston.

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