

January 26, 2024

Volume 30, Issue 3

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A publication of

RMC Ventures, LLC

The _____ MICHIGAN GAMING _____ Newsletter



Plymouth Township Terminates Discussions on Northville Downs Proposal of Relocation

The Plymouth Township Board of Trustees voted 6-0 on January 23 to rescind a motion authorizing negotiation for a planned new facility for Northville Downs. By doing so, the Board put an end to negotiations with Northville Downs' owners to relocate the track, which is currently located in Northville Township, a few miles away.

"I don't see any path to reopening these discussions, I think we've made a decision that discussions are over. We've withdrawn their application, and I anticipate that their time extension will be denied," Township Supervisor Kurt Heise said to [Hometown Life](#).

The proposal became public in Plymouth Township early in 2023 and quickly passed through several required steps on the way to approval. With the proposal came opposition from community members concerned about animal welfare, gaming expansion and anticipated changes to the quiet nature of the township.

The Plymouth Township project stalled last summer when Plymouth Township and Northville Downs could not find common ground about the community benefit agreement.

Heise argued the agreement would help offset the controversial nature of the project and help fund recreation projects for the community. "We did some hard bargaining with them, and we demanded a lot from them, and they rejected it," he said.

Other members of the board shared similar objections. Treasurer Bob

Doroshewitz said the level of community resistance to the project was something he hadn't seen in 19 years in the township.

"I believe this widespread opposition is genuine and... not politically motivated, but rather represents sincere concerns for the direction the township is going with this project," Doroshewitz said. "I believe the majority of opponents sincerely believe this is not right for Plymouth Township."

Trustee John Stewart, who initially voted in favor of the project but later changed his mind, said the board's Jan. 23 decision was in the "best interest of the people."

A number of citizens at the Jan. 23 meeting thanked the board for rescinding the PUD application, but several also expressed doubts about what the future might hold.

Marilyn Bertera, a Northville resident, and harness racer who serves in roles with the U.S. Trotting Association and the American Horse Council, told the board she was disappointed.

"I don't think the general public will ever know the specific details or understand how the negotiation of the community benefit agreement actually broke down," she said.

MGCB Sends Cease-and-Desist Letters to US, International Internet Gaming Companies Due to Illegal Operations

According to a [press release](#) issued by the Michigan Gaming Control Board "(MGCB)", cease-and-desist letters have recently been sent to three online gaming companies — two in the U.S. and one overseas — after investigations revealed the entities are offering online gaming in Michigan without licenses to do so legally.

The three gaming companies in violation who received cease-and desist letters are:

- PredictionStrike Inc., in Bay Shore, New York;
- Sweepstakes Limited (Stake.us), in Limassol, Cyprus;
- VGW LuckyLand, Inc. (VGW) in San Francisco, California — whose parent company is VGW Holdings Ltd., a global technology online social gaming company headquartered in Australia

"Gambling regulations are in place for a reason, and illegal gambling operations are not welcome in Michigan. We do not want businesses who skirt the law having access to Michigan citizens and leaving them vulnerable because they are playing on unregulated sites that leave them with no recourse, and that siphon funds away from communities because they are not paying taxes like a regulated, legal gambling establishment would," MGCB Executive Director Henry Williams said.

The companies' violations include:

- Offering internet gaming and internet sports betting in Michigan without being licensed in the state as an internet gaming operator and a sports betting operator (PredictionStrike).
- Promoting an unlicensed online lottery and/or raffle for customers that buy its products through its internet website (Stake.us).
- Conducting illegal gambling by offering an internet game in which a player wagers something of monetary value for the opportunity to win something of monetary value (VGW).

Due to their unregulated and unlicensed online gaming offerings, PredictionStrike, Stake.us, and VGW are in violation of the following Michigan gaming laws, including the:

- [Lawful Internet Gaming Act](#)
- [Lawful Sports Betting Act](#)
- [Michigan Gaming Control and Revenue Act](#)
- [Michigan Penal Code](#)

PredictionStrike Inc., Sweepstakes Limited (Stake.us), and VGW LuckyLand, Inc. (VGW) have now each taken steps to prevent Michigan residents from gambling on their websites.

If Michigan residents have information regarding illegal gambling websites, they can report their tips to the MGCB by calling 1-888-314-2682 or sending a message to MIGamblingTip@michigan.gov.

Pokagon Band and Its Four Winds Casinos Announce Community Investment Contributions For 2024

On January 25, 2024, Pokagon Band and Four Winds Casinos sent out a joint [press release](#) detailing their financial contributions for 2024. A total of \$435,000 was invested between 12 organizations. The ceremony to present these contributions was held on the same day at Four Winds South Bend.

Organizations that received contributions include:

- Beacon Children’s Hospital
- Bodwewadminwen Ethe tek, Inc.
- Boys & Girls Clubs of St. Joseph County
- Cultivate Food Rescue
- Food Bank of Northern Indiana
- Logan Community Resources, Inc.
- Proteus
- St. Joseph High School, South Bend
- South Bend Community School Corporation
- The Kwek Society
- Unity Gardens
- YWCA of North Central Indiana

Tribal Chairwoman of the Pokagon Band, Rebecca Richards, commented, “The Pokagon Band is very pleased to be able to make meaningful contributions to these very important organizations that do so much to support the varied and diverse needs of the residents in South Bend and the Region.”

Additionally, CFO and interim COO of Four Winds Casinos, Clayton Mason, stated, “We are extremely pleased to take that contribution a step further by making charitable donations to these important organizations that support the personal needs of so many.”

The Pokagon Band has also funded development initiatives within South Bend including the renovation of Howard Park, the Bowman Creek Project, the renovation of the Beacon Children’s Hospital’s Newborn Intensive Care Unit, and non-profits in the community.