



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 22, 2007

Contact: Marcia Halloran: (616) 204-1383

Peter Secchia's River Grand "Stall" Effort and Casino Opposition May Have Same Motive

Wayland, Michigan – Today the Friends of Gun Lake Indians (FOGLI) called attention to reported similarities between Peter Secchia's opposition to the "River Grand" project and the Gun Lake Casino. Recently reported e-mails and a 2003 news report reveal an economic parallel in Secchia's opposition to both proposed projects.

"Six years ago casino opponents publicly taunted the Tribe with racial slurs and tomahawk chops. Afterwards we started FOGLI for fair and equal treatment of the Tribe. It's sad that Peter Secchia is still fighting the Tribe's development, and other development proposals too," said Marcia Halloran FOGLI Council member.

Numerous West Michigan media sources have reported that Secchia asked Mayor George Heartwell to "stall" the River Grand project, proposed by Duane Faust. Secchia and Heartwell discussed details of the proposed development via e-mail. In one exchange Secchia wrote, "if this does not workout, something else will. We have too much to offer." This message suggests that Secchia was or is interested in submitting his own proposal to counter the River Grand.

On May 20, 2003 the Lansing political newsletter, Gongwer, quoted then-Speaker of the Michigan House of Representatives Rick Johnson, saying that Secchia opposed the Gun Lake Casino because he did not get a piece of the action:

Mr. Johnson suggested that Mr. Secchia is upset with him because Mr. Secchia had been denied partnership in the casino.

"Through all this, it's my understanding that he got cut out of the Gun Lake business deal, and for whatever reason, I don't know. One thing I do know is I had nothing to do with that. I don't understand why he tends to point at me on it."

The Secchia-Heartwell e-mails and former Speaker Johnson's statements suggest that Peter Secchia will oppose projects in which he has no personal interest. Why else would Secchia oppose two proposed developments that would create thousands of jobs and significant economic growth? These incidents don't bode well for West Michigan's ability to attract new development.

FOGLI is urging all citizens to quit ignoring that Peter Secchia is acting like the Dictator of West Michigan. Secchia's 23 is Enough is funding the lawsuit delaying the Gun Lake Casino and thousands of jobs, millions of dollars in local vendor contracts, and millions of dollars in local revenue sharing.

For more information visit www.fogli.org.