

Richmond City Council Meeting
Monday, February 24, 2020

Current Situation

The timing for a required referendum in the City of Richmond is different in the two casino gaming bills (House Bill 4 and Senate Bill 36). Guidance on this issue is needed from City Council as soon as possible, as the two casino bills will soon go to a conference committee to work out differences between the two bills.

- Does Richmond wish to be included (with the other 4 casino cities) in a referendum on the November 3, 2020 ballot asking “Shall casino gaming be permitted at a casino gaming establishment in the City of Richmond and Location of said casino within the City of Richmond?” (HB 4)

OR

- Does Richmond want to go unnamed as to the timing of a referendum on the question of “Shall casino gaming be permitted at a casino gaming establishment in the City of Richmond and Location of said casino within the City of Richmond?” (SB 36)

Background/Steps before referendum:

- 1) Host city must submit its preferred casino operator, based on the selection criteria set forth in the bill, to the Virginia Lottery Department for pre-certification of their qualification to conduct casino gaming in the Commonwealth.
- 2) Host city must also submit any written or electronic documentation including memorandums of understanding, incentives, development agreements, land purchase agreements, or local infrastructure agreements to the Lottery Board.
 - a. Lottery Department must complete its pre-certification review within 90 days of receipt of request by the host city.

That means that once the casino bill becomes law (July 1, 2020), pre-certification must already be in the works and sent to the Lottery Department in order to effectuate their 90-day review. (Sept. 2020).

The host city must petition the Circuit Court for a court order to hold the referendum. The referendum must be ordered at least 81 days prior to the date for which the election is called. For a November 3, 2020 referendum, the court order for the referendum must be received no later than August 14.

The clerk of the court to publish notice of the referendum in general circulation newspaper once a week for 3 consecutive weeks prior to the election. (October 2020).

* If, for some reason, a casino license has not been granted by the Lottery Board within 5 years of the court order proclaiming results of the election, a subsequent local referendum will have to be held.