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[Gaming commissioner on his game](#)

Crosby speaks at chamber dinner

BY ETHAN FORMAN STAFF WRITER

DANVERS — The last time that state gaming czar Stephen Crosby addressed the North Shore Chamber of Commerce, it was the day after the Nov. 6 election, and Crosby said he suffered some sort of a “physical problem,” making it impossible for him to give his talk on the future of casino gaming in the Bay State.

Last night, during the chamber’s 94th Annual Dinner and second annual Distinguished Leadership Awards, Crosby was on his game before a packed ballroom at the Danversport Yacht Club filled with 500 businesspeople from all over the North Shore.

“I want to assure you I got plenty of sleep last night,” said Crosby, the chairman of the Massachusetts Gaming Commission.

“I’m sorry I don’t have any insights on Powerball,” Crosby joked. Last night was the big drawing for the game, with a jackpot of \$550 million. “There are benefits of being a gaming commissioner, but that’s not one of them. Although, I was sure to tell my wife to get us a few tickets.”

Last night, Crosby gave a status report of where casino gaming stands about a year after the law allowing it passed. He outlined the criteria the commission is going to use to make its decisions about who will get a casino license and the public policy questions that might affect communities. There are three full casino licenses up for grabs, one in the western part of the state; one in eastern Massachusetts, which would include this region; and one in southeastern Massachusetts.

There is a proposal by Caesars Entertainment to site a \$1 billion resort at Suffolk Downs in East Boston. This week, casino developer Steve Wynn showed interest in putting a casino in Everett, which might then compete for a license against the Suffolk Downs proposal.

One of the many things the commission must mull, including job creation and impacts due to compulsive gambling, is the definition of a “surrounding community” to a casino. Those operators who want to get a casino license must ink agreements with host communities first.

Such communities are those that are “materially adversely affected” by the casinos.

“Danvers and this area is pretty far away from East Boston or from Everett,” Crosby said, “but it will impact your residents as they travel to and from work, or to and from town, or your guests, so is that a surrounding community, should there be some need to mitigate? We’ll see about that.”

In an interview, Crosby said the commission will look at a proposed casino’s traffic plans and consult the state highway department and experts, if need be.

“If it’s a problem, we will say so,” Crosby said.

Crosby acknowledged that there has been criticism that the commission is taking too long to license a casino.

“We will not compromise the integrity of the process for the time,” Crosby said. “We have to get this absolutely right. If we don’t, we will never get it back on track.”

The chamber also took time last night to conduct some of its business, presenting outgoing 2012 chamber Chairwoman Karen Andreas, the publisher of The Salem News, with a chair from her alma mater, the University of New Hampshire. The chair was presented to her by Robert Lutts, the president and chief investment officer of Cabot Money Management in Salem, who is the incoming 2013 chairman of the chamber.

Also winning awards as distinguished leaders on the North Shore were outgoing Senate Majority Leader Fred Berry, D-Peabody; Carlton Berry, president and founder of C.P. Berry Homes; entrepreneurs and philanthropists Henry and Donna Bertolon; Tim Collins, the president and founder of EBSCO Publishing in Ipswich; Robert Lappin, the president and founder of Shetland Park in Salem and founder of the Robert I. Lappin Charitable Foundation; Joanne Patton, owner and partner of Green Meadows Farm in Hamilton; and Richard Wylie, president of Endicott College in Beverly.

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