

On February 21<sup>st</sup> City Council held hearings on a package of bills introduced on our behalf by Councilman DiCicco. These bills were designed to gum up the works on the casinos, pure and simple. The following is an excerpt of my testimony, as President of QVNA, to Council:

*Madam President, Councilman DiCicco and Members of City Council:*

*We are all witnesses to a truly remarkable period of development in many areas of our great City. No where is this more evident than in Queen Village. The vibrancy and diversity of our community is the cumulative result of thousands of homeowners and businesses who have worked hard for many years, creating a truly great neighborhood, one that I am proud to call home.*

*But without transparency or adequate consultation, State authorities and their agent, the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board, have hijacked our rightful participation in the decision making process, and selected totally inappropriate sites to locate slot parlors in our neighborhoods.*

*The resultant traffic will absolutely overwhelm Columbus Blvd not to mention Christian Street and Washington Avenue, which are the gateways to Queen Village. As you are no doubt aware, we are already inundated with traffic from the Ikea and other retail development to the south. The threat of an additional estimated 50,000 or 60,000 visitors a week descending into and through our streets would have an immeasurable negative impact on our way of life.*

*I am here to tell you this is not acceptable. I do not believe that City Council wants to, or should, abdicate or otherwise abandon its responsibilities to Queen Village or any other neighborhood in this City.*

*The State has systematically stripped Council's rightful decision-making power on behalf of its residents and business owners. In the strongest possible terms, we urge Council to take back its power. Continue to refuse zoning to the predatory gambling operators. Force the State, by any means, to allow Philadelphia to choose whether or where to site any slots parlors. Continue to support Councilman DiCicco's proposals that will save our neighborhoods, and finally, support our request for a referendum, signed by nearly 28,000 taxpaying residents of the City of Philadelphia and put the question of slots parlors on the May primary ballot.*

*Be the strong, committed City Council doing what it was elected to do – represent the best interests of the citizens of Philadelphia and by doing so, restore our faith in equity and justice.*

*Thank you,  
Jeff Rush, President  
Queen Village Neighbors Association*