

# Orlando Sentinel

EDITORIAL

## **We think: DeBary's City Council needs to reject developers' plans for a poker room**

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Not a lot happens in DeBary, a quiet little Volusia County city on the banks of the St. Johns River.

That's going to change if some Midwest gambling entrepreneurs get their way. A company with close ties to Iowa-based Isle of Capri Casinos wants to bring quarter-horse racing to DeBary. Actually, horses are just a sideshow. Where the developers of DeBary Town Center and Equestrian Park will make the big money is with a poker room that can't exist unless it's paired with a pari-mutuel establishment.

It's a terrible idea, and DeBary's City Council must send these gambling interests packing. How can DeBary's leaders, who forever yak about preserving the city's small-town, family atmosphere, possibly consider opening the door to legalized gambling?

Vice Mayor Chris Carson, who has barely said two words during his years in office -- even amid the city's recent flooding crisis -- suddenly found his voice. Mr. Carson's practically giddy about the project and said so in a slick, promise-filled newsletter promoters mailed to residents, a newsletter that played down the card room.

Mr. Carson's colleagues on the council aren't much better. Instead of taking a firm stand against gambling in the city, they're muttering about a referendum.

Note to council: Sumter County held a referendum in June on a similar proposal by the same gambling entrepreneurs. Nearly 60 percent of the voters said no.

That's nothing new. Nearly every time Florida's voters get the chance they reject legalized gambling. It's bad for the state and it's certainly a bad bet for a small, suburban city. DeBary's council members need to grow a backbone and kill this idea.