

MGM, Springfield mayor in fight over sale of casino

By [Jon Chesto](#) Globe Staff, Updated September 4, 2026, 1:56 p.m.



MGM opened the Springfield casino in 2018. CHARLES KRUPA/ASSOCIATED PRESS

MGM Resorts says it has a buyer lined up for its Springfield casino — but Mayor Domenic Sarno is getting in the way.

On Thursday, the city of Springfield sued the Las Vegas-based casino operator, arguing that it's failing to live up to terms in its host community agreement with the city. Among the areas where the city says MGM Springfield is falling short: the number of employees, the amount of games, and the redevelopment of a nearby building.

City officials have been negotiating with MGM for two years over issues raised in the host community agreement. MGM says in response to the lawsuit that the big beef is over the [sale of the casino operations](#) (MGM has already sold the casino's underlying real estate); the host community agreement also gives the city approval power over any transfer of the casino business.

MGM Resorts said Sarno and the city "initiated frivolous litigation to continue to delay its consideration of MGM's request to approve the proposed sale of its interest in MGM Springfield to a well-qualified casino operator."

MGM didn't disclose the potential buyer. The Las Vegas-based company put another casino on the market around the same time, the Northfield Park Racino in Ohio, that was sold earlier this year to Clairvest Group. The Toronto-based private equity firm owns a number of gambling businesses.

MGM says it notified Sarno in early 2024 that it had a potential buyer lined up, with the hopes it could receive a green light from the city to move forward. It says it agreed to convert 101 State St., next to the casino, into a hotel, per the city's wishes. The company now argues that Sarno and other city officials were "not acting in good faith" and instead were just trying to delay the sale.

The city and company had gone to arbitration to resolve their issues, and MGM said the city had a deadline of Friday to respond.

MGM became the first full-scale resort-style casino in Massachusetts when it [opened](#)

[its doors in 2018 to much fanfare](#). (Wynn Resorts opened the only other one in the state the [following year, in Everett](#).) At the time, Sarno joined MGM's top local executive in a vintage Rolls-Royce to celebrate in a procession down Main Street.

It seems unlikely Sarno will be sharing a car ride with MGM executives now. In the lawsuit, the city complains of unmet promises. The casino has 1,600 slot and video gaming machines and 50 table games today, compared to 2,800-plus machines and at least 75 table games pledged in the community agreement. Likewise, only around 1,500 people work for MGM in the city, with about 1,000 full-timers, well short of the 3,000 workers, including 2,200 full-time employees, that were once promised.

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