

# Citizens in North Valleys concerned about development

6:46 PM, Jul. 9, 2011 | Comments

Recommend

Be the first of your friends to recommend this.

Recommend

A A

ADVERTISEMENT

Written by  
**Brian Duggan**  
 bduggan@rgj.com

FILED UNDER

Local News  
 Virginia Street

Leaders in Reno's North Valleys are starting to question a potential development that is, among dozens of other options, considering a casino as part of the project.

A handbook for the second phase of the Vista Hills development was filed with the city in December by RMT-HRCF Sky Vista LLC and has yet to make it to Reno's planning commission. It's being pushed by Developer Carlos Vasquez and is backed by New York's Hudson Real Estate Capital, which is represented by Vasquez's partner, Chris Barrett. The project would be located in a parcel just north of the Walmart that's under construction off of Sky Vista Parkway.

## If you go

North Valleys Citizens Advisory Board  
 Where: North Valleys Regional Sports Complex  
 Community Building, 8085 Silver Lake Drive  
 When: 7 p.m. on July 11

## Related Links

Gaming revenues down again in Washoe County;  
 economy and competition cited

Political connections to Reno casino project jeopardize  
 development

Political connections to Reno casino project jeopardize  
 development

Vasquez said there are no plans for a casino at this time, instead calling it just one option in a tight commercial real estate market.

"Zero interest," he said, referring to potential gaming operators.

Others aren't so sure.

Sarah Chvilicek, a county resident and chairwoman of the North Valleys Citizens Advisory Board, toured the site with Vasquez and Barrett last month.

"My impression is if he can sell it to a casino, he'll sell it to a casino," she said afterward.

Ed Hawkins, a city resident and chair of the city's North Valleys neighborhood advisory board, said he does not want zoning policies changed to allow a casino in the area.

"We're not going to stand for it out here, there's no way," he said.

Vasquez said he's approached dozens of companies, largely big-box retailers, about filling up the potential development, which could also include senior housing.

Chvilicek asked Vasquez to address the North Valleys Citizens Advisory Board on July 11 now that residents in the area are starting to learn about the plans for the second phase of the development just north of the Walmart, which is part of the development's first phase. Vasquez and Barrett are on the agenda for the meeting.

While Chvilicek said she has nothing against gaming, her goal right now is to make sure her neighbors know about the potential development even if it's months or years from breaking ground.

## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT



Wanderlust festival



New dogs, cats at Reno shelter



Mug shots



Midtown art walk

## MORE HEADLINES

Former RSCVA chief Oppenheim joins Desert Research Institute

Introducing Octomom, the boxer

Blog: State to get answers on status of Reno's financial future

## MOST POPULAR

1. FBI: 'Credible lead' surfaces in D.B. Cooper case
2. Fact checker: Did Nevada Treasurer gamble away \$50 million?
3. Former RSCVA chief Oppenheim joins Desert Research Institute
4. Reno Police seek public's help on string of drive-by shootings
5. Reno man arrested in fatal hit-and run Thursday



Bain Street  
 Fire reader  
 photos



New at Reno  
 shelter late  
 July



Gym hosts  
 special-needs  
 cheerleading  
 squad

## MOST COMMENTED

- |  |    |
|--|----|
| Former RSCVA chief Oppenheim joins Desert Research Institute | 34 |
| Cain wins straw poll of conservatives in Denver              | 30 |
| Forget spending cuts, we need jobs, money                    | 55 |
| Insurers must cover birth control with no copays             | 24 |
| Romney opposes debt deal                                     | 24 |

ADVERTISEMENT

"Once the developers fill their properties, it's the neighbors that have to live with this," she said.

Washoe County Commissioner Bonnie Weber, who represents the North Valleys, said she was angered when she recently heard about the potential casino.

"Just the idea that they would do a two-tower hotel casino on the backside of the North Valleys Regional Park is just the topping on the cake," Weber said. "This is the worst thing that could ever happen in the North Valleys."

She added, "I'm absolutely appalled."

Meanwhile, the Bonanza Casino on North Virginia Street registered a website, [www.northvalleys.com](http://www.northvalleys.com), about a month ago that asks if the proposed project will be, "Another Lazy 8 Casino?" That refers to a proposed development in Sparks that was represented by Vasquez and triggered an ethics controversy when Councilman Mike Carrigan voted in favor of the project despite Vasquez being his friend and former campaign manager.

Ryan Sheltra, the general manager of the Bonanza, said the website is intended "to keep the residents of the North Valleys informed of the process."

The website features a copy of the project's handbook and dates for relevant meetings. While Sheltra said the casino isn't trying to speak out against the project -- and a potential competitor down the road -- the website also asks, "Do we really need this type of controversy & negative press in our quiet North Valleys community?"

"Whether they're opposed to or for this project, we believe the citizens of the North Valleys deserve to have all this information readily available to them," said Sheltra, whose father, Russ Sheltra, founded the Bonanza in 1973.

If the project winds up moving forward, the Reno City Council would have to give it their approval. Council members Jessica Sferrazza and Dave Aiazzi are seeking opinions from the city attorney over past campaign ties to Vasquez and if they would be required to abstain from casting a vote on the project. Mayor Bob Cashell also has an ongoing friendship with Barrett and served for two years on the board of directors for the Bonanza. He stepped down in November.

Virginia Valentine, the president of the Nevada Resort Association, said some members have also expressed concerns over the potential development.

"I do know some of our members have some concerns that this economic environment whether or not you would be bringing more or new visitors to the region," she said, "or if you'd be cannibalizing what's already here."