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Controversial Lazy Eight Casino Moving Forward

The Sparks City Council has approved a land use change for the Lazy 8 Casino in a 2-1 vote.

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The Sparks City Council has approved a land use change for the Lazy Eight Casino in a 2-1 vote.

Councilmember Julia Ratti was the lone 'No' vote. Mike Carrigan and Phil Salerno abstained from the vote. Councilmembers Ron Smith and Gary Schmitt voted for the "tourist commercial" designation for land near the Pyramid Highway.

Shirley Berschinger opposes the project, and said so do many of her neighbors. "They don't feel this project is compatible with the library and regional park they have there and I don't think this project needs to go in that location," she said.

But Sparks resident Carol LaFord disagrees. "What people don't realize this is a gambling town and we need the casinos and if they moved here from another state and they don't realize that then they moved to the wrong state," LaFord said.

Harvey Whittemore, developer of the Lazy Eight project, said the project has had one of the most extensive reviews of any project in the history of the City of Sparks.

"The city has spent extraordinary resources, we have, we want to get on with the business of developing our property," Whittemore said.

Opponents may yet challenge the land designation before the Regional Planning Commission. The agency may or may not come to the same conclusion as the Sparks City Council.

The Nevada Supreme Court last week rejected a bid by opponents to erase a controversial settlement that kept the project alive after the Sparks City Council voted 3-2 against the Lazy 8

project in mid-2006.

Developers backed by Harvey Whittemore gained the settlement after filing a \$100 million-plus lawsuit.

John Ascuaga's Nugget and 17 people argue that the settlement let the city and Whittemore's Red Hawk Land Co. circumvent zoning regulations.

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