

Sparks Council approves controversial Lazy 8 casino project

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The Sparks City Council voted two to one Monday to allow the controversial Lazy 8 Casino project to move forward. The council originally denied the project in 2006, but following a lawsuit by Developer Harvey Whittemore's Red Hawk Land Company, the council changed its vote.

Opponents of the Lazy 8 project say the casino doesn't belong along the busy Pyramid Highway, and they say its been proven time and time again.

"This project has been turned down several by several entities," Shirley Bertschinger, an opponent of the project said. "The ad hoc committee chosen to select where a casino should be allowed... that site wasn't selected. It was turned down by the Spanish Springs Advisory Board, by the Sparks Planning Commission not once, but twice, (and) by the Sparks City Council once."

John Ascuaga's Nugget and several citizens filed lawsuits, saying the city council violated open meetings laws and could not legally allow the project to move forward . The Nevada Supreme Court upheld a lower court decision just last week to dismiss those lawsuits.

Whittemore says the Supreme Court decision as well as the city councils latest vote prove, he hasn't cut any corners.

"It closes a lot of open questions that people have been suggesting that somehow we were manipulating the zoning process," Whittemore said. "In fact, our opponents have been manipulating the legal process to slow this down for their benefit."

The project now moves on to the Regional Planning Commission.

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