

HARRISBURG - The state Gaming Control Board lacks the necessary votes to award a resort casino license, so action anticipated for Thursday has been postponed indefinitely.

The result leaves uncertainty about how the remaining resort casino license will be handled during a time of transition in Harrisburg.

The votes of five of the seven gaming

board members are needed to approve an action. All four legislative appointees on the board must form part of this required supermajority.

"They don't have a qualified majority to vote yet," spokesman Doug Harbach said Tuesday, explaining the board's move to delay the widely anticipated vote on the resort casino license.

It's not known what internal splits among board members are preventing a supermajority.

The four applicants for the license are Fernwood Hotel and Resort, Bushkill; Nemaocolin Woodlands Resort in southwest Pennsylvania; Penn National Gaming for a casino featuring an "RV World" west of Harrisburg and Mason-Dixon Resort and Casino in Gettysburg.

House Republican lawmakers who took control of that chamber Tuesday applauded the move.

"It's the right thing to do," said House Majority Leader Mike Turzai, R-28, Pittsburgh.

In recent weeks, Rep. Curt Schroder, R-155, Exton, chairman of the House Gaming Oversight Committee, called for the gaming board to delay the license award until new board members are appointed. To do otherwise, would leave the decision in the hands of lame ducks, said Mr. Schroder.

Gaming board lacks votes on license - Scranton Times-Tribune

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The two-year term of gaming board member Raymond Angeli, president of Lackawanna College, expires Jan. 20. Mr. Angeli is eligible for appointment for a second term by Senate Democratic leader Jay Costa, D-43, Pittsburgh.

The terms of original board members Kenneth McCabe and Jeffrey Coy both expire, but they can't be reappointed because of term limits. Another board member Gary Sojka is an appointee of House GOP leaders.

Three appointees of Gov. Ed Rendell, who leaves office Jan. 18, including Chairman Greg Fajt, complete the board. Gov.-elect Tom Corbett could appoint a new chairman among existing members after he takes office.

Another factor could be at play in the delay.

The gaming board has been waiting for months for a state Supreme Court ruling on a challenge by Philadelphia Park casino to the other resort casino license awarded to Valley Forge Hotel and Convention Center in 2009. The case concerns issues involving adding casinos to a market that some claim is too saturated.

Mr. Rendell said Monday that the court ruling is imminent.

The gaming board has hoped to get guidance from a court ruling prior to awarding the second resort casino license, said Mr. Harbach.

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