

Scott Walker seeks meeting this week on Kenosha casino with 11 tribes

Written by Administrator

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Gov. Scott Walker's administration hopes to schedule a meeting this week between the governor and the leaders of Wisconsin's 11 Indian tribes to discuss the Menominee tribe's desire to open an [off-reservation casino in Kenosha](#).

"I will be sitting down with all those who have raised any concerns as well as the Menominee," Walker said in brief comments to reporters Friday at a charity event at the Pfister Hotel. "My goal is, there is to be a positive outcome. I'd like to see a win-win."

Walker has been hoping that the [11 tribes reach agreement](#) dealing with the Menominee proposal to open an off-reservation casino in Kenosha since the [federal government approved](#) the plan Aug. 23. As governor, Walker has unilateral veto power over the Menominee plan and any other proposals to open an off-reservation casino in the state.

Walker has said the Menominee must meet three criteria — including winning unanimous approval for the project from the state's other 10 tribes — for him to approve the Kenosha deal.

Walker will discuss the criteria with tribal leaders when he meets with them, according to the state Department of Administration, which is setting up the session.

"The goal of this meeting is for the tribes to hear directly from the governor about how the three criteria need to be met before any casino project can move forward," according to a statement from the department.

Finding a win-win is a tough proposition, as the state's three wealthiest tribes have not approved the Menominee plan.

The Oneida have not made a decision, tribal spokesperson Bobbi Webster said Saturday. The Ho-Chunk and Potawatomi have not budged away from their steadfast opposition to the Kenosha casino.

"To me, it's a done issue," said Jon Greendeer, Ho-Chunk president. "And, as far as the Ho-Chunk Nation is concerned, it's a done issue."

Greendeer added that "asking the same question over and over again in different and creative ways seems to be a new art form, but it doesn't change anything."

Potawatomi fight plan

The Potawatomi, who fear a Menominee casino would take business away from its Milwaukee casino, have spent millions of dollars fighting the Menominee tribe's various proposals to open a Kenosha casino.

"The Potawatomi look forward to putting its case to the governor," tribal lobbyist Ken Walsh said.

The Menominee tribe tried to bolster its efforts last week by announcing that [Hard Rock International](#) — a multi-billion-dollar entertainment and casino company owned by the Seminole tribe — has signed on to develop and manage the Kenosha casino complex, if it is allowed to open.

Walker said, however, that Hard Rock's involvement would not influence his decision.

Walker has given the Menominee 60 days from the date of the federal approval to meet his criteria. His other criteria require that there be community support for the casino and that it result in "no new net gaming" in Wisconsin. Administration officials have repeatedly refused to define what the latter requirement entails.

Evan Zeppos, a spokesman for the Kenosha casino project, said in an email: "The focus of the Hard Rock Kenosha Casino team has been on meeting the three criteria set out by Gov. Walker, and we continue that effort."

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Patrick Marley and Bill Glauber of the Journal Sentinel staff contributed to this report.

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