

After allegations, Wynn's Boston casino draws regulatory scrutiny

Written by Administrator

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The Massachusetts Gaming Commission said it is reviewing a license it issued for a resort casino to Wynn Resorts.

"The Commission is now aware of and is taking very seriously the troubling allegations detailed in the Wall Street Journal article," said Elaine Driscoll, director of communications for the Massachusetts Gaming Commission. "The suitability and integrity of our gaming licensees is of the utmost importance, and ensuring that suitability is an active and ongoing process. Consequently, the MGC's Investigations and Enforcement Bureau will conduct a regulatory review of this matter to determine the appropriate next steps."

The MGC awarded a license for the \$2.1 billion Wynn Boston Harbor in 2014. The planned

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27-story, 671-room hotel and casino will be located on a 33-acre site along the Mystic River in Everett, Massachusetts. It will adjoin a convention and expo center. The casino resort is expected to create more than 4,000 construction jobs, as well as 4,000 permanent jobs -- which should generate more than \$170 million in annual payroll.

Wynn beat out Revere by Mohegan Sun for the state gaming license.

The gaming commission maintains broad legal authority to decide who is suitable to hold a state gaming license. Massachusetts law states that character, reputation, and integrity are all considered as part of the licensing process. Licenses must be renewed with the state every three years. The commission did not immediately return messages from CNNMoney.

Wynn, 76, has denied the charges in the Journal story, published on Friday.

"The idea that I ever assaulted any woman is preposterous," he said in a statement that the company sent to CNN. "We find ourselves in a world where people can make allegations, regardless of the truth, and a person is left with the choice of weathering insulting publicity or engaging in multi-year lawsuits. It is deplorable for anyone to find themselves in this situation."

The newspaper detailed allegations from a married manicurist who received a \$7.5 million settlement from the billionaire casino owner after she complained in 2005 that she had been ordered by Wynn to have sex, even though she told him she was married and did not want to have sex.

Representatives for Wynn did not immediately respond to messages from CNNMoney but in a statement released late Friday, the Wynn Resorts board said a special committee, "comprised solely of independent directors," would begin probing the allegations made in a Journal article. The investigative committee will be chaired by Patricia Mulroy, a member of the board's corporate governance and compliance committees, it said.

"The Board is deeply committed to ensuring the safety and well being of all of the Company's employees and to operating with the highest ethical standards," the statement read.

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It said it has a hotline any employee can use anonymously to make a complaint about sexual harassment or misconduct. "Since the inception of the company, not one complaint was made to that hotline regarding Mr. Wynn," said the statement.

Wynn Resorts alleges that the Journal story is a result of an effort by Elaine Wynn, Steve Wynn's ex-wife, to "tarnish the reputation of Mr. Wynn in an attempt to pressure a revised divorce settlement from him." Steve Wynn echoed that claim in the statement he provided to CNN.

The Journal story quoted Elaine Wynn's attorney as saying the claim that she instigated the Journal's article "is just not true."

Wynn is the first CEO and founder of a major publicly traded company to face such charges, although a growing number of men in business have been accused of sexual misconduct in the last year.

On Saturday, Wynn resigned from his position as finance chairman of the Republican National Committee.

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