

Legends casino back on track in Sparks - Reno Gazette-Journal

Written by Administrator

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The Sparks Planning Commission on Thursday plans to hear a request from Olympia Gaming of Las Vegas for a special-use permit to begin the planning process for a hotel-casino at the Legends at Sparks Marina shopping center.

A hotel-casino, dubbed the Legends Bay, was part of the

original plans for the shopping and entertainment project that sits next to Interstate 80 and opened in June 2009. But casino plans have been on hold because of the recession, city officials said.

Olympia Gaming, which operates the Casino Fandango in Carson City, now wants to move forward with the project, although an Olympia executive would not give a starting date for construction if the planning commission approves the project.

Approval on Thursday would be final, unless an objection is filed, Sparks Mayor Geno Martini said. The city council then would vote on the special-use permit, Martini said.

Even though gaming revenues in the Reno-Sparks area have fallen because of the recession and tribal gaming in Northern California, the Legends remains an excellent spot for a new casino, said DeCourcy Graham, chief marketing and development officer for Olympia.

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The hotel would overlook the marina, making it a fresh, new and attractive place to stay, Graham said. It also would become the first new hotel-casino for the Reno-Sparks area since the Silver Legacy opened in 1995.

We have always been a believer in the shopping center and what it draws to that part of the valley, Graham said. We see it as an excellent spot to have a facility like this. We have never wavered on that belief.

The first phase of the project would call for a 201-room hotel and about a 60,000-square-foot casino and restaurant complex.

The total build out would cost \$185 million and include a spa, 23,000-square-foot convention center, private beach, swimming pool, water show, amphitheater, parking garage and an 800-room hotel, according city of Sparks documents.

A casino-hotel at the Legends could work despite of the struggle of the overall Reno-Tahoe gaming market, a Northern Nevada gaming expert said.

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