

Lebanon officials consider turning former dealership into charitable casino

Written by Administrator

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LEBANON, N.H. (WCAX) - A proposal is in the works to turn a former Lebanon car dealership into a casino, with a portion of the earnings going to charity.

Cars are no longer sold at the former Gerrish Honda dealership and the building on the Miracle Mile now sits empty. But a plan is in the works to turn it into a charitable casino.

"You know, everyone has vices," said Marc Garza, who owns a gym right down the road from the proposed casino. "I think it is great. I think it is great for business. I think it will bring a lot of business to the area. It's fantastic for all."

The plan before the Lebanon Planning Board calls for the dealership to be converted into a restaurant and charity gaming center. It would include about 111 electronic games and 90 table games. "Indoor amusements is a use that is allowed," said Tim Corwin with the city's planning department.

The city's Planning Board must first approve the nearly 20,000-square-foot facility, which includes additional parking and sidewalks. Corwin says they are meeting with the developers Wednesday to begin the approval process. "That we have accounted for traffic concerns, that we ensure that it complies with our applicable landscaping requirements, lighting requirements," he said.

Charitable gaming has been legal in New Hampshire for decades. The law specifies that 35% of the cash generated must be given to nonprofits that are chosen by the New Hampshire Lottery Commission.

Lebanon has had a small charitable gaming operation at a different location for several years. "Whether a casino per se should be allowed or not -- or where it should be allowed in the city -- is a legislative matter for the City Council," Corwin said,

Garza is one business owner who says he's on board. "New Hampshire is working towards full

