

3-year extension of casino pact settled

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Casino plans in Beloit remain in place, with the City Council approving an extension of the intergovernmental agreement.

The agreement, which is between the city, Rock County and the Ho-Chunk Nation, was extended for three years. The Beloit Casino Project is still pending before the Department of Interior.

“As so often has happened in the past with casino-related agreements, we need an extension. The Nation has still not received the final approval on their project,” said City Manager Larry Arft.

Arft said the application is complete and is being reviewed by the regional Bureau of Indian Affairs office in Minnesota.

“Sometime in the not so distant future, we’ll get an answer,” he added.

Ho-Chunk President Jon Greendeer said the Ho-Chunk legislature is in full support of the intergovernmental agreement. Greendeer said concerns about the application were very minor and “not even something the Nation has any obligation toward.”

There are still some criteria the application needs to meet in order to align with the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act.

“Given the level of support the city and the county and the Stateline region has given to this, we’re looking for a fluid approval,” he said.

Greendeer told the Daily News in January he was confident their applications would be approved based on a compact the Ho-Chunk Nation has with the state of Wisconsin, which permits the Ho-Chunk to build another casino in the state.

The original IGA was passed by the Beloit City Council in March 2012. The agreement calls for the Ho-Chunk Nation to build a casino, hotel and other facilities on more than 30 acres of land near Colley and Willowbrook roads. In 2013, the Ho-Chunk also agreed to purchase an additional 33 acres from the city for parking and other facilities that would support the casino.