

Project moves another step forward

City Council has unanimously endorsed the development of a casino, performing arts centre and banquet hall for Swift Current.

At their regular meeting on Monday, councilors approved recommendations that will clear the way for the project's proponents, the File Hill Qu'Appelle Tribal Council (FHQTC), to seek approval for the development at the provincial level.

The agreement between the City of Swift Current and the FHQTC, includes a provision that, if the project gains the necessary approvals, the casino, 500 seat banquet hall and 700 seat performing arts centre will be constructed at the same time.

That issue came up repeatedly during the public consultation process held earlier this year.

"Part of our resolution says that those facilities – the casino, the convention centre and the performing arts centre would be built concurrently," said councilor Gord Budd in an interview.

"In other words, all at the same time. The city can rest assured now that as far as city council is concerned, it's all or none."

Another provision in the deal means the City and the FHQTC agree to work together exclusively for the next 12 months to establish the proposed entertainment facilities.

To put it another way, that means the City of Swift Current cannot entertain offers from other native groups that might have an interest in developing a similar project here.

Councilor Tim Keene, who in the run-up to the October Municipal election said he was personally opposed to a casino, voted in favour of the recommendations Monday after citing the results of last month's plebiscite vote.

Fifty-five per cent of ratepayers who cast ballots said "yes" to the development of a casino here.

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