

BREAKING NEWS: Casey Anthony gets four years in jail for lying to police

Raynham Park owner confirms talks with tribe on former dog track's future

Raynham Park owner says nothing definitive on horizon

By **Matt Stout**

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RAYNHAM — Raynham Park owner George Carney confirmed Wednesday he has been in talks with the Mashpee Wampanoag tribe on the future of the former dog track — a move that creates potential for what one state senator termed “big change” in an expanded gaming landscape.

But as talks of legalizing casinos continues on Beacon Hill, Carney said nothing definitive is on the horizon for the park he owns.

The only guarantee Carney said he has asked of anyone — whether it be a partner or a buyer of the park — is they promise to take on his 200-plus employees, plus those laid off more than 18 months ago when the statewide ban on dog racing went into effect.

“I may go off with a partner, I may go it alone. I’m not committed to anybody,” said Carney, adding he’s had two to three discussions with the tribe, who are looking for a casino site.

“I just don’t want them (the employees) sitting and waiting for the other shoe to fall,” he said. “That’s the most important thing to me, my people.”

Carney said he’s hopeful for passage of an expanded gaming bill, which could open the door for a resort-style casino or slots at his 108-acre site on Route 138 in Raynham.

Beacon Hill leaders — House Speaker Robert DeLeo, Senate President Therese Murray and Gov. Deval Patrick — support legalizing resort-style casinos in Massachusetts, but their talks last summer failed to reach an agreement. They have pledged to pass a gambling bill this year.

There will be fresh faces casting votes on such a bill; 25 percent of the Legislature is comprised of newcomers.

Interviews with local freshman lawmakers who took office in January found they all support expanded gambling in the state.

But the newcomers disagreed on how many casino licenses to approve and whether to allow slots at racetracks — the same issues that stalled the bill last summer.

Freshman Rep. Geoff Diehl, R-Whitman, said he prefers one casino. “You start with one casino and see where that leads you,” Diehl said.

A spokesman for state Sen. John Keenan, D-Quincy, who also represents Abington, said he supports two casinos — maybe a third — but no slots.

Rep. Angelo D’Emilia, R-Bridgewater, said he supports casinos as well as slots, but feels the “free market” should decide how many would operate and who runs them.

“We have to be careful when we pick winners here at the Statehouse,” D’Emilia said. “I think it’s our job to create a level playing field for everyone in Massachusetts, not to pick winners.”

Rep. Shaunna O’Connell, R-Taunton, said she’s flexible on the number of casinos and slot parlors in the state.

“I’m not going to sit here and dig in my heels, and say only two casinos, only two slots,” she said. “I am keeping an open mind.”

Rep. Rhonda Nyman, D-Hanover, called a casino gambling bill “long overdue” and said she would support any number lawmakers can agree on. She also supports slots.

“It’s jobs,” Nyman said. “This is a jobs bill.”

But whether the new lawmakers will influence the outcome is up for debate.

Sen. Marc R. Pacheco, D-Taunton, a staunch supporter of expanded gaming, said he doesn’t feel the total number of votes has drastically shifted. The difference will come in the ability of Beacon Hill’s three major leaders to come to an agreement, which remains to be seen, he said.

“I think there’s absolutely no difference this year than any other year,” Pacheco said.

Pacheco said he supports three casinos and slots at the existing parks, but called a potential acquisition of Raynham Park by the Mashpee Wampanoag tribe a “big change.” He cautioned he has no information on any possible talks.

Sen. Thomas Kennedy, D-Brockton, predicted that new members – perhaps feeling the unexpected pressure from lobbyists – would embrace the revenue a gaming bill could provide.

“That hasn’t changed over the years that I’ve been up here,” he said. “I think these new folks may see it in the same light.”

GateHouse News Service reporter Nancy Reardon contributed to this story. Matt Stout may be reached at mstout@enterpriseneews.com.

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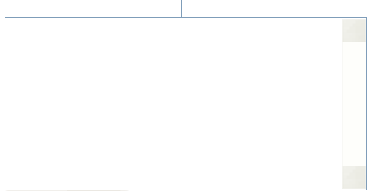
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Leeinmass

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First Middleboro? Then Fall River? Now Raynham? The Indians really want this thing to go in.

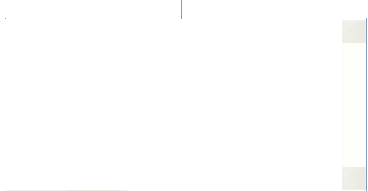
However, if I remember correctly, the agreement with Fall River has an exclusivity clause in it, I would think that would mean that either the Indians cannot go somewhere else for a casino, or it will cost them LOT\$ of money in order to do so.

bobsmithavon

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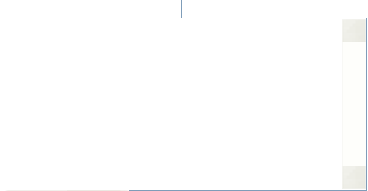
I hope we get gambling in this state. I'll believe it when I see it...

Just listening

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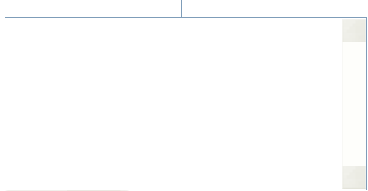
The Wampanoags are proving the term 'Indian Giver' is true and alive once again. I didn't know their ancestral homeland extended from Mashpee to Middleboro, down to Fall River and now up to Raynham. Its amazing how money trumps ancestry for this group. Their leaders are in jail, they wooze every town in the area, and then back out... Why does anyone trust them is beyond me.

Southeaster

4 hours ago

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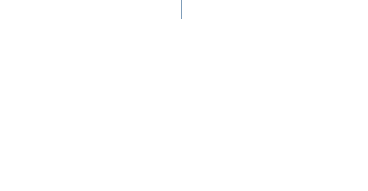
I think theWampanoags were in all of SE Massachusetts.

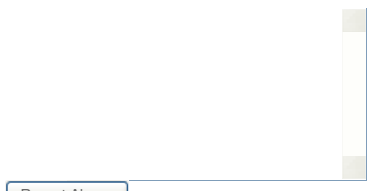
citizen02301

28 minutes ago

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