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KENOSHA NEWS


MOSTLY SUNNY 90 • 66 FORECAST, A6 | **THURSDAY, JULY 21, 2022** | kenoshanews.com | \$2.00

Hard Rock returns

Menominee tribe to partner with international brand in casino effort

DANIEL GAITAN
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The Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin is partnering with Hard Rock International to re-launch the tribe's efforts to open an entertainment center and ca-

sino on the west side of the City of Kenosha.

Menominee would own the casino and its related facilities, and Hard Rock would serve as developer and manager of the project.

"Hard Rock has a long standing partnership with the Menominee Tribe and is proud to support them in their continued efforts to bring a world-class gaming and entertainment resort to the Kenosha community," Hard Rock International COO Jon Lucas said in a statement. The Seminole Tribe of

Florida owns Hard Rock International.

Menominee Chairman Ronald J. Corn, Sr. said that the revived effort is aimed at providing necessary resources for the ongoing and growing needs of the tribe's members. Hard Rock International had previously planned to partner with the Menominee Indian Tribe to develop an \$800 million hotel and casino at the former site of Dairyland Greyhound Park in Kenosha. The plan, however, was rejected by then Gov. Scott Walker

in 2015.

"Much has changed since our 2015 effort, but the needs of our tribe and its members have continued and in some cases grown more acute," Corn said in a statement.

Corn said the new Hard Rock International project would have a "trimmed back" casino to "reflect the increased number of gaming facilities in both Wisconsin and northern Illinois."



COURTESY PHOTO

The Hard Rock brand got its start as a London-based restaurant in 1971 that catered to expatriate Americans

Please see **CASINO**, Page A3



SEAN KRAJACIC, KENOSHA NEWS

WALKING THE LINE

Alec Digirolamo, of Kenosha, practices on his slackline at Simmons Island Park on Tuesday, July 19, 2022. Digirolamo, a 2022 graduate of Carthage College, says he started slacklining a month ago and practices almost daily. A slackline consists of connecting a 1- to 2-inch wide length of webbing between two anchor points.

BRISTOL VILLAGE BOARD

60 acres sold for casino site

Residents speak pro and con about project

DANIEL GAITAN
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BRISTOL — The Village Board and the Community Development Authority voted unanimously to sell nearly 60 acres of land to Hard Rock International for about \$15 million Tuesday evening.

The vote came after a nearly 2-hour meeting at the Municipal Building, 19801 83rd St., that at times became contentious between area residents in support or against the sale to Kenosha Landco LLC, an affiliate of the Davie, Florida-based Hard Rock International.

Kenosha Landco LLC purchased nearly 59.91 acres of land located southwest of Interstate 94 and 60th Street from the village for \$15,213,221.

The land is owned by the village but is located within the City of Kenosha because of a longstanding boundary agreement between the two Kenosha County municipalities. Any approvals for development on the land must come through the City of Kenosha because the land is located in city limits.

Bristol Village Administrator Randall Kerkman said the village has been marketing the land for years and Kenosha Landco LLC made the highest offer for the site located southwest of Uke's

Please see **SITE**, Page A3

POWERS LAKE

8-year-old girl drowns

Multiple departments respond; second water death in a week

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POWERS LAKE — An 8-year-old girl died following a reported drowning that occurred Tuesday night at Powers Lake.

Authorities were called to the scene, 9018 Lake Park Drive, at 5:46 p.m. Arriving at the beach, rescue personnel at-

tempted life-saving measures, according to Lt. Keith Fonk of the Kenosha County Sheriff's Department. According to Sheriff David Beth, authorities on scene said the 8-year-old girl was pulled from the water at Powers Lake.

According to a news release, Kenosha County deputies responded at Lakeside Park on the south end of Powers Lake for a report of a drowning child. Dispatch

Please see **DROWNING**, Page A3



A sign outlines the rules at Powers Lake beach. The 8-year-old girl who drowned was reportedly swimming in the designated area but was not wearing a flotation device.

KENOSHA NEWS FILE PHOTO

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Casino

From A1

“The proposed project will not be as big as it was previously envisioned, but it will still create jobs and be substantial. It will still be a Hard Rock brand and be an incredible addition to the community, the local and regional economy, and the state,” Corn said.

While previous plans called for the Menominee-Hard Rock entertainment center and casino to be built at the site of the former Dairyland dog track, the new site being proposed is just west of Interstate 94 on about 60 acres of land in the city.

The property was previously owned by the Village of Bristol. The Village Board and the Community Development Authority voted unanimously to sell nearly 59.91 acres of land for \$15,213,22 Tuesday evening.



DANIEL GAITAN, KENOSHA NEWS

A crowd gathered at Bristol Municipal Building before the vote that could set the stage for development of a casino for Kenosha.

Corn also said that because this is a different site from the 2015 proposal, developers must develop a revised federal gaming application as well as negotiate intergovernmental agreements.

“We are sincerely grateful for the positive working relationship we have had over the years with the City of Kenosha, Kenosha County, the local business community, and the countless res-

idents who have supported our previous efforts,” Corn said. “We look forward to re-engaging with the community as our talks with the City and County take shape. We have always said it must be good for Kenosha to be good for Menominee, and we are excited about getting the process started.”

Mayor, county executive respond

Mayor John Antaramian said the proposal “has a lot of positives, a lot of financial benefits, a lot of employment benefits, a lot of good things, but there are other issues that we have to make sure we address.”

“The city will now start the process of sitting down and reviewing the old compact and making sure we have a good understanding of that again because that has not been looked at for a long time, and then sit down with the tribe

and start discussions as to what we would be looking at,” he said. “We start the process now. We’ll talk more about where we’re going and we need to make sure the public and the (City) Council will be kept informed.”

Kenosha County Executive Samantha Kerkman expressed similar sentiments.

“I’ve always been supportive of the project. But now in this role, I want to make sure the county is also protected. So, we’ll review the agreements that have been signed previously, and work to resolve any concerns that may arise going forward,” Kerkman said in a statement.

“The county doesn’t have the only say in approving this project, but what I will do is continue to work to make sure it is the best opportunity for all of Kenosha County.”

Gov. Tony Evers could not be reached for comment.

Site

From A1

Harley-Davidson (on the opposite side of the interstate) and north-west of Cracker Barrel.

“I think it’s a great thing for the taxpayers if the sale goes through for \$15.3 million,” Village Trustee John McCabe told the Kenosha News after the vote. “We could do a lot of good with that.”

Dozens of village residents turned out to express their concerns or hopes about the sale and to ask questions of village officials.

Resident Diana Brenner spoke against the sale during the public comment portion of the meeting. She feared the sale would pave the way for the casino.

“Do we need money? Yes. But does it come as a price tag of morals or values? Because this is going to bring more crime in,” Brenner

said, adding she wants to keep the areas surrounding the village “family oriented.”

However, resident Todd Becker said he is “greatly in favor of a casino.”

“I think of all the direct jobs,” he said. “I also think of all the associated tax revenue that will come in from the casino, restaurant and hotels—anything that’s going to be built with it or built around it. Fifteen million dollars plus all that revenue, my goodness, that can only be a good thing for Bristol and the residents in Kenosha County as a whole.”

Becker said anyone opposed to a casino shouldn’t visit one.

“That’s your prerogative, don’t go,” he said. “But don’t interfere with my personal choices and freedoms. Give me my choice, you can have yours.”

Resident Bob LeFebvre said he’s in favor of the board selling the

property.

“I see this as two elements,” he said. “First of all, we own a piece of property that is not in the village but resides in the City of Kenosha. I know there’s a lot of rumors around that it will eventually be a casino, and that may well be, but that matter lies with the City of Kenosha, the County of Kenosha and the State of Wisconsin. That is not a matter before the (Village) Board. Our matter is simply do we sell this land that we’ve had in our inventory for a long period of time.”

Lorri Pickens, of Appleton-based Citizens Against Expanded Gambling, also attended the meeting. Perkins fought against the sale of land to Kenosha Landco LLC.

“I oppose any sort of government-sanctioned gambling,” she told the Kenosha News.

“When you think about the

role of government, its primary job is to protect its citizens. How does the government win in this scenario? The citizens lose. Do you honestly think that everyone walks away from a casino a winner? Very few people (do). The odds are stacked very much against them. The entire industry’s business model is based on those who play to extinction. They don’t make money off of the casual gambler who goes in and spends \$50 and leaves.”

Still, most in attendance spoke against the sale.

When asked by the Kenosha News if Tuesday’s attendees represented the will of the village residents, Village President Mike Farrell said “I don’t know the answer to that.”

Hard Rock International had previously planned to partner with the Menominee Indian Tribe to develop an \$800 million hotel

and casino at the former site of Dairyland Greyhound Park in Kenosha.

A referendum on the matter was approved by residents and supported by locally elected officials. The plan, however, was rejected by then Gov. Scott Walker in 2015 during his presidential campaign and after objections from the Forest County Potawatomi, operators of a casino in Milwaukee.

Hard Rock International is owned by the Seminole tribe and operates casinos across the country. On Wednesday morning Hard Rock International formally announced plans to develop an entertainment center and casino with the Menominee tribe.

Hard Rock International recently opened a casino and entertainment complex in north-west Indiana. Chicago officials have also given the greenlight to a major casino in that city.

Drowning

From A1

advised that law enforcement officers from Walworth County had originally been called prior to Kenosha County deputies and were already on the scene performing CPR on the child.

Initial reports indicated that she had been swimming in Powers Lake in a roped-off swim area. The girl was found unresponsive in the water by another swimmer near the end of a pier at the beach, according to the release.

The child was not wearing a flotation device. Richmond, Ill. - rescue personnel arrived a short time later, took over life-saving measures and transported the child to a hospital in Burlington. Authorities said the child died at the hospital. The girl’s name is being withheld out of respect for the family, authorities said, authorities said. The incident remains under investigation.

Families in need of assistance in dealing with the tragedy are encouraged to contact the Mental Health Resource Center at 262-764-8555. The sheriff’s department asks that anyone with information regarding

the incident to contact the Kenosha County Sheriff’s Department Detective Bureau at (262) 605-5102.

The latest reported drowning is the second Kenosha County has experienced in a week.

On July 12, rescue person-

nel pulled a 5-year-old boy from Lake Michigan after he went missing near the mouth of the Pike River at Pennoyer Park in Kenosha. The boy, whose identity has not yet been disclosed, was reported missing at 6:17 p.m. that day, minutes

after a “near drowning” had been reported of an older child who was with him, according to officials with the Kenosha Fire Department.

He was found about 45 minutes later with the help of a beachgoer who volun-

teered the use of his drone

to assist in finding the boy. The boy was located submerged in the water 50 feet from the shoreline. Emergency medical personnel performed “cold water resuscitative measures” prior

to transporting him to a local hospital; however, he died a day later.

The investigation into the boy’s death continues with the police department and no additional details have been released.

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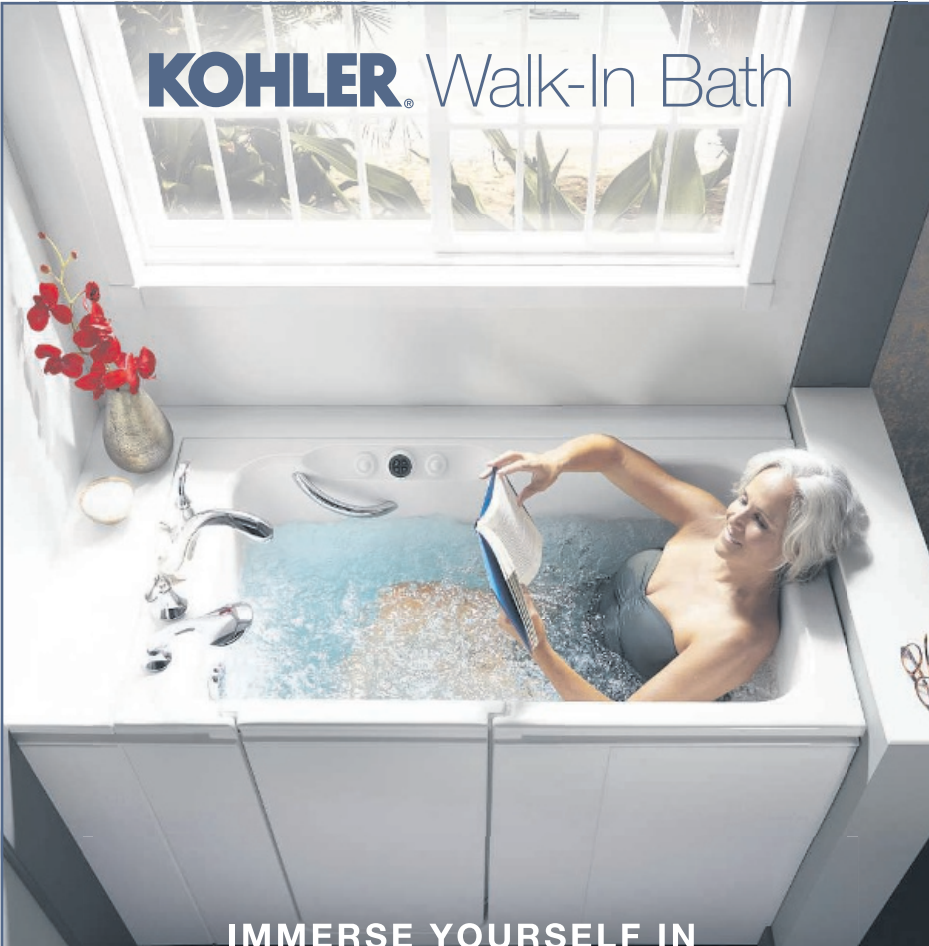
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