



State's high court won't block construction of Foxwoods casino

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The state Supreme Court yesterday shot down City Council's last-ditch effort to stall construction of a controversial casino proposed for the Delaware River waterfront in South Philly.

The court refused to reconsider its April 2 ruling that ordered the city to approve zoning changes needed for Foxwoods to be built. That ruling also forced the city to turn over control of gas and water rights-of-way under Reed Street, on the site's northern border, and Dickinson Street, which once ran across the middle of the site.

"We're pleased the Supreme Court ruled as they did and we're anxious to move this process forward," Foxwoods spokeswoman Maureen Garrity said yesterday. "We've already begun the process of applying for permits with the city and we're finalizing our plans to release bid packages for construction materials, which will launch the start of millions of dollars generated by Foxwoods in wages and revenues."

Councilman Frank DiCicco yesterday reiterated the notion he has expressed after several Supreme Court rulings in favor of local casinos: He's disappointed but not surprised. Council will consider what if any options it has in the case on Monday.

"It's the same old song and dance," DiCicco said of the court's ruling.

Attorneys for City Council on April 16 told the court its ruling "overlooked" a conflict with the 2004 state law that legalized casinos. That law prohibited the taking of city-owned property for a casino project.

Mayor Nutter's administration on April 30 offered support for Council's request for another chance to argue its case, telling the court it couldn't "cede control and authority and decision-making" to Foxwoods for property the casino doesn't own.

In its April 2 ruling, the court agreed with Foxwoods that Council had improperly stalled the proposed casino zoning.