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Firm hired in casino license case

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City Council hired a local law firm yesterday to appeal the Pennsylvania Gaming Board's decision to award casino licenses to two operators along the Delaware River.

The appeal has been expected for some time, but Councilman Frank DiCicco - who convinced Council to authorize spending \$100,000 on the appeal - has had trouble finding a local law firm that was not connected to casino interests.

A tentative deal with one firm fell through two weeks ago when the firm was hired by SugarHouse Casino, one of the two casinos whose licensing DiCicco wants to appeal.

Yesterday, he settled on **Mitts Milavec** L.L.C., a small Philadelphia firm that specializes in commercial litigation and bankruptcy. In a statement, DiCicco praised the firm's appellate court experience.

"Their background, expertise and available resources make them an attractive firm and I have no doubt they'll represent Council and my constituents in an exemplary manner," DiCicco said in the statement. The councilman did not return a call to his office for further comment.

The deadline to file the appeal is March 5. Casino Free Philadelphia, an anti-casino organization, has vowed to challenge the gaming board's decision in court.

In December, the gaming board awarded the Philadelphia licenses to two casinos that faced considerable opposition from community groups: SugarHouse Casino on North Delaware Avenue, and the Foxwoods Casino in South Philadelphia. Both casinos are in DiCicco's district.

Legal experts have said any challenge to the board's decision will face long odds in the courts.

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