

Treasure Island tribe buys Washington County land — but not for a casino – Twin Cities

Written by Administrator
Friday, 19 February 2016 23:37 -

The owners of Treasure Island Resort & Casino have bought 112 acres of farmland at a freeway interchange near Lake Elmo — raising speculation about what they plan to build.

The 870-member band of Mdewakanton Sioux paid \$4.4 million for the land, tribal council President Shelley Buck said. It is the tribe's first purchase of real estate in the metro Twin Cities.

The L-shaped parcel is northeast of Interstate 94 and Manning Avenue in West Lakeland Township, bordering Lake Elmo and Woodbury.

Buck said the tribe was not planning to build a casino but had bought the land only as an investment.

"I can't speculate what is going to go there," Buck said. "Our plan is not to put a casino there. The state would not allow us to put one there."

According to the Washington County assessor's office, a group called Four Sisters LLC bought the land in June 2015. Buck confirmed Friday that Four Sisters is an investment company owned by the tribe.

Buck said the purchase price — \$40,000 an acre — is typical of what nearby land is selling for.

Buck also denied recent rumors the tribe was buying Tartan Park, the 426-acre golf course owned by the 3M Co. The company closed the course in December and has put it up for sale.

"We are not buying Tartan Park," Buck said.

Treasure Island tribe buys Washington County land — but not for a casino – Twin Cities

Written by Administrator
Friday, 19 February 2016 23:37 -

Buck said that the tribe is buying the West Lakeland Township property, in part, because the tribe's Red Wing reservation land is next to the Prairie Island Nuclear Power Plant.

The tribe objects to the practice of storing radioactive fuel rods by the plant.

"We currently live 600 yards" from the storage site, she said. "We want to invest in land in a place that is safer."

The tribe owns Treasure Island and Mount Frontenac Golf Course, both in Red Wing. Tribal businesses employ about 1,700 people.

With the land purchase, Buck said, the tribe is diversifying its investments.

"We are investing in our future," she said.

It is possible — eventually — for Indian tribes to build casinos on land away from their reservations, according to Sarah Crawford, Intergovernmental Affairs Liaison with the federal National Indian Gaming Commission.

But it isn't easy, she said Friday. A tribe must buy land, then have it legally designated as a certain type of trust. This can be done by Congress, the courts or the Interior Department. The process can take years, Crawford said.

The tribe then may operate a lower-level Class 2 gaming operation on the land, with games such as pull-tabs and bingo.

For a full-fledged casino with blackjack and slot machines, a Class 3 designation is needed. That requires approval by the state — and more delays.

Treasure Island tribe buys Washington County land — but not for a casino – Twin Cities

Written by Administrator

Friday, 19 February 2016 23:37 -

Buck said that isn't likely to happen on the 112-acre parcel because of opposition from local and state governments. She cited as an example the attempt by private developers to build a casino in Block E in downtown Minneapolis. The proposal was rejected in 2011.

"The state did not allow that to go through," Buck said.

Read more http://news.google.com/news/url?sa=t&fd=R&ct2=us&usg=AFQjCN GnlZdYp_uXZC8lQGcl-cwKs7Rxjw&clid=c3a7d30bb8a4878e06b80cf16b898331&ei=0_LHVtDuCtuphQGalpOYAQ&url=http://www.twincities.com/2016/02/19/treasure-island-tribe-buys-land-but-not-for-a-casino/