

Resort brings up land disposal woes

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PALMER — A fact-finding session on the subject of Victor Trygstad's proposed Homestead Resort has revealed what could be larger problems in Mat-Su Borough's land disposal program, according to District 1 Assemblyman Larry DeVilbiss.

DeVilbiss said he wants the borough's land program reviewed extensively at an assembly work session already scheduled on Saturday, Feb. 22, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Trygstad's application to purchase or lease 320 acres of borough land to develop the Homestead Resort in the Butte was shot down by the Planning Commission on Feb. 3. Missed deadlines for information in connection with the proposal comprised the main objection when the planning commissioners voted it down.

On Tuesday afternoon, DeVilbiss chaired a more than two-hour meeting which reviewed the entire process involving the resort.

Trygstad would like the assembly to review the application, but that does not appear to be in the cards.

"I'm not trying to make a case for or against Mr. Trygstad's proposal. I'm just concerned about procedures in our land

disposal program," DeVilbiss said.

The Butte Community Council in November voted 25-0 in opposition to Trygstad's resort plan.

But what is bothering DeVilbiss is Trygstad's claim that he was treated unfairly. Originally, DeVilbiss said, Trygstad's application included a site plan, marked "confidential." He was informed the borough couldn't guarantee the drawing's confidentiality, and he then withdrew the plan.

On numerous occasions, since November, Trygstad has been requested by groups and agencies — including the planning commission — to show a concept plan.

On the night his project was rejected by the commission, Trygstad explained after the meeting that his concept plan was not ready in time to be submitted on the final deadline of Jan. 29.

He did have an extensive clear-sheet drawing of roads and buildings, overlaid on an aerial photograph, and showed it to the press. He had those materials with him at the final planning commission session on his application, but the public hearing phases had ended at the previous meeting, and Trygstad was not allowed to speak or do a presentation.

Another matter troubling DeVilbiss, he said after the meeting, is an apparent discrepancy in accounts by Mat-Su Borough Manager Don Moore of what happened to a letter from Moore to Trygstad stating the borough would prefer a lease with an option to purchase on the parcel, rather than an outright sale. Performance

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milestones and deadlines were to be built into the document.

Trygstad later agreed to the terms, but apparently first learned of the borough's switch to a lease-plan in a newspaper story. Moore said he wrote Trygstad a letter informing him of the switch, but the letter never got mailed because Moore's secretary was away.

DeVilbiss said the story became hard to swallow when Moore said he was going to hand-deliver the letter to Trygstad at an upcoming meeting.

"Mr. Trygstad said he didn't know of any such meeting," DeVilbiss reported Tuesday night.

But Moore on Wednesday stuck by his account of the dis-

position of the letter.

Trygstad indicated he would like to see the proposal for the land acquisition come to the borough assembly for action, even though it was rejected by the planning commission. While legal, that would be an almost unprecedented procedure, DeVilbiss said.

The matter would have to be sponsored by an assembly member, at any rate, and DeVilbiss said he has no plans at present to do that. "It's the procedures in general I'm concerned about," DeVilbiss said.

Those attending Tuesday's fact-finding session included DeVilbiss, Trygstad and Moore, Planning Director John Duffy and District 7 Assemblyman Doyle Holmes.



Larry DeVilbiss

CLARIFICATION

A Feb. 12 story about city council discussion of the firing of Police Chief Irl Stambaugh said Wasilla Mayor Sarah Palin fired and rehired Library Director Mary Ellen Emmons Jan. 31. Palin says Emmons was never fired. Palin contends she presented Emmons with a letter referring to an intent to terminate her employment. Emmons was told Jan. 31 that Palin had decided to keep her as head of the city's library.