

Brighton tenants fight Trop expansion

■ A lawsuit filed by the Brighton Towers Condominium Association last week claims the Atlantic City Zoning Board overstepped its authority in approving variances for Tropicana's expansion.

By JEREMY OLSHAN
Staff Writer, (609) 272-7275

ATLANTIC CITY — Tropicana Casino and Resort plans to break ground on its \$225 million expansion later this year. But there may be more gavels than shovels in the project's immediate future.

Residents of neighboring Brighton Towers condominiums are suing the casino and the city to stop construction of the 500-room addition, which will include restaurants, shops, a theater and parking garage.

The lawsuit, filed by the Brighton Towers Condominium Association last week, claims the city's Zoning Board abused its discretion and overstepped its authority in approving the variances for the expansion. Both the board and the casino are named as defendants.

The noise and traffic created by the expansion will ruin the quality of life in the area, the 172-member condo association told the city's Zoning Board in May, during 12 hours of discussion over three days. The board, however, unanimously approved the plan.

The Planning Board, not the Zoning Board, should have heard Tropicana's application, said Glenn Zeitz, the condo association's attorney. While the expansion will not include additional slot machines or table games, with a blockwide bridge over Pacific Avenue, the casino will expand seamlessly into an area that was not zoned to be a casino.

Zeitz also argues that the Tropicana failed to prove that the expansion would not have a substantial impact on public health and safety.

"This seems a little ridiculous," said Kenneth Platt, the city's director of planning and development. "Yes, the addition and the casino will be seamless, but the whole world is seamless."

As for public health and safety, Platt said, studies were conducted to determine the impact on sunlight, shadows and traffic.

Tropicana's attorney, Mark Sandson, would not comment on the lawsuit.

Despite their complaints about noise and traffic, some members of the Zoning Board have speculated that the condo association is more interested

☐ See Brighton, Page A4