

# County reviews secrecy of talks in Vegas

District Attorney's Office looks into Garden Grove's casino dealings.

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**GARDEN GROVE** • The Orange County District Attorney's Office has launched an investigation into whether city officials violated state laws when they held secret talks on building a casino near Disneyland.

Senior Deputy District Attorney Tom Crowfoot confirmed the investigation this week.

The investigation potentially will examine the actions of City Council members who met secretly in Las Vegas with resort mogul Steve Wynn, held closed council meetings on the project and signed confidentiality agreements to keep the deal secret.

City leaders scrapped plans for a Las Vegas-style resort and casino last month.

The secret talks stretch as far back as April 2003, when city officials began discussions for an American Indian cultural center on Harbor Boulevard.

Last fall, the talks expanded to include a San Diego-based tribe, the Mesa Verde Band of Mission Indians, and by March brought in Wynn, who developed Vegas hotels such as the Mirage and Bellagio.

In May, four council members met separately, within minutes of each other, with Wynn in Las Vegas.

The next month, council members met in closed session to discuss the deal.

At their June 8 closed-session meeting, three council members - Van Tran, Mark Rosen and Bill Dalton - signed an agreement to keep the discussions confidential.

"We welcome an investigation," Tran said Wednesday, adding that he believes the complaint letter was politically motivated. "We are sure no laws were violated."

Councilman Mark Leyes, who along with Mayor Bruce Broadwater did not sign the agreement, said he believes the talks "violated the spirit of the law."

Santana reported from Santa Ana and Vu from Garden Grove.