The city of Del Mar announced that the Winston School's lease, which runs through 2063, will remain unchanged following a period of negotiations between both sides.

The Winston School owns the buildings on its property, but the city owns the land and serves as landlord.

In 2018, the Winston School asked for a rent reduction from $197,245 per year to $1 and increasing the term from 55 to 99 years, among other asks, according to the city's news release. The City and Winston engaged in discussions, off and on, to address these requests. The City expressed agreement to some Winston requests and offered suggestions or counterproposals to others.
Negotiations ended after the Winston School received an appraisal, but wouldn’t share it with the city, according to a 10-page memo written by Council members Dwight Worden and Sherryl Parks.

“The reasonable inference is that the appraisal did not support Winston’s position that its rent was too high,” they stated in the memo.

The city announced on June 2 that the negotiation period was concluded and that Winston’s new deadline for submitting a complete redevelopment application to the city is October 2, 2020, according to the city’s news release. The new date is based on the four-month extension from the point that either side decided to end discussions to amend the lease.

The Winston School said in a statement that school officials were unaware that the city was going to end lease negotiations.

“This statement was especially surprising since we formally made a request to the city in writing on March 13, ‘that all decisions, meetings, discussions, planning and negotiations that pertain to the redevelopment, planning and revised lease terms are placed on hold for a minimum of 30 days,’” the school’s statement read in part, adding that school officials needed to focus on complying with public health guidelines put in place because of COVID-19.

The school’s plans include a remodel of its existing buildings and classrooms that can accommodate in-person and remote learning.

“We look forward to sharing our vision with the Del Mar community, who have been so supportive of the school over the past thirty years,” the school’s statement said.

--Report by Luke Harold
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