

## **THE STATE HORSE RACING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

**April 28, 2020**

*A public business meeting of The State Horse Racing Commission was held at the following date, place and time: Via Telephonic Conference Call on Tuesday, April 28, 2020 at 1:00 P.M.*

*Commissioners in attendance: Chairman Russell C. Redding, Darryl Breniser, Salvatore DeBunda, Dr. John Egloff, Thomas Ellis, Russell Jones, C. Edward Rogers, Michele Ruddy and Dr. Corinne Sweeney were present via telephonic conference call. Commissioner Robert Lark was not present. Also present were Commission Counsel Jorge Augusto and Marija Kuren.*

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

A quorum of the Commission being present, Chairman Redding called the meeting to order. Chairman Redding noted that the meeting was properly advertised in accordance with the Sunshine Law. The Commission conducted an executive session to engage in a quasi-judicial deliberation to be adjudicated at the public meeting and engaged in attorney client privilege communication.

Chairmen Redding welcomed everyone.

### **PUBLIC MEETING**

**1.) MINUTES OF THE February 25, 2020 MEETING** as emailed to the Commissioners for their review in advance of the meeting.

Motion by: Commissioner DeBunda  
Second by: Commissioner Rogers (Correction of the date for February meeting minutes.  
Decision: Passed by unanimous vote.

### **PRESENTATIONS**

**2.) RACING FUND February and March FINANCIAL REPORT** – presented by Tracee Gotwalt.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS**

**3.) None**

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **4.) Equine Racing Group-March/April meeting cancelled-no report.**

#### **RACING RESUMPTION – RECOVERY RESPONSE TO PUBLIC QUESTIONS.**

- Thoroughbred Director Chuckas advised the Commission that the staff have been working on developing PPE protocols and procedures to be implemented upon the return of racing. The major focus has been on areas of Commission control, Stewards/Judges stand; Commission office and the Test Barn. In addition, staff has been reviewing best practices for the Harrisburg office.

The Bureau Directors, in conjunction with legal counsel, have been reviewing applicable regulations to determine their impact on racing and the need to waive certain regulations to facilitate the resumption of racing. The Commission's position is to support the immediate return of racing under the proper guidelines provided by the Governor and the Secretary of Health.

Director Chuckas also advised the Commission that a meeting was held with the racetrack operators, horsemen and Commission representatives. The meeting was productive with the group discussing the Governor's and Health Secretary's guidance and its impact on racing and other Covid-19 issues relevant to the resumption of racing. The group concurred that ultimate success was contingent on a collaborative effort and cooperation between all the participants. The goal is to develop a "Universal" Racing Plan that identifies Best Practices which are Pennsylvania-centric.

- Commissioner Ellis raised the issue of drafting a letter to the Governor requesting consideration of opening the tracks early with no spectators under the appropriate guidelines. The Commission directed the staff to draft the letter, have the Commission review and submit to the Governor's office by May 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Thoroughbred Director Chuckas advised the Commission that the Thoroughbred Breeders Association submitted a proposal to set up a fund (\$100,000) to allocate and distribute to Breeders who have been negatively impacted by Covid-19. The Commission is supportive of the breeders and would like to help. The proposal has merit but there are outstanding procedural questions. Commissioner Jones spoke on the matter and stated that the Commissioner was favorably inclined, it was concerned about the details of the proposal. He believed further analysis was warranted prior to Commission approval. Bureau Director Chuckas will schedule a call with Mr. Sanfratello and Commissioner Jones to attempt to resolve outstanding issues.
- Commissioner Ellis requested an update on the state's budget process. Bureau Director Chuckas responded that there was no definitive information at this point. The situation is very fluid but will circulate information to the Commission upon receipt. Chairman Redding stated no final decision has been reached and will keep the Commission posted.
- Bureau Director Salerno reported that the Commission received three written questions from a reporter. The questions were submitted to the PDA's Press Office

for a response. There were no additional written questions received prior to the meeting.

## **INDUSTRY REPORTS.**

**5.) General Reports.** Mr. Russell Williams reported on action taken by Hanover Shoe Farm for the benefit of the staff. Hanover Shoe increased the number of sick days; covered the co-pays and permitted paid staff leave for individuals to remain home with their children. Mr. Williams stated that Hanover Shoe Farm is invested in the long term and will plan to sell 220 yearlings in Harrisburg in 2022.

Commissioner Breniser requested Mr. Williams to provide an overview of Hanover's latest initiative. Hanover has issued a \$250,000 challenge grant. The purpose is to provide funding for high level investigative services to supplement the work of the Pennsylvania Commission. Bureau Director Salerno advised that he has had preliminary meeting with Mr. Williams on this matter. The plan is to have future meetings. The program is in the draft stage and not ready for publication. Commissioner Rogers recommended the Thoroughbred industry should be included in on-going discussions.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chairman Redding announced the next meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 26, 2020. The Meeting will be held at the Dept. of Agriculture Building, ROOM 309, 2301 North Cameron St. Harrisburg, PA 17110.

- Executive Session      11:00 A.M.
- Regular Session        1:00 P.M.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:46 P.M.

## **NOTES**

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas F. Chuckas Jr.  
Bureau Director  
Bureau of Thoroughbred Horse Racing

Anthony Salerno  
Bureau Director  
Bureau of Standardbred Racing