

Racing Committee Minutes
September 14, 2009 – 4:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Veitch; Supervisors Hargrave, Hunter, Southworth, Wood, and Yepsen; Spencer Hellwig, Mgmt. Analyst; Ed Lewi, Ed Lewi Associates; Charlie Wheeler, Facilities Manager, Saratoga Race Course; Press.

Chairman Veitch called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance.

On a motion made by Ms. Yepsen, seconded by Mr. Hunter the minutes of the July 28, 2009 meeting were approved unanimously.

Mr. Lewi gave a brief summary of the Saratoga Race Meet as follows:

This year there were more promotions than ever before.

- The first promotion was Hat's Off that has always been successful and draws approximately 17,000 – 20,000 people.
- Coupon book for downtown merchants was given to all that were admitted to the track.
- Attractions at the track were down this year by approximately 1%, which was very good compared to other tracks around the country.

Mr. Lewi said when the county gave money to the Chamber of Commerce for advertising it was a tremendous move. Anyone who was involved received more for the money, which included "I Love NY", money.

Mr. Lewi said promotions included areas such as Baltimore, Boston, Philadelphia, Burlington, and Plattsburgh.

The following events took place during the 2009 Summer Meet:

- **St. Patrick's Day Event – 7,000 people came through the entry with something green**
- **Travers Festival – consisting of 50 different organizations**
- **College Promotion – every college student that showed his or her ID was given a T-shirt**
- **Labor Day Barbecue - \$20 fee with a sellout by mid July**
- **Military Day – Veterans are given free entry with ID**
- **Community Day – approximately 20,000 attendees**

Mr. Wheeler said Saratoga racetrack received lengthy coverage on ESPN for the Travers Race free of charge. Attendance was down 1.5%, better than the expected 5%. The average betting increased by 3.1% and the total business interest increased by 4.8%.

Mr. Wheeler said the Whitney race drew 39,000 people and was the peak day for the season. Tipton Development and Expansion last year walked through the track with Mr. Hayward and the marketing people discussing improvements to the property. They had a vision of developing a horse experience for people from all over the world to see racing and go to the auction sales. Results were a 20% increase in the sale of horses from the previous years.

Mr. Wheeler said Turnberry Consulting was retained a year ago. They looked at all three tracks and recommended that the first money spent by NYRA be put in Saratoga. The number used in press releases is \$100 million, he said.

Mr. Wheeler said architectural history was researched with drawings going back to 1910 to 1920. Photo images were taken and a history was created on how the site was developed. This summer a presentation was made by Paul Roberts, of Turnberry Consulting at the Saratoga Library and was put on by the Historic Preservation Society.

Two firms were retained and recommended by Turnberry Consulting. One firm, Blackburn, has experience in the equine industry with regard to barns and David Swartz, who has experience in tracks and parks. Most of the improvements that will first take place will be in the backstretch to improve the housing and change the traffic flow. The time frame for the completion of the improvements is approximately 18 months.

Mr. Wheeler said on College Day at the track there were nine scholarships given out.

Ms. Yepsen asked for more information about "Proud to be an American Day". Mr. Lewi said it was a program that was started approximately 15 years ago to salute veterans and active military people. At that time there were many large displays that were funded through money from the military organizations. Today the displays are much smaller due to lack of funding. The races for the day were named after each one of the armed services. He said he would like to see the program bigger and much more sophisticated in the future.

Mr. Lewi said there were over eight hundred college students attending the College Day event and seven administrators in attendance. There are already several colleges that have committed to match the scholarships. Mr. Lewi said it is projected that the program will grow to 4,000 – 5,000 in two years.

Mr. Veitch said it is anticipated that the NYRA Local Advisory Board should be meeting in the next few weeks, and he will bring a report to the committee at that point.

On a motion made by Mr. Wood, seconded by Ms. Yepsen the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Sansom