

Racing Committee Minutes
November 7, 2013 – 3:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Veitch; Supervisors Barrett, A. Johnson, Richardson, Southworth, Yepsen, and Grattidge; Ryan Moore, Mgmt. Analyst; Peter Martin, County Clerk.

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

On a motion made by Ms. Yepsen, seconded by Mrs. Southworth the minutes of the September 5, 2013 meeting were approved unanimously.

Mr. Veitch said it was noted that Proposition 1 was defeated in Saratoga County, but did pass statewide. He said a site is being looked at in the capital region area, potentially in Saratoga County or Saratoga Springs.

Mr. Veitch suggested that before a resolution is presented that the committee take some time to speak to business leaders and county residents because there is some concern from the Saratoga Springs perspective, what a full scale casino could mean for the city as well as the impact on the Racino.

Mr. Johnson said at some point, not only from the City of Saratoga Springs, but from the County, there needs to be support for Casino gambling from a Government standpoint, and not in Rensselaer or Albany County.

Mr. Richardson said when the committee met with the Governor's office the City of Saratoga Springs supported casino gambling. Mr. Veitch said some of the business people have concerns that were not expressed at that time.

Ms. Yepsen said the committee was meeting with the Governor's office way before the June bill was passed. Until the statute was written and every word was read, no one understood how it was going to impact anybody, including the City Center and SPAC.

Mrs. Southworth said it would be great for jobs, but how do you justify going forward when the majority of the people said they didn't want it in their community.

Ms. Yepsen said the driver is the commercial operators. They are the ones putting in the proposal. The RFP will be submitted by the commercial operators and they don't want an area where they are not going to be successful. She said what the people didn't understand was that November 5th was the only chance they had to vote on this. It is not coming back to the county board for a local vote. It is going to be between what RFP's come in and the Governor's Site Panel.

Mr. Johnson said the vote was for statewide Casino gambling. He said if there is already Casino gambling approved by the State and you took a vote as to whether you wanted it in Saratoga County as opposed to some of the other counties in the capital region, most people would probably give an overwhelming yes, that they would rather see it in Saratoga County where the county could receive the benefits rather than another county.

Mrs. Souhworth said she thought that the people voted as to whether they wanted it in their county and they said they didn't.

Mr. Veitch suggested that the right course of action is to not pass anything right now and to have discussions on a larger level with the City Council of Saratoga Springs, downtown business people, and any businesses in the county that have questions.

Ms. Yepsen said Saratoga Business is planning a \$30 million expansion. As officials of Saratoga Springs we need to work with them to make it as friendly a transition as possible for everyone.

Mr. Grattidge said the committee should wait and see what the RFP is requiring. The proposals have to be formed and part of the criteria is what they are looking for.

Mr. Moore said in the process of responding to the RFP the companies will bring in the downtown business groups, the City of Saratoga Springs and the County and make sure that people are comfortable with it. At that time, judging from that process, the county can then figure out what they want to do.

Mr. Grattidge said the City of Saratoga Springs will have much more control if a license is granted, than if they just build a \$30 million addition. They will have much more say if they have to come before a licensing agency than if it is just status quo. If a second site goes in Albany county or Rensselaer County that will hurt what we have built on in Saratoga Springs for the harness business, and the agricultural businesses that we have. If we become the site, all the contractual issues stay intact, i.e., harness purses and cuts, and the City of Saratoga Springs would continue to receive the revenues that they get off that. If that model changes, and a second site is in Albany and business drops off in Saratoga that would dramatically affect the harness business. Mr. Grattidge said the way the Governor has set this up as being a destination location, there isn't anyone who could argue that Saratoga Springs and Saratoga County is a destination location within the eight counties.

On a motion made by Mr. Richardson, seconded by Mr. Veitch the meeting was adjourned unanimously.

**Respectfully,
Chris Sansom**