

RACING COMMITTEE MINUTES
AMENDED
SEPTEMBER 10, 2007 – 2:30 P.M.

Present: Chairman Wood; Supervisors Peck and Yepsen; David Wickerham, County Administrator; Press.

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

On a motion made by Mr. Peck, seconded by Ms. Yepsen the minutes of the July 2, 2007 meeting were approved unanimously.

Mr. Wood distributed copies of the comments on the Memorandum of Understanding between Governor Spitzer and NYRA for the NY Racing Senate Committee on Racing, Gaming and Wagering to all committee members for their review.

Mr. Wood said there will be a meeting of the NY Racing Senate Committee on Wednesday, September 12th at 11:00 a.m. in hearing room A, of the Legislative Office Building in Albany.

The following comments were added to the Memorandum of Understanding as follows:

1. The Governor's MOU calls for the racing schedule at Saratoga to remain "substantially similar" to the current racing schedule. The lack of specificity is unsettling to us. Current legislation provides us with a minimum of 24 racing dates and NYRA currently schedules 36 days of exclusive racing. We ask you to amend the racing law to provide us with a minimum of 24 exclusive dates and a maximum of 36 exclusive dates. **We further urge all efforts are made to ensure there is no break in New York Racing for the foreseeable future.**
2. Since the State will assert ownership of the tracks, we have to assume that they will assert their right to operate without regard to local zoning and planning ordinances. While the MOU does require that "the historic and unique character of the Saratoga Race Course shall be preserved", there is no suggestion as to how that will be accomplished. The City of Saratoga already has a Historic review Commission as well as respected

planning and zoning boards. It would seem appropriate that the Racing law be amended to require the franchise holder to submit any renovation proposals to the same process required of all other **persons and businesses who deal with the City and County.**

3. **The MOU provides that about 14.5% of the additional VLT revenue will be provided to the racing community for purses, capital improvements and general racing operations Depending on what percentage of the revenue is being retained by the State that may or may not be the correct percentage. We ask you to review the distribution of the profits and ensure that the racing industry be given the majority of VLT funding not retained for State purposes.**
4. Finally, we would point out that the Saratoga meet is the most successful Thoroughbred meet in the world. It provides more than half of the revenue of NYRA and continually attracts the most successful and highest profile horses in the world. Therefore, it seems strange that the Governor's MOU doesn't mandate a single resident of Saratoga County be placed on the newly constituted NYRA Board of Directors. **We ask that Saratoga County be empowered to nominate at least one Board member to the new reconstituted NYRA.**
5. The MOU clearly establishes that all real property would become the proerty of the State and would be leased back to NYRA for one dollar per year. This would take all of these properties off of the tax rolls and deprive local residents of significant tax revenues, which would have to be made up by the rest of the property tax payers. While racing has a positive economic impact in Saratoga County there is no question that it also adds to the cost of public services. Police activity and infrastructure use peak during the August meet. We ask you to add legislation that would require the State to pay its share of property taxes, either directly or as a full paying of in lieu of taxes. Additionally, we ask that no changes be made to the current legislation that allows us to collect admissions tax revenues and OTB Surcharge revenues.
6. The MOU is silent with regard to the Spring and Fall training seasons. The training facility in Saratoga is important to New York racing as well as the local agricultural industry. Trainers use the facility to keep horses fresh for races in Belmont and Aqueduct, as well as to train their New York bred colts and fillies. They also act as a feeder system for racing

and provide significant employment during our shoulder seasons. We ask you to require the continuation of the training program by the franchise holder.

Mr. Peck suggested distributing another copy of the Racing Brochure, in addition to the Comments on the Memorandum of Understanding to all Legislators. Five hundred additional copies of the Racing Brochure will be ordered through the Board of Supervisors office.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Sansom