

RACING COMMITTEE MINUTES

APRIL 2, 2009 – 3:00 P.M.

Present: Chairman Veitch; Supervisors Hargrave, Hunter, Southworth, Wood and Yepsen; Spencer Hellwig, Mgmt. Analyst; Skip Carlson, John Matanazzo, Saratoga Gaming and Raceway; Michael Amo, Nila Lee Rove, Thorofan; Shauna Sutton, Deputy Mayor, Saratoga Springs; Press.

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

On a motion made by Mr. Hargrave, seconded by Mr. Hunter the minutes of the April 2, 2009 meeting were approved unanimously.

Ms. Yepsen gave a brief overview of ThoroFan as follows:

Ms. Yepsen said a group, ThoroFan, (Thoroughbred Racing Fan Association) has been initiated with a website of www.thorofan.com. The group was initiated last summer after a couple of years of conversation and planning about how the fans seem to be left out and not represented with any of the already existing organizations. A number of people were frustrated with that and wanted to form a group to represent the fans.

Ms. Yepsen said there is a local ThoroFan Chapter of over 200 people in Saratoga County that meet on a regular basis, the second Monday of every month. The group is always looking for new places to have their meetings and invites all people who are interested to attend the meetings and use the website. The membership fee is \$20, she said.

Last summer ThoroFan had a booth at the Saratoga Racetrack to promote ThoroFan, and give people an opportunity to not only join, but also an opportunity for the Chamber of Commerce and all their members to get involved. A space was offered at the ThoroFan booth to get businesses involved in the races and having fans go downtown and into businesses, using ThoroFan as an economic opportunity as well.

Ms. Yepsen said it was important to organize ThoroFan, not only to become the voice of the fan, but also to get a closer relationship for local businesses.

The following goals have been established for ThoroFan:

- **To enhance fan enjoyment of Thoroughbred racing**
- **To educate fans in race watching and handicapping**
- **To cooperate with others to promote Thoroughbred racing**
- **To advocate for fans**

- **To retain existing racing fans and develop new ones**

Ms. Yepsen said there have been several partnerships that have been casually formed because of the goals that have been set. One of the areas that will be increased this year will be the 10% discount opportunity for all businesses.

An expansion in the area of education is on the agenda for this year. The NYRA was extremely cooperative last year, and education programs were set up at the track every day at the Carousel with NYRA's support.

A Fan Appreciation Day is in the process of being formed on the last day of the racetrack, as well as a kickoff for ThoroFan in the beginning of the Saratoga Meet.

Mr. Veitch said part of the franchise agreement with NYRA was the installation or construction of VLT's at Aqueduct. The purpose was to revitalize Aqueduct and to provide NYRA with operating revenue as well as the addition for all gaming in New York State, which is education. When the franchise agreement was signed in September of 2008 a process began for an operator of VLT's at Aqueduct. Delaware North was chosen to operate the VLT's at Aqueduct based on a few different criteria; money that would be paid to the State, initially, as operating cash for NYRA, and ongoing as they continued operations.

Approximately three weeks ago there were some changes in the agreement, i.e. Delaware North was changing some of the ways that they wanted to give the cash to the State. At that point the State decided that the changes were too much of a change in the bidding process that they had to cancel the bid and Delaware North would no longer be the operator. The impact of not having an operator for Aqueduct will have a very negative impact on not only the City of Saratoga Springs, but Saratoga County as well. It is estimated that without VLT's operating at Aqueduct, the loss in revenue would be more than \$1 million a day.

Mr. Veitch distributed a copy of a letter supporting VLT operations at Aqueduct that was sent to all of the surrounding nine counties.

Mr. Veitch requested approval of a resolution urging resolution of VLT operations at Aqueduct Racetrack.

A motion was made by Mr. Hargrave, seconded by Ms. Yepsen to approve a resolution in support of urging a resolution of VLT operations at Aqueduct Racetrack. Unanimous.

Mr. Veitch said with the 2009 State budget it is indicated that Saratoga County and the City of Saratoga Springs will lose VLT revenue. With the formula used for distributing VLT revenue it has been determined that Saratoga County is above the poverty level in

the state, which eliminates the distribution of any VLT money to either Saratoga County or the City of Saratoga Springs.

Mr. Carlson distributed a report reviewing the state of racing at Saratoga Gaming and Raceway to all committee members for their review.

Mr. Veitch introduced his father; Michael Veitch who has been involved in both the IDA report as well as writing about the Saratoga Racetrack through his column in the Saratogian Newspaper.

Mr. Michael Veitch complimented the committee for taking an active interest in the very important issues concerning racing in Saratoga Springs.

Mr. Veitch said at the last meeting the County Attorney was asked to prepare a report for the committee to explain the New York State Property Tax payments. A letter from the County Attorney was distributed to all committee members.

On a motion made by Mr. Hargrave, seconded by Mr. Hunter the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Sansom