

Racing and Gaming Committee Minutes  
March 10, 2016 – 4:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Veitch; Supervisors Grattidge, Lent, Martin, and Wood; Spencer Hellwig, Administrator; Steve Dorsey, County Attorney; Michael Vild, Casino & Raceway; Rod Sutton, Cindy Hallowood, Concerned Citizens for Saratoga Racing; Press.

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

Chairman Veitch announced the appointment of Mr. Grattidge as Committee Vice Chair.

Mr. Sutton said Concerned Citizens for Saratoga Racing has been meeting on and off for the past fifteen years trying to keep in the loop where racing is going, not only in Saratoga Springs, but in the State of New York. He said it is well known that Saratoga Springs has a huge impact on the racing industry, not only in the State of New York, but worldwide.

Mr. Sutton said the Saratoga Race Track draws close to a million people yearly. He said the contract with the State of New York has expired, and NYRA has been asked to put a plan together to send to the Governor's office to see where the next step goes with the privatization as a not-for-profit.

Ms. Hallowood said Concerned Citizens met with State legislators and local officials in Albany confirming that there are no provisions in the State budget to extend public control over NYRA. She said last year when the budget was released they were notified that there was an extension clause that funded the Governor's oversight. She said that NYRA is required to provide the organization plan to the Governor, Senate, and Assembly by April 21, 2016.

Ms. Hallowood said there was no confirmation from the Governor's office that they had received any draft plan to date. She said when the plan is released; Concerned Citizens will meet, working with Legislative leaders to have a hearing scheduled for the Senate and Assembly Racing Committee, working with the Legislative Delegation to move legislation that would approve the re-privatization plan.

Mr. Sutton said the action plan that NYRA is presenting to the Governor's office was supposed to be submitted in 2015, and the Governor is now asking that the plan be submitted. He said the NYRA Board will then meet to continue to develop the Action Plan. He said once the plan has been made public Concerned Citizens will then analyze it to see if it is in the best interests of not only Saratoga County and Saratoga Springs, but for horse racing in general. He said racing in Saratoga Springs has a yearly impact to Saratoga County of \$237 million.

Mr. Vild, General Counsel to the Saratoga Casino and Raceway, gave a brief review of 2015 and what is coming up for 2016. He said the gross revenue for 2015 was approximately \$160 million, well ahead of 2014. One of the drivers for that was due to the new legislation that was passed in 2015 that allowed additional table games. He said the racing handle was up significantly in 2015.

Mr. Vild said this fall the Casino and Raceway reached a new agreement with the Horsepersons Association for racing terms and conditions for the next three years. He said the initial contract expired year end 2015.

Mr. Vild said there are approximately 500-700 employees hired for work at the new Hotel. With the addition of the Morton Steak House it is anticipated that there will be an additional 100 employees at the facility. He said the anticipated opening date is June 27, 2016. The hotel will consist of 117 rooms, with an indoor pool, fitness facility, banquet room, and small ball room that could accommodate up to 300 people.

Mr. Vild said this past weekend marked the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Harness Racing in Saratoga.

**On a motion made by Mr. Martin, seconded by Mr. Wood the minutes of the November 10, 2015 meeting were approved unanimously.**

**On a motion made by Mr. Martin, seconded by Mr. Lent the meeting was adjourned unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Chris Sansom