

RACING & GAMING COMMITTEE
May 5, 2016
Meeting Minutes

PRESENT: Vice Chairman Alan Grattidge; Supervisors Art Johnson, Peter Martin, Tom Wood and Chairman of the Board Mo Wright; Spencer Hellwig, County Administrator; Hugh Burke, Assistant County Attorney; Todd Shimkus, Saratoga Chamber of Commerce; Press.

Vice Chairman Grattidge called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance.

On a motion by Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. Martin the minutes of the March 10, 2016 meeting were unanimously approved.

Mr. Grattidge said Todd Shimkus was there to provide an update from the Concerned Citizens for Racing on the Re-Privitization of the NYRA situation. He said he attended a meeting on this subject in place of Racing Chair Matt Veitch who is out of the area on work duties.

Mr. Shimkus gave a brief history of the process of the re-privitization to date. He said victory could be declared on what the temporary board has done to date. There was supposed to be a recommendation from NYRA as how to reprivatize as a not for profit and the legislature was supposed to take that up. This did not occur. The Governor inserted language in the budget that extended the temporary board for one year. The temporary Board was supposed to and did file a letter with the Legislature and the Governor that contained a plan to reprivatize NYRA. Mr. Shimkus gave a brief history of the Concerned Citizens for Racing. They are asking that in this session approval be given to option 'b' that NYRA has approved which will allow NYRA to reprivatize as a not for profit corporation. We believe that having representation from Saratoga is very important. This is one of those times when operations in Upstate subsidize operations in NYC. If it weren't for Saratoga Race Meet's profits it would be hard for other tracks to operate. A letter from the County Board of Supervisors asking the Governor that NYRA be reprivatized this year would be enormously helpful.

Mr. Grattidge asked if Mr. Shimkus's group was asking for is a letter of support for reprivatizing NYRA's option 2 in this session. We have identified the Governor, Assemblywoman Carrie Woerner and Senator Kathy Marchione as receivers of this letter. He asked if there was a Committee that is overseeing this process that should also receive this letter. Mr. Shimkus said Senator Bonacic and Assemblyman Pretlow who is the Chair of the Racing Committee. Mr. Johnson asked if the Governor had to take one of the three options NYRA proposed in the plan. Mr. Shimkus said he did not. Mr. Shimkus pointed out that NYRA has been profitable for 2 years in a row. Mr. Hellwig said the County is well aware NYRA had met the conditions a year ago. This letter will help but the process is well underway. It makes no sense not to give it back to NYRA and the oversight committee was set up to monitor them and they've met all the conditions. NYRA should be allowed to reprivatize and the State should not go back on their promise to hand the keys back when NYRA had met the conditions.

On a motion by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Martin unanimous approval was given to authorize the Chairman to pen a letter to send to those named within these minutes.

On a motion by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Wood the meeting was unanimously adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pamela Wright
Clerk of the Board