

## THE STATE HORSE RACING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

**DECEMBER 15, 2020**

*A public business meeting of The State Horse Racing Commission was held at the following date, place and time: Via Telephonic Conference Call on Tuesday, November 17, 2020 at 1:00 P.M.*

*Commissioners in attendance: Chairman Redding, Darryl Breniser, Salvatore DeBunda, Thomas Ellis, Russell Jones, Robert Lark, C. Edward Rogers, Michele Ruddy, Dr. John Egloff and Dr. Corinne Sweeney were present via telephonic conference call. Also present were Commission Counsel Jorge Augusto and Marija Kuren.*

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

A quorum of the Commission being present, Chairman Redding called the meeting to order. Chairman Redding noted that the meeting was properly advertised in accordance with the Sunshine Law. By way of notice, the Commission conducted an executive session to engage in quasi-judicial deliberation to be adjudicated at the public meeting and engaged in attorney client privilege communication.

Chairman Redding welcomed everyone.

### **PUBLIC MEETING**

**1.) MINUTES OF THE November 17, 2020 Meeting** as emailed to the Commissioners for their review in advance of the meeting.

**Motion By:** Commissioner Ellis  
**Second By:** Commissioner Rogers  
**Decision:** Passed by unanimous vote.

### **PRESENTATIONS**

**2.) RACING FUND OCTOBER FINANCIAL REPORT** – presented by Tracee Gotwalt. Ms. Gotwalt provided a detailed financial analysis of the State Racing Fund, Commission and Testing Revenues and Expenses, Promotional Expenditures, a Comparative to FY 19/20 and an overview of the Breed-specific funds for the month of November 2020.

**3.) 2021 Thoroughbred Breeders Budget** – presented by Brian Sanfratello. Mr. Sanfratello provided an overview of the projected 2021 budget and then provided a line by line analysis of the budget. In addition, he advised the Commission that the on-line Breeder registration system was almost ready to go operational. He informed the Commission that the Breeders have formed an anti-slaughter committee to address thoroughbred issues in Pennsylvania. The Commissioners had sought clarity with specific budgetary issues which Mr. Sanfratello answered to their satisfaction.

**4.) PTHA MARKETING/PROMOTIONAL REPORT** – presented by Mike Ballezzi, Bruce Casella, Mike Baldini and Jim Thomas. Mr. Casella provided an overview of the current status of racing at Parx. Pre-COVID, Parx focused on live events, attracting patrons to the

track with positive results. Unfortunately, with the advent of COVID a major shift in marketing was required. A decision was reached to focus on racing exposure. This was done by bolstering social media, utilizing the horsemen and expanding the TV show. Mr. Casella also advised the Commission that Keith Jones, announcer at Parx, was retiring after 34 years. Mr. Baldini supported the Mr. Casella's presentation focusing on specific social media platforms utilized both pre and post-COVID. Mr. Thomas followed up with a detailed analysis of the numbers focusing on views, hits and uploads. The panel expressed hope that there would be a return to normalcy in the near future.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS**

#### **5.) Motion to approve the 2021 Thoroughbred Breeders Budget.**

**Motion By:** Commissioner Jones  
**Second BY:** Commissioner DeBunda  
**Decision:** Passed by unanimous vote.

#### **6.) Motion to approve the Simulcast Calendars for January 2021 for Harrah's Philadelphia, Mohegan Sun at Pocono Downs and The Meadows.**

**Motion By:** Commissioner Sweeney  
**Second By:** Commissioner Ellis  
**Decision:** Passed by unanimous vote.

#### **7.) Motion to approve the Simulcast Calendars for January 2021 for Parx, Penn National and Presque Isle Downs.**

**Motion By:** Commissioner DeBunda  
**Second By:** Commissioner Rogers  
**Decision:** Passed by unanimous vote.

### **INDUSTRY REPORTS**

**8.) General Reports.** Director Salerno reported on two matters. The first was a public response to inquires the office received regarding "how racing was allowed to continue" during the shutdown. Racing was permitted to continue to operate based on the Commonwealth's definition that Racing is considered a professional sporting event. The Chairman confirmed this analysis with the Governor's office. The second matter was to provide a COVID status update. Director Salerno stressed the importance of continuing to adherence to the COVID policies and procedures by all parties. Director Salerno addressed the current COVID situation at The Meadows in the Test Barn.

- The Racing Directors, Horsemen and Breeders wished everyone a happy and safe holiday. The group expressed their thanks for the collaboration and efforts to combat the COVID situation and a positive view to 2021.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

The Chairman recognized Andrew Bender, Director of Licensing, for his public service and work with the Commission and his efforts to modernize the licensing process. Chairman Redding expressed his gratitude for Andy's contributions and stated that he will be missed. Director Salerno, Director Chuckas and Counsel Augusto expressed appreciation for his efforts. Mr. Bender will retire on December 18<sup>th</sup>.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chairman Redding announced the next meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 26, 2021. The Meeting location is to be determined.

- Executive Session 11:00 A.M.
- Regular Session 1:00 P.M.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:53 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas F. Chuckas Jr.  
Bureau Director  
Bureau of Thoroughbred Horse Racing

Anthony Salerno  
Bureau Director  
Bureau of Standardbred Racing