

Virginia Racing Commission

MINUTES

OF THE

COMMISSION MEETING

December 11, 2013

**HORSEMEN'S BUILDING
COLONIAL DOWNS
10700 HORSEMEN'S ROAD
NEW KENT, VA**

In Attendance

Commission Members:

Stuart Siegel, Chairman
J. Sargeant Reynolds, Jr., Vice Chairman
Carol G. Dawson
Stran Trout
D.G. Van Clief, Jr.

Commission Staff:

Bernard J. Hettel, Executive Secretary
David S. Lermond, Jr., Deputy Executive Secretary
C. Richard Harden, DVM, Equine Medical Director
Courtney Reid

Attorney General's Office:

Joshua Laws

At 10:00 a.m., the scheduled meeting of the Virginia Racing Commission (VRC) was called to order by Chairman Siegel.

The minutes of the September 25, 2013 Commission meeting were approved.

Commissioner Van Clief reported on the activity of the Blue Ribbon Committee. The committee is composed of stakeholders working to find implementable solutions to promote excellence, growth and sustainability in the Virginia horse racing and breeding industries. Commissioner Van Clief projects the committee will create a mid-year growth plan in 2014, build a strategic product design, and expand the committee in the future with other valuable stakeholders.

Commissioner Trout commended Commissioner Van Clief and the other members of the Blue Ribbon Committee, along with the work they are diligently pursuing.

Bernard Hettel, Executive Secretary of the Virginia Racing Commission, addressed the Virginia Gold Cup limited license renewal. He mentioned that the Gold Cup and the Gold Cup International required operational improvements which needed to be addressed before the 2014 race days occur. Mr. Hettel invited Dr. William Allison, President of the Virginia Gold Cup, to speak on the progression of these improvements.

Dr. Allison reported the Gold Cup races in 2013 had more attendance than past years, as well as a large increase in betting interests. Gold Cup leaders have met with United Tote operators and Wi-Fi technicians, to identify every glitch which occurred at the 2013 races. They will increase betting machines and tellers as well as have the mobile betting technology as a supplemental way of accepting wagers.

Chairman Siegel suggested the Gold Cup approach this process slowly in order to make it the best it can be. A motion was made for the renewal of the limited license and it was approved.

Mr. Hettel next reviewed the requested approval of the new Jacobs Trust Investment of Colonial Downs. Mr. James Weinberg briefly explained the new ownership and he reported the new ownership has virtually no visible change. A motion was made to approve the new Jacobs Trust Investment and it was approved.

Mr. Hettel recommended to the Commission that the Account Deposit Wagering licenses be renewed for 2014. This included, EZHorseplay, TVG, XpressBet and TwinSpire. With no major changes from previous years, the renewal of the requested licenses was approved.

The next item on the agenda was the request for Thoroughbred Racing days in 2014.

Mr. Ian Stewart, President of Colonial Downs, proposed many reasons supporting the requested days for the 2014 season. Colonial Downs proposed a boutique meet for the 2014 Thoroughbred season; 12 days of racing over a 4 week period. He suggested in order for Virginia racing to become better than the current conditions, change is needed. This format has not yet been attempted at Colonial Downs and it has potential to bring a different outcome than in past years.

Mr. Frank Petramalo, Executive Director of the Virginia Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association (VHBPA), disputed the statistics Colonial Downs presented and did not support the boutique meet. He explained how with this short race meet, horsemen are not able to run as often, and struggle to find fitting races for horses in the condition book. He also reminded the group it is not beneficial for trainers and owners to ship horses to Colonial for such a short amount of time. Mr. Petramalo declared that the horsemen would like 32 days of racing over an 8 week period.

Commissioner Siegel stated that due to Colonial Downs and the VHBPA not agreeing on race days, the Commission will make the decision on the 2104 Thoroughbred race days. Commissioner Reynolds made a motion to host 25 days of racing over a five week period. The public was then asked if they had any comments or questions on the proposed days.

Several stakeholders in the Virginia racing and breeding industry commented on the race days, many portraying concern for the diminished meet. Many people explained how the racing experience as a whole must be improved at Colonial Downs and become a more positive experience for both the public and the horsemen.

Chairman Siegel stated he appreciates the comments and the commission understands not everyone will be satisfied with the decision. A motion was made to support the proposed 2014 Thoroughbred days (25 days in 5 weeks) and it was approved.

The next item on the agenda was the request for 2014 Standardbred Race Days. Colonial Downs requested to start the same day as the New Kent Country Fair (September 13, 2014) and the horsemen requested to start four days later (September 17, 2014). A motion was made to approve 24 days of harness racing, with the exact dates to be determined between the two parties; this motion was approved.

The 2014 Virginia Gold Cup request for race days was the next agenda item. The Gold Cup Association requested the days for the Virginia Gold Cup to be May 3th, 2014 and the Virginia Gold Cup International to be October 25th, 2014. A motion was made to approve these dates and it was approved.

The last agenda item was the Virginia Breeder's Fund Proposals. Commissioner Van Clief reported that he had studied both proposals carefully and they were both well addressed. A motion was made to approve the Virginia Thoroughbred Association (VTA) to continue to manage the fund, under stipulations and supervision by the VRC. The motion was approved.

There was no closed meeting.

With no further business being present, Tuesday, January 21, 2014 at 10:00 a.m. was set as the date and time of the next meeting, located at the Horsemen's Building, 10700 Horseman's Road, New Kent, VA. An appeal hearing will take place at 9:00 a.m., before the scheduled meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:42 a.m.