

**MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT  
HORSE RACING ADVISORY COMMISSION**

**Constitution Hall  
Van Deusen Conference Room  
525 W Allegan St  
Lansing, MI 48933**

**and**

**Remote Technology via Microsoft Teams  
Dial: 1-248-509-0316, Conference ID 360 086 503#**

**MEETING MINUTES  
May 26, 2022**

**PRESENT IN PERSON:**

Brian Nielsen, Chair, Horse Racing Advisory Commission  
Thomas Barrett, Member, Horse Racing Advisory Commission  
Michael Carlo, Member, Horse Racing Advisory Commission  
Sylvia Renteria, Member, Horse Racing Advisory Commission

**PRESENT REMOTELY:**

William Frank, Member, Horse Racing Advisory Commission

**CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Chair Nielsen called the meeting of the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Horse Racing Advisory Commission to order at 2:00 p.m. on May 26, 2022. Chair Nielsen and all members introduced themselves, providing background on their experience and representation.

**INTRODUCTION OF JENNIFER EYDE, INTERIM ASSISTANT TO HRAC**

Ms. Renteria introduced Jennifer Eyde, Interim Assistant to the MDARD, HRAC. Ms. Eyde is serving in the capacity until a permanent replacement is selected. Ms. Eyde shared her background and experience working with MDARD.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**MOTION: MR. CARLO MOVED TO APPROVE THE MEETING AGENDA FOR  
MAY 26, 2022. SECONDED BY MR. BARRETT. MOTION CARRIED.**

**APPROVAL OF PROPOSED 2022 MEETING SCHEDULE**

The members discussed the proposed dates for the remainder of the 2022 meetings. Mr. Carlo suggested hosting the November meeting at Northville Downs. The members agreed it would be a good idea to visit the racetrack and will wait for more information as the November meeting date approaches.

**MOTION: MR. CARLO MOVED TO APPROVE THE MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2022. SECONDED BY MR. BARRETT. MOTION CARRIED.**

**APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES**

**MOTION: MR. CARLO MOVED TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 20, 2017, JUNE 21, 2021, AUGUST 24, 2021, OCTOBER 12, 2021, NOVEMBER 9, 2021, DECEMBER 14, 2021, JANUARY 11, 2022, AND MARCH 1, 2022 MEETING MINUTES. SECONDED BY MR. BARRETT. MOTION CARRIED.**

**NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING**

The next scheduled meeting is August 18, 2022, to be held at Constitution Hall, 525 W Allegan St, Lansing, MI at 2:00 p.m. Remote technology via Microsoft Teams will also be offered.

**BUDGET APPROVAL**

Ms. Renteria reviewed the appropriated \$125,000 budget for Fiscal Year 2023. The budget allocates \$50,000 toward an economic impact study; \$25,000 towards seminars; and \$50,000 towards promotion campaign.

Chair Nielsen suggested considering travel reimbursement for the HRAC members. The members came to a consensus to move \$5,000 from the promotion campaign allocation to travel reimbursement.

**MOTION: MR. BARRETT MOVED TO APPROVE THE FY 2023 BUDGET WITH THE \$5,000 TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT ADJUSTMENT BEING MOVED FROM THE PROMOTION CAMPAIGN. SECONDED BY MR. CARLO. MOTION CARRIED.**

**ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY**

Members discussed the process for MDARD to secure a contract with a vendor to conduct an Economic Impact Study (EIS) on the value of horse racing in Michigan. Ms. Renteria shared the State of Michigan bidding process, including obtaining detailed bid proposals from at least three contractors.

- *Members agreed to reach out to industry contacts that may have had an EIS conducted and willing to share with the HRAC for comparison. Members will also reach out to vendors to obtain bids on conducting the EIS. Vendor contact information and detailed bids should be sent to Ms. Renteria for building the scope of work for the total bid proposal.*

**GAMING AND HORSE OWNERSHIP SEMINARS**

Members discussed ideas for a gaming and horse ownership seminar targeting new horse owners and potential new horse owners. Ideas included a fall event at Northville Downs to be funded by HRAC with the seminar being held first, followed by activities of engagement, and watching a race. Ideas for activities included a tour of barns and double seated jog cart rides. Marketing and promotion ideas included utilizing social media, requiring RSVPs for event with contact information, race coupons, and betting vouchers. The members agreed it would be best to hire a marketing firm to coordinate

the details of the event. Ms. Renteria suggested using an approved State of Michigan marketing vendor and members concurred.

- *Ms. Renteria will share via email statement of work template for members to complete. The statement of work should contain specific details to ensure the marketing vendor understands exact expectations and deliverables.*

### **PROMOTION CAMPAIGN**

Members discussed several ideas for promoting horse racing. Promotion might be possible at a county fair but would want to be careful not to exclude other fairs. Members discussed marketing horse racing as tourism through the Pure Michigan campaign, utilizing the marketing company for promotion ideas, podcasts, and race recaps on social media. Members also discussed the creation of a website with a unique name that can be linked on all social media.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment on non-agenda items was requested.

### **OTHER**

**MDARD Administrative Rules and Section 20 of Michigan Horse Racing Law (MCL 431.320)** – Members expressed concerns with meeting nuances of MDARD Administrative Rules relative to how horses can be raced to receive money and restrictions that inhibit the utilization of all monies available. The Administrative Rules seem unclear and subject to interpretation.

Members agreed the MDARD Administrative Rules and MCL 431.320 should be reviewed, and interpretation shared with MDARD legal counsel.

- *Ms. Renteria will share via email a link to the MDARD Administrative Rules relative to Fairs, Exhibitions and Racing and MCL 431.320.*
- *Mr. Barrett, Mr. Carlo, and Mr. Frank agreed to review the Rules and MCL 431.320, develop an interpretation document, and send to Ms. Renteria.*
- *Ms. Renteria will send interpretation document to MDARD legal counsel and request review and opinion of the Rules and MCL 431.320.*

**House Bill 5783** – Ms. Renteria reported House Bill 5783 reverses a one-time deposit of \$3.2 million from the General Fund into the Agriculture Equine Industry Development, provided in the FY 2022 budget. More discussion is needed to understand the fund and how it operates. The goal is to have the final budget language on the Governor's desk by the end of June.

- *Ms. Renteria will track movement of the Bill and share updates with members.*

### **ADJOURN**

**MOTION: MR. CARLO MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. MR. BARRETT SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:46 P.M.