

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

**Constitution Hall
Coleman Young Conference Room
525 W Allegan St
Lansing, MI 48933**

and

**Remote Technology via Microsoft Teams
Dial: 1-248-509-0316, Conference ID 203 186 178#**

**MEETING MINUTES
June 15, 2023**

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

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Nielsen called the meeting of the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Horse Racing Advisory Commission (MDARD HRAC) to order at 2:04 p.m. on June 15, 2023. Roll call was taken by each member introducing themselves.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

**MOTION: MR. CARLO MOVED TO APPROVE THE MARCH 15, 2023
MEETING MINUTES. SECONDED BY MR. BARRETT. MOTION CARRIED.**

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

The next scheduled meeting is September 21, 2023, 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.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

**MOTION: MR. CARLO MOVED TO APPROVE THE MEETING AGENDA FOR
JUNE 15, 2023. SECONDED BY MR. BARRETT. MOTION CARRIED.**

INTRODUCTION

Sylvia Renteria, Director of Finance and Budget, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, introduce Tracy Ebels, Financial Specialist, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. The Commissioners welcomed her.

BUDGET UPDATE

Sylvia Renteria, Director of Finance and Budget, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development gave an update on the FY 2023 Budget. MDARD has been working on a legislative transfer and is still awaiting approval. For FY 2024, MDARD is continuing negotiations with the legislature, to have the budget completed by the end of June.

CIVIC ECONOMICS PROJECT

Brandon Colby, Buyer, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, explained that though some delays, Chairman Nielsen and Mr. Colby were impressed with the process on the final report. Civic Economics stated that they expected the final report in the next week.

NORTHVILLE DOWNS LOCATION CHANGE

Commissioner Carlo informed that the plans of a location change were approved by the Planning Commission for the City of Plymouth. They expect to have final approval and start construction in the coming months.

LIVESTREAM MARKETING PROGRAM

Ms. Renteria informed the commission she has prepared a draft grant agreement, it was sent to Crystal Terrell, representing the Michigan Harness Horseman Association (MHHA), for approval, and is awaiting signature.

NORTHVILLE DOWNS MEET

Commissioner Barrett explained meets are progressing. Simulcast are off by 15% but with 30% more races, cost are high. Races were recently affected by air quality from the fires in Canada. Commissioner Carlo stated the number one focus is the use of license track line similar to thoroughbreds. Commissioner Renteria informed the commissioners she has been discussing this request, and conversations are moving forward.

The Chair asked why they were seeing a reduction on simulcast. Commission Carlo informed there was a decrease in races nation-wide, which means less money coming in. Commissioner Barret explained they are seeing a decrease in horses being bred, which also leads to less horses being raced.

OTHER

Chairman Nielsen shared an email from Caylyn Mira, a former student at Michigan State University and President of the MSU Horsemen's Association, thanking the commission for their work and letting her be involved during her time at MSU. Ms. Mira shared she had received a scholarship at a university in Florida to study Equine Policy.

Commissioner Carlo introduced his niece Clare who is shadowing Mr. Carlo for the summer.

Chairman Nielsen started discussion on possible future marketing programs to increase interest in the Horse Racing Industry. The commission discussed how to focus on horse ownership as their next marketing highlight.

Commissioners asked Ms. Renteria what allotment was available to invest in marketing and education. Ms. Renteria informed the commission there was funds available still from the original budget in Fiscal Year 2021. She warned the commission to be cautious continuing caring over the funds.

Commissioners discussed adding an additional meeting to the commissions schedule to discuss additional marketing expenditures before the end of Fiscal Year 2023.

MOTION: MR. BARRETT MOVED TO ADD JULY 20TH AT 2:00 PM, AT CONSTITUTION HALL TO THE 2023 MEETING SCHEDULE. SECONDED BY MR. CARLO. MOTION CARRIED.

Inger Lanese, representing the Michigan Horse Council, sent a request asking the commission to be a sponsor at Michigan Equine Day in the fall. Commissioners agreed to have them submit a request via email for approval.

Commissioner Renteria left due to another meeting.

Commissioners continued the discussion on other possible options to provide additional grant funding for promotional events educating the public on horse racing.

MOTION: MR. CARLO MOVED TO APPROVE ADDITIONAL SPENDING NOT TO EXCEED \$40,000, AS A GRANT, TO MICHIGAN HARNESS HORSEMAN ASSOCIATION FOR PROMOTIONAL EVENTS. SECONDED BY MR. BARRETT.

ROLL CALL VOTE

YAYS: Commissioners Nielsen, Barrett, and Carlo.

NAYS: NONE

MOTION CARRIED.

Commissioners discussed what additional planning needed to happen before the special July meeting on promotional items pertaining to the county fairs and breeder sales. Additional information was being collected before the next meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

ADJOURN

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

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:26 P.M.