

CALIFORNIA AUTHORITY OF RACING FAIRS

Live Racing Committee
Tuesday, October 6, 2009

Minutes

A meeting of the California Authority of Racing Fairs Live Racing Committee was held at 11:00 A.M., Tuesday, October 6, 2009. The meeting was conducted at the Big Fresno Fair Administration Office, 1121 Chance Ave., Fresno, CA, 93702.

Live Racing Committee members attending: John Alkire. Joining by conference call: Norb Bartosik, Chris Carpenter, Debbie Cook, Mike Paluszak, Rick Pickering, Tawny Tesconi and Stuart Titus.

Staff and Guests attending: Chris Korby, Larry Swartzlander, Heather Haviland and Tom Doutrich. Joining by conference call: Margot Wilson, Dave Elliott and Kate Pharriss.

Agenda Item 1 – Date and Time of Next Meeting. The next CARF Board & Live Racing Committee meeting will be scheduled in conjunction with the CFA Fall Management Conference (Nov. 4-6, 2009) in Sacramento, date and time to be determined.

Agenda Item 2 – Approval of Minutes. Mr. Bartosik requested Staff review the June 2, 2009 meeting recordings to determine if he and Mr. Elliott were in attendance. Ms. Cook requested that the August 2, 2009 meeting minutes be amended on the first page, last paragraph, eighth sentence to read, "The San Joaquin Fair Board should probably have a decision about the length of their Fair during their strategic planning meeting taking place in mid-September." Ms. Cook moved to approve the meeting minutes as amended. Mr. Paluszak seconded, unanimously approved.

Agenda Item 3 – Discussion and Action, if any, on Racing Dates for 2010 and Beyond. Mr. Korby introduced three draft 2010 racing dates calendars/scenarios that have been developed through recent Live Racing Committee meetings. Mr. Korby requested that Fair Managers share any developments that might have occurred since the group last met.

Mr. Bartosik reported that Cal Expo has had no further discussions and nothing new to add. Mr. Bartosik will be recommending the California State Fair move into July dates at a Board retreat later in the week.

Mr. Paluszak reported that the Solano County Fair would reserve their option to request racing dates in 2010 until such time that the CARF Board/Live Racing Committee has reached an agreement on assuring continued revenues to Fairs which have agreed to reduce or end their live racing program.

Mr. Cook reported that the San Joaquin County Fair would request two weeks of racing in 2010 with the possibility of reducing race dates in 2011.

Ms. Tesconi reported that the Sonoma County Fair wishes to retain the tradition placement of their racing dates and is interested in adding a third week of racing.

Mr. Pickering reported that he will be meeting with representatives from the Alameda County Board of Supervisors on Oct. 12, 2009 and the Alameda County Fair Board of Directors will meet on Oct. 13, 2009. The current Fair Board position is that Pleasanton is open to all conversations, but to accept dates outside of the traditional Fair will require input from the County Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Titus reported that the Humboldt County Fair plans to occupy its traditional slot in the two weeks following the Sonoma County Fair.

Agenda Item 4 – Discussion and Action, if any, on a New Model for the Structure, Schedule and Conduct of Horse Racing at Fairs. Mr. Alkire asked the group to turn their attention to the proposal included in the meeting packet regarding a model for the future of California racing Fairs, which was developed by Staff at the request of Mr. Bartosik. Mr. Alkire complimented the thoroughness of the document and requested Mr. Korby walk the group through the basic premise of the proposed model.

Mr. Korby reported that the framework of the document titled “Proposal – California Racing Fairs, A New Model for the Future” could be condensed into three basic elements. 1) Strengthen Northern California Fair racing by operating a combined Fair race meet to run June through October, 2) Optimize the quality of the racing program by consolidating the purse program to better manage purses and reduce risk to individual Fairs, and 3) Assure continued revenues to Fairs which agree to reduce or end their live racing program.

Mr. Doutrich added that consolidating the purse program will benefit each individual Fair by enabling the Racing Secretary to write better condition books and develop a cohesive racing program for horsemen while creating better management of purses and being able to closely tracking purses paid to purses generated. The racing product is stronger, risk is diminished and planning is enhanced when the race meet is developed as a twelve week program versus several two to three week programs.

Mr. Paluszak approved of the initial idea of consolidating purses, but asked that the concept be applied retroactively to help fairs that are already in an over-payment situation.

Ms. Tesconi inquired on whether a sub-committee would be beneficial to working through some of these concepts and making recommendations to the Live Racing Committee. Mr. Alkire asked that Ms. Tesconi and Mr. Bartosik serve on that sub-committee. Ms. Cook asked that Mr. Paluszak also participate on the sub-committee on behalf of Fairs that might phase out of live racing. Mr. Paluszak accepted.

Mr. Pickering moved to approve in concept the document titled “Proposal – California Racing Fairs, A New Model for the Future” with the formation of a sub-committee to work through the details and make recommendations to the Live Racing Committee for future vote. The newly formed sub-committee will consist of Ms. Tesconi, Mr. Bartosik (and/or Dave Elliott) and Mr. Paluszak. Mr. Bartosik seconded, unanimously approved.

Agenda Item 5 – Executive Director’s Report. No new items to report.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Haviland