

CALIFORNIA AUTHORITY OF RACING FAIRS
Board of Directors & Live Racing Committee
Concurrent Meeting
Thursday, September 12, 2019

MINUTES

A concurrent meeting of the California Authority of Racing Fairs (CARF) Board of Directors and Live Racing Committee was held at 10:00 A.M., Thursday, September 12, 2019 via teleconference. The meeting originated at the CARF office, 1776 Tribute Road, Sacramento, CA, 95815.

CARF Board Directors joining by conference call: John Alkire, Richard Conway, Jerome Hoban, Rick Pickering and Kelly Violini.

CARF Live Racing Committee joining by conference call: John Alkire, Richard Conway Jerome Hoban and Rick Pickering.

Staff and Guests participating: Larry Swartzlander, Heather Haviland, Juliana Gomes, Tom Doutrich, Cody Boyles, Lauri King, Wayne Atwell, Allen Aldrich and Stacey Lapham.

Agenda Item 1 – Date, Time and Location of Next Meeting: TBD at the Big Fresno Fair. The next CARF Board of Directors and Live Racing Committee meeting will be held October 11, 2019 at the Big Fresno Fair.

Agenda Item 2 – Public Comment. None.

Agenda Item 3 – Report, Discussion and Action, if any, on Racing Operations.

Auxiliary Stabling: Mr. Swartzlander stated that the CARF position regarding stabling/dates that he is taking forward with industry principals includes: 1) CARF is willing to continue to pay Golden Gate Fields \$510,000/year as an auxiliary stabling facility for member fairs, 2) CARF-member Fairs request to shift one week later in the calendar to compensate for Leap year, and 3) CARF is requesting one week (four days) of unoverlapped racing with host status for Humboldt County Fair.

Mr. Hoban requested that staff consider raising the stall rent participation rate at Golden Gate Fields to encourage those horses to run at fairs to help offset the \$510,000 auxiliary stabling fee. Mr. Aldrich stated that the Thoroughbred Owners of California's (TOC) position is that it is imperative for stabling to remain open year-round at Golden Gate Fields.

Race Dates: Mr. Swartzlander stated that a calendar titled “Proposed Northern California Racing Dates DRAFT – updated 6-28-19” is included in the meeting packet for discussion. This calendar was also presented and discussed during the August 6, 2019 CARF Board meeting. Mr. Swartzlander asked each fair to provide input and a position on the calendar as proposed.

Alameda County Fair (Pleasanton): Mr. Hoban reiterated that CARF Fairs are not asking to change the calendar, but are simply trying to compensate for the traditional shifts created by the 2020 Leap year by maintaining traditional holiday placement. If the shift does not occur, holidays will fall outside traditional fair dates and create logistical concerns for partners servicing the fair circuit. The proposed calendar mitigates financial and safety concerns for the Alameda County Fair.

California State Fair (Sacramento): Mr. Pickering stated that in 2016 fairs did not make the Leap year shift and it caused Pleasanton to close their fair on Monday, July 4, 2016. This closure date resulted in coordination and safety concerns for the carnival operator servicing both fairs as well as other mutual vendors. The tight turnover in 2016 meant that some rides were not available opening day of Sacramento. Mr. Pickering stated that carnival revenue exceeds racing revenue, so it is an important factor in determining race dates for fairs.

Sonoma County Fair (Santa Rosa): Mr. Swartzlander stated that he has reached out to Becky Bartling, CEO of Sonoma County Fair, and she was adamant that her fair does not want to move farther into the school year and that she opposes CARF’s tentative calendar. Mr. Swartzlander stated that he made Becky Bartling aware that CARF has been reaching out with paymaster support and encouragement to rejoin CARF for more than three years with no further action on Santa Rosa’s part to rejoin or to offer a counter compromise for services.

Humboldt County Fair (Ferndale): Mr. Conway stated that Ferndale could creatively adjust if fair dates fell well within the school year, but that trying to run exhibits and animal programs during the first week of school presents extreme logistical challenges for kids, parents and community. Local schools are willing to work with the Ferndale fair, but the Eureka school district has already set their schedule. In the past, shifting later in the calendar has proven to negatively affect attendance and revenue for the fair. Mr. Swartzlander added that the results from the 2019 Ferndale meet were better than when the fair ran later in the year.

Big Fresno Fair (Fresno): Mr. Alkire stated that as the last fair on the racing circuit, the Big Fresno Fair is open to shifting or not and is willing to accommodate the dates presented in the proposed calendar. Mr. Alkire stated that keeping the carnival operator healthy may not be important to the racing industry, but it is extremely important to the fair family.

{ACTION} Mr. Hoban moved to approval the proposed 2020 racing calendar as presented in the meeting packet. Mr. Pickering seconded. YES VOTE: Mr. Alkire, Mr. Hoban and Mr. Pickering. NO VOTE: Mr. Conway.

Agenda Item 4 – Executive Director’s Report. Mr. Swartzlander reported that according to a New York Times report Justify, winner of the Triple Crown in 2018, allegedly failed a drug test for scopolamine after running in the Santa Anita Derby weeks before the Kentucky Derby and that the test result was dismissed by the California Horse Racing Board after the colt went on to win the Triple Crown.

Respectfully submitted,
Heather Haviland