

Board Addresses Several Key Issues at May 7th Meeting

The NEHBPA's Board of Directors held their first meeting of the 2008 racing season on Wednesday, May 7th at Suffolk Downs. Below is a capsule look at some of the key issues from that meeting:

- President Al Balestra welcomed the board members. In his opening remarks, he stressed the importance of the board working together on behalf of our horsemen.
- The board was presented a detailed review of all horsemen's purse revenue, handle numbers and simulcasting percentages by Bruce Patten.
- Reviewed the 2008 Live Racing Schedule
- Approved Market Area Agreements with Rockingham, Seabrook, Hinsdale, Newport, Twin River, Newport Jai-alai and The Lodge at Belmont, formerly known as Lakes Region Greyhound Park.
- Discussed the newly installed Eurociser.
- Approved a contract with Dave Matthews & Philip Drago to operate the Suffolk Ice House for 2008 racing season.
- Held a long discussion regarding the racing surface at the quick times on opening day.
- Discussed the turf course opening on Memorial Day weekend and the possible renovation of the course in the future.
- Requested that the maintenance department address the leveling of shed rows at the conclusion of the meet so that they will be in good condition when the horsemen return next March.
- Shirley Dullea informed the Board that work orders for maintenance requests are printed in triplicate so that we can now monitor our horsemen's needs.
- Discussed the general condition of the backstretch and the recent renovation of four barns and newly remodeled restrooms.
- Approved the 2008 Purse Contract following detailed review.
- Requested that a full report on the Massachusetts Lottery's Daily Race Game be made by the staff at the next board meeting on June 4.
- Set up a meeting with Suffolk CFO John Rizzo to discuss the horsemen's purse account.
- Reviewed the 2008 Stakes Schedule at length.
- Approved a letter drafted by General Counsel Frank Frisoli to the Massachusetts State Racing Commission with regard to the NEHBPA's rights as it relates to the NYRA signal.
- Discussed the controversy surrounding 2008 Kentucky Derby. In addition, explored the possibility of establishing a program, in conjunction with Suffolk Downs, that will educate the public and the media of horsemen's concerns over the safety of racing as well as the regulation of steroids
- Reviewed a request from the Steeplechase Association to conduct two races. This matter will be discussed with the Suffolk management team with the condition of the turf course paramount.
- Will extended an invitation to Bob Reeves of the Ohio HBPA and/or National HBPA President Joe Santanna to come to a future board meeting to discuss the possibility of joining the newly formed Horsemen's Coalition.
- Scheduled a Legislative Committee meeting to discuss all pertinent issues in both Massachusetts and New Hampshire.