

MHC UPDATE

mdhorsecouncil.org



815575-100310

Saving Maryland Racing - by Stuart Pittman, president



MHC members in Anne Arundel County kicked into gear when the county council was considering whether to zone for slots at Arundel Mills Mall. One county staffer said, "Our phones haven't stopped ringing since your email went out this morning."

Our position (which was supported by MHC member associations the Maryland Horse Breeders Association, the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association, and the Maryland Jockey Club) was that the council should vote no on zoning for Arundel Mills. That would have allowed

new ownership of Laurel Racetrack to compete for the slots license. Most council members admitted that they would prefer to have slots at Laurel, but that they had no faith that new ownership would be able to put an application together any time soon. We lost by a single vote in the county council.

That decision to zone for slots at Arundel Mills confirmed the state's approval of the slots license to Cordish Companies for Arundel Mills. The Maryland Jockey Club then allied itself with residents opposed to the Mills casino and organized a petition drive that puts the county zoning decision to referendum in November. MHC was asked to participate in this effort and might well have done so if a number of our members in the racing industry had not called to voice another perspective. Some, but not all, breeders and owners of racehorses believe that Arundel Mills would actually produce more revenue for racing than a casino at Laurel Racetrack. They argue that a petition drive for a November referendum would create delays in casino construction and ultimately hurt our chances to save Maryland racing.

So, despite MHC's longstanding policy of supporting slots at racetracks we decided to sit down with David Cordish and Joe Weinberg to hear their views not only on why they believe that Arundel Mills would generate more money than slots at Laurel, but also what vision they have for Maryland racing if they buy the tracks. Their arguments centered around the findings of an independent study of Arundel Mills as a casino location and the impressive track record of their company in developing casinos and other entertainment destinations throughout North America. They believe that their expertise and financial resources could be used to revitalize Pimlico and Laurel and to create a "renaissance" in Maryland racing. They argued that as a Maryland-based company they have no intention of blemishing their reputation with a failed project in their own backyard.

MHC was and is still keenly aware that we have no vote on who acquires the tracks in the bankruptcy auction. Our only influence is on the political level, and given our members' divergent viewpoints our goal

continued...

Wanted: Your Zoning Horror Stories!

plus: Your county zoning ordinances and how they have helped or hindered you.

"Save the Horse Farm" Zoning Meeting Rescheduled Due to Snow

THURSDAY, MARCH 18, 2010 7-9PM

PLEASANT PROSPECT FARM'S MEETING ROOM
4389 Jennings Chapel Road, Brookeville, MD 20833

To pre-register or to get directions, visit
www.mdhorsecouncil.org

While the state may consider horses to be agriculture, many counties lump horses with all sorts of things except agriculture! They hit us with absurd zoning laws that either prevent people from establishing horse farms, limit what we can do, or sometimes even put us out of business.

This statewide meeting will kick off a campaign to fight back. The first phase is research. We will collect not only every county's laws that affect horse farms, but also those that are being used against us simply because of the way bureaucrats interpret them. We also need to know all of your case stories. We understand that when folks are trying to get zoning permits, or are trying to avoid being caught out of compliance, the last thing they want is publicity. That's OK. We won't share your stories if you don't want us to. We just need to know how the county laws are being used against us so that we can write new laws.

Once the research is complete we will issue a report along with model county laws that can be applied anywhere.

If we are to make Maryland "Horse Country" once again, we must start where we are being hit the hardest: at the county level. Please attend the March 18 meeting, or visit www.mdhorsecouncil.org to share your story. We need your story if we are going to make Maryland a more horse-friendly state.

Maryland Horse Council membership is open to all associations, farms, businesses and individuals.

To join, please visit mdhorsecouncil.org, contact admin@mdhorsecouncil.org, or call 301-502-8929

The Maryland Horse Council is sponsored by B & D Builders, Naden/Lean, The Equiery, Farm Credit and Southern States



became to ensure that Maryland horse people stay well informed. Our organization was under pressure from both sides to take a position on the Anne Arundel County petition drive, so we invited our friends at the Jockey Club and the Cordish Company to our Quarterly Meeting in Timonium on January 21. The room was packed with most of the major players in Maryland racing, and moving speeches were given in support of both the Jockey Club strategy of blocking slots at the Mills, and the Cordish strategy of supporting the Mills. After a thorough debate we passed a motion that MHC would take no position on the petition drive and that individual members should act on behalf of Maryland racing as they see fit.

What many of us took away from that meeting, however, was

"Horse people don't get to choose the new owner, but you can bet we will be vocal about the future decisions that this new owner makes."

- Stuart Pittman, president

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that there is a sense of optimism right now about the future of Maryland racing. Six bidders are vying for ownership in the bankruptcy auction that keeps getting postponed, and all of them believe that they can revitalize the sport. Horse people don't get to choose the new owner, but you can bet we will be vocal about the future decisions that this new owner makes. If you happen to be a Maryland state legislator and want to avoid being trampled by a stampede, you had better listen and do right by the Maryland Horse Council and it's friends in the racing industry. We have come a long way in the struggle to get slots revenue to racing, and we won't give up easily.

MHC Business Network

This new initiative is up and running. We met first at Jane Siegler's Reddemeade Farm for a planning meeting and again on February 2 for our first official gathering. Our first topic was to compare stories on how the Great Recession has changed our business plans, marketing, services and anything else.

The Business Network is made up of some of the most respected folks in the Maryland horse world, and the opportunity to openly discuss all aspects of what we do with these people is invaluable. We seem to have experts in just about every aspect of what we do. The level of discussion is very collaborative and professional.

MHC in Annapolis

Last year MHC was on the offensive and passed two bills which we conceived and drafted. This year our role is more defensive. Thanks to our Legislative Committee under the leadership of lobbyist and lawyer Amy Samman of Furey, Doolan, and Abell LLP, nothing has slipped by us so far.

We testified in support of the bill that would protect the Horse Industry Board's stable licensing program from a raid by the general fund (SB62). The bill raises licensing fees for stables by \$50 per year but our board voted unanimously to support it at our

January meeting as a show of support for the program and to keep state budget cutters out of our programs. Prospects for passage look good.

We have been in negotiations with Delegate Pena-Melnyk over a bill that would require minors to wear helmets when riding on public property (HB248). MHC supports helmet use but questions the benefits of having the police department as the enforcer -especially at horse shows where some classes do not require approved helmets. If the bill is restricted to public trails, roads and other thoroughfares there is a possibility that MHC would support the bill.

Amy is also watching progress on the following:

- a bill that would make it easier for the state to partner with private land preservation programs;
- a bill that better defines the role of the MDA secretary in putting farms in quarantine;
- a bill that would exempt farms in ag preservation from inheritance taxes;
- all legislation relating to slots and Maryland racing;
- anything else that we think will affect horse people.

A fuller legislative update has been sent to MHC members. Join if you want to follow more closely.

MHC Embraces Social Media

Look for our new Facebook page. Type in Maryland Horse Council and become a fan. It seems like a silly gesture, but even if you never join the horse council (a shameful thing to never do), you should be a fan of our Facebook page. Politicians notice numbers, and we want ours to be high.

You'll also notice that our web site is growing. It's full of information that anyone can access, but most importantly you can join online with a few clicks of your mouse! Please do it today. Your \$40 individual membership not only means power for our causes, but without dues money we cannot exist. We are your voice only because we are funded with your dues.

"It's only when the tide goes out that you learn who's been swimming naked."

- Warren Buffett

It can be an unfortunate truth that recessions have a way of culling the weak businesses. Don't let the receding tide expose you, make sure your swimming suit is intact! When the MHC Business Network gets together, business owners share great recession-busting business tips. If you missed the February meeting, you missed:

- hot tips for saving money on insurance
- challenges and triumphs in the hunt for hay and much more! So don't miss the next one!

MHC Business Networking Tues. April 6 at 12:30 p.m.

Pleasant Prospect Farm

4389 Jennings Chapel Rd • Brookeville, MD 20833

Lunch provided by The Equiry; registration required.

Participation restricted to MHC farm and business members.

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The Quarterly Meeting of the Board of Directors

Open to All Members and Guests

Thursday, January 21, 2010 - Horse World Expo

Every member association is entitled to a seat on the MHC Board of Directors. Please review this list to make sure your association is a member and to ensure active representation for your association on the MHC Board of Directors. The MHC Board of Directors, on behalf of the horse industry, make important legislative and policy decisions, and so your associations participation is critical. Farm, business and individual members elect at-large directors to represent their interests on the Board.

Officers Present:

President: Stuart Pittman,
Director-at-Large-Farms
Vice President: Dr. Amy Burk,
Director-at-Large-Individuals
Treasurer: Royce Herman,
Tuckahoe Equestrian Center
Secretary: Chris Bricker, Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association

Directors Present:

Director-at-Large-Businesses: Keith Wills, Farm Credit
Director-at-Large-Businesses: Crystal Brumme Kimball, *The Equiery*
Director-at-Large-Farms: Jane Seigler, Reddemeade
Director-at-Large-Farms: Karen Fulton, Full Moon Farm
Director-at-Large-Individuals: Michael Erskine
Director-at-Large-Individuals: Beverly Raymond
Director-at-Large-Individuals: Rob Burk
Director-at-Large-Youth: Daryll Ann Buschling
Carroll County Equestrian Center: Joseph Zentgraf
Chesapeake Plantation Walking Horse Club: Jacquelyn Cowan
Days End Farm Rescue, Inc.: Kathleen Howe
Equine Rescue and Rehabilitation, Inc.: Deborah Rollins-Frank
Howard County Iron Bridge Hounds: Crystal Kimball
League of Maryland Horseman: Kathy Dobson
Maryland 4-H Program: Kristen Wilson

MHC Quarterly Meeting of the Board of Directors

Open to All Members and Guests

Tuesday, May 18, 2010

6pm reception • 7pm meeting

Show Place Arena

14900 Pennsylvania Ave., Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

For more information, or to join MHC, please visit

www.mdhorsecouncil.org

MD Equestrian Foundation/Rosaryville Cons.: Dorothy Troutman
Marlborough Hunt Club: Christy Clagett
Maryland Association of Equine Practitioners: Michael Erskine
Maryland Association of Wildlife Conservation: Patty Sasscer
Maryland Combined Training Association: Cathy Tucker-Slaterbeck
Maryland Farriers Association: Doug Anderson
Maryland Horse Breeders Association: Cricket Goodall
Maryland Jockey Club: Carrie Everly
Maryland Steeplechase Association: Crystal Kimball
Mid-Atlantic Saddlebred Association: David Turner
New Market Middletown Valley Hounds: Guillermon Warley
Prince George's Equestrian Center, Show Place Arena: Elizabeth Yewell

Trail Riders of Today (TROT): Ron McNab
Tuckahoe Equestrian Center: Royce Herman

Directors Absent:

Director-at-Large-Individuals: Fred Lewis
Director-at-Large-Youth: Daryll Ann Buschling
Cloverleaf Standardbred Owners Association: Sharon Roberts
Fair Hill International, Inc.: Trish Gilbert
Graham Equestrian Center: Jim McDonald
Howard County Horse Show Association:

Mary Anne Steele
Humane Society of Carroll County: Nicky Ratliff
Maryland Dressage Association: Margaret Wilterdink
Maryland Horse Shows Association: Alan Lohman
Maryland Standardbred Association: Felicia Hilleary
Maryland State Quarter Horse Association: Terry Christensen
Pasadena Horse and Pony Association: Allison Asti
Plantation Walking Horses of Maryland: vacant
Potomac Hunt Club: Charlie Mess
Potomac Valley Dressage Association: Deanna Beall
Oatlands Stables, Inc.: Chrissy Keys Heard
Ranger Foundation, Inc.: Barbara Kraft
Washington International Horse Show: Debbie Blair
Wicomico Hunt Club: Jane Rhoades

MARYLAND HORSE COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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