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COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS GAMING COMMISSION
PUBLIC MEETING

RE: RUNNING HORSE RACING LICENSE APPLICATION

COMMISSIONERS:

Gayle Cameron

Bruce W. Stebbins

October 21, 2014 10:00 a.m.

OFFICE OF THE DIVISION OF INSURANCE

1000 Washington Street, Room 1F

Boston, Massachusetts 02118

1 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Good morning
2 everyone. Today is Tuesday October 21st.
3 This is a public hearing before the
4 Massachusetts Gaming Commission. I'm
5 Commissioner Gayle Cameron representing the
6 commission today. Also present is
7 Commissioner Bruce Stebbins.

8 The hearing is being convened
9 pursuant to Massachusetts General Law,
10 Chapter 128A, Section 3. We are here today
11 in Boston to accept public comment on the
12 live racing application submitted by the New
13 England Horsemen's Benevolent Protective
14 Association for a live racing meet to be held
15 at Suffolk Downs.

16 Before we begin, the commission
17 would like to thank you all for being here
18 today. This is a public hearing. It is
19 critically important that you, the public, be
20 part of the process to ensure that the
21 commission achieves the best possible
22 results.

23 The purpose of this public hearing
24 is to offer any interested person or group an

1 opportunity to comment on the racing license
2 application. This is not a
3 question-and-answer period or a debate. Once
4 we begin, anyone who wishes to comment on the
5 proposal may raise their hand and be
6 recognized by the commission. This may
7 then proceed -- they may then proceed to
8 offer their comments.

9 The commission requests that all
10 speakers please identify themselves prior to
11 commenting, and please be sure to keep your
12 voices up, as this hearing is being recorded.
13 With that, we will now open the floor for
14 comment. Mr. Spadia, I hear you would like
15 to speak first, sir?

16 MR. SPADEA: Yes, I would. First of
17 all, I want to thank commissioner -- both
18 commissions, Ms. Cameron and Mr. Stebbins, for
19 allowing to us be here today.

20 As you realize, it's been a very
21 difficult time for our horsemen and our
22 people, and I'm the lucky gentleman that
23 happens to be here today to speak for a large
24 group of people.

1 As you both realize, the legislature
2 has designed this gaming bill with a stream
3 of revenue for our people so that they could
4 keep racing and keep our farms open. What is
5 very important about today, for us, is that
6 there are so many people that count on the
7 revenue stream that has been given to us from
8 casino gaming, if, naturally, the referendum
9 does not pass. And our farms in
10 Massachusetts, the agricultural landscape of
11 the state of Massachusetts, for some people
12 that probably don't realize it, there is
13 presently 6500 acres of open space in
14 Massachusetts. That represents somewhere
15 between 62 and 109 established breeding farms
16 of thoroughbreds. And on those farms there
17 are mares and stallions that our farmers have
18 bought and spent tremendous amounts of money
19 on maintaining them over the years.

20 And the only way that they have an
21 opportunity to earn any type of residual
22 income, if their offsprings are allowed to
23 race on a Massachusetts racetrack. And
24 that's because of something called Breeders

1 Awards that Massachusetts has a Mass.
2 breeding program, which is funded by the
3 revenues from a thoroughbred racetrack, which
4 is funded, also, by the revenues that the
5 legislatures are now going to make available
6 from casino gaming.

7 What's most important, without a
8 place to race, or a place to race those
9 thoroughbreds that have to eat 365 days a
10 year, that need labor-intensified people to
11 maintain them, thoroughbreds are not like any
12 other animal. They require constant
13 attention. They require veterinarian
14 services. They require blacksmith services,
15 and they're labor-intensifying. They eat
16 Christmas, and they eat Thanksgiving, and
17 they eat every holiday, and they have to be
18 maintained. And without the opportunity for
19 those farmers to earn revenue and run on a
20 Massachusetts thoroughbred track, those farms
21 will close, or become development and,
22 naturally, houses or some other type, but
23 that landscape is going to change. And that
24 goes from Rehoboth to the left, Salisbury to

1 the right, Martha's Vineyard on one side, to,
2 maybe, Sturbridge on the other side. And
3 there's farms throughout the whole state.

4 We only hope that what could happen
5 and happened in upper state New York, with
6 the added revenue for farms and how they've
7 grown, that can happen in Massachusetts. So
8 that's one side of the coin that I think a
9 lot of people aren't aware of. What will
10 happen to all those people, and all those
11 labor-intensified type of jobs, where those
12 people are older and their skills are not of
13 what they can today go out into the job
14 market.

15 They're not skilled type of
16 employment where they have skills to compete
17 in the job market today. They're people that
18 have been doing this for years and years, and
19 they're people that would be put at a big
20 disadvantage. And every one of those
21 communities where those farms are, there's
22 small businesses that live off those farms.
23 They buy, naturally, feed supplies. They
24 buy, naturally, fencing. They buy all the

1 things necessary to run a farm.

2 And then we have the other side of
3 the coin. Every year around March or April
4 Suffolk Downs would reopen, and we'd have 900
5 to 1500 intensified-labor people again that
6 will start to work again. And those goes
7 from anything like a backhoe driver or a
8 heavy equipment operator to a teller selling
9 tickets at the racetrack, or somebody serving
10 a drink in one of the rooms at the racetrack.

11 And then you have the backside of a
12 racetrack, where, maybe, 200 people move into
13 dormitories that are there that house, maybe,
14 somewhere of 900 people actively that will be
15 in that area spending money in those
16 communities. And without Suffolk Downs
17 reopening, those people, again, have done the
18 same profession for, maybe, 30 or 40 years
19 that have unskilled ability to be in the job
20 market. Those people are going to be without
21 employment.

22 Now, some of them, as I said, may be
23 on the roles of the state or whatever. We
24 are hoping that we can apply and have this

1 license so that we can work out some sort of
2 an arrangement with Suffolk Downs to continue
3 racing for the next three years. We've went
4 as far as trying to employ, and we have a
5 consultant that we have hired to help us with
6 this process. The executive director of the
7 HBPA, Bruce Patten is an engineer by trade,
8 and a very brilliant engineer by trade. I'm
9 a financial planner, and I own an insurance
10 agency. Bruce and have I both been in our
11 own industries for 40 years. We're not
12 racetrack managers. We have no expertise in
13 racetrack, and we don't pretend to have any
14 expertise.

15 So what we have done is, we've hired
16 Louis Raffetto, and I've presented his
17 credentials to Mr. Stebbins before the
18 meeting. And I'm going to ask Lou to say a
19 few words about why we've encompassed his
20 help to help us through this process.

21 And along the way, there is a number
22 of people in this room that have a large
23 interest in Massachusetts racing, whether it
24 be people that own farms that are here today,

1 or people that work at the racetrack. I've
2 tried to give you a very quick synopsis of
3 what this means to all of us. And this is
4 something that people's lives are at stake.
5 And I have not been able to sleep for the
6 last two weeks just thinking about today,
7 making sure that I say the things that are
8 important, because I know people's lives are
9 at stake here.

10 I look at George Brown, who's the
11 president of the Mass. Breeders, who's owned
12 a farm in Rehoboth or 50 years. That's all
13 he knows. It's different when you're
14 somebody like myself that has a business
15 that's altogether different. I can work
16 tomorrow morning no matter what happens.
17 George can't move Briar Hill Farm. It's in
18 Massachusetts. Lee can't move her farm, Lee
19 Loebelenz. There's a number of people like
20 that, that don't have that opportunity, and
21 they're not 25 years old anymore.

22 So without anymore, I'd like to
23 introduce Louis Raffetto, who's going to --
24 who we've hired as the consultant to work

1 with us, to talk a little bit more about what
2 his credentials are, and what he can do to
3 help us. Thank you.

4 MR. RAFFETTO: Good morning.

5 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Good morning,
6 sir.

7 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Good
8 morning.

9 MR. RAFFETTO: My name is
10 Lou Raffetto, I'm, fortunately, as consultant
11 for the HBPA. Just by way of background, my
12 history, I've actually been a horse trainer,
13 racing secretary. Hail from New Jersey. And
14 somehow, people thought I lost my mind when I
15 left Jersey in the confines of Monmouth Park
16 to come here in 1991 to reopen Suffolk Downs.
17 There were many times, at that point, that I
18 thought I was crazy. But I have to tell you,
19 having lived through nine years of glory days,
20 and I say glory days, the revival of the
21 MassCap and what we were able to do at that
22 time with Cigar coming here and other horses,
23 Skip Away, many other champions, we were very
24 proud of the team we put together and what we

1 accomplished during that time to make it
2 successful.

3 And, needless to say, two, three
4 weeks ago at the closing of Suffolk Downs,
5 and subsequently about a week or so later,
6 the death of Cigar, you know, it's a poynant
7 time for me because they were two key parts
8 of my professional career. I really
9 developed a true fondness for, not just
10 Suffolk Downs, but the people. I always had
11 a very good working relationship here.

12 I left Suffolk to go on and oversee
13 the Maryland Jockey Club for a number of
14 years, and been involved in some other
15 projects. But, at this point in time,
16 understanding the need and my relationship
17 with Mr. Spadea and a lot of the horsemen up
18 here, I see another opportunity -- another
19 challenge, to say the least, and certainly
20 understand the vastness of the challenge at
21 hand. But there is an industry that's, you
22 know, at risk here.

23 Obviously, Anthony speaks about the
24 farms and it's a key point, and the horsemen

1 at the track, and the employers. So what
2 we're -- what's at stake here are many, many
3 jobs, many lives. And understanding, again,
4 it's extremely -- it's going to be extremely
5 uphill battle. And if we can get that point
6 in time, if we're able to make a deal of some
7 sort with the owners of the racetrack. And
8 again, some of them I'm familiar with, having
9 worked for some of them at that point in time
10 when I was here, but as I like to say, you
11 know, that was a -- Lazarus came back from
12 the dead one time, and we're going to try to
13 one up it and bring Suffolk Downs back a
14 second time, given the opportunity and the
15 financial wherewithal.

16 So I'm happy to answer any questions
17 at any point in time, if you have any, but
18 that's -- those are my statements for right
19 now.

20 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: No questions.
21 We look forward to more information, when it's
22 available.

23 MR. RAFFETTO: Great. Thank you
24 very much.

1 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Someone else
2 to comment?

3 MS. SCOPA: Good morning.

4 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Good morning.

5 CHAIRMAN CROSBY: Good morning.

6 MS. SCOPA: My name is
7 Stephanie Scopa, and I am the executive
8 director of the Revere Chamber of Commerce. I
9 would first like to thank the commission for
10 the opportunity to speak today, in support of
11 the applicant, Suffolk Downs, and your
12 consideration of saving a great -- the great
13 sport of horse racing.

14 I come before you today,
15 representing several interests of someone who
16 supports the continuation of live racing at
17 Suffolk Downs. I am a lifelong resident of
18 East Boston, and now a very proud property
19 owner there.

20 Horse racing has always been a part
21 of my family. My father was a horse owner at
22 Suffolk Downs, and some of my best memories
23 of him are at the races. These experiences
24 taught me to appreciate the sport of horse

1 racing, and all the dedicated men and women
2 that work at Suffolk to keep this grand
3 tradition going. It is my hope that, by
4 sustaining racing at Suffolk Downs, families
5 will make cherished memories, like mine, for
6 years to come.

7 I hold a bachelor's degree in
8 criminal justice from the University of
9 Massachusetts Boston. I was a small business
10 owner for 15 years and, now, am the proud
11 executive director for the Revere Chamber,
12 working directly with small businesses in
13 order to fulfill their networking needs.

14 The reason I am supporting Suffolk
15 Downs' application is to keep live racing
16 because of the facility's commitment to local
17 business, like the ones in the chamber.

18 When we discuss Suffolk Downs, one
19 may not think small local business, but for
20 every function, celebration, dedication the
21 facility has, they use all local vendors.
22 Their local florist can ship floral. A small
23 Revere business and a proud member of
24 chamber, will lose Suffolk Downs as a most

1 beloved and loyal client. For years, Kinship
2 has provide the handsewn floral horse blanket
3 to Suffolk Downs' tribute to Sea Biscuit in
4 its annual Columbus Day parade. The senior
5 citizens of both Revere and East Boston will
6 not be able to have their annual Valentines
7 Day dance sponsored by Suffolk Downs, an
8 event they literally wait all year for. The
9 Boston Wounded Vet Run will have to find a
10 new ending venue to honor local veterans who
11 have served for our country. Frank's Suffolk
12 Diner, also a member of our chamber, will
13 lose her lunch crowd that consists of jockeys
14 and horsemen on a daily basis. Luigi's Pizza
15 will also suffer, along with Beachmont Roast
16 Beef, Dimino's Subs, Parkway Convenience,
17 Patriot Taxi, and Toretta's Bakery. A tiny
18 snapshot of many local businesses railing
19 from the loss of the track.

20 This decision has created a
21 spiraling effect on the local business
22 community. Businesses that relied on
23 Suffolk Downs for their purchasing and
24 patronage. The closing of Suffolk Downs is a

1 lost felt so deeply in our small community,
2 but most of all, causes our local businesses
3 to suffer great financial losses.

4 I can you that working directly with
5 Suffolk Downs on a chamber level has been a
6 great experience. They are active members of
7 our chamber, participating in all of our
8 chamber events, including all of our
9 community outreach, local networking, fund
10 raisers and charity events. They have a
11 longstanding record of being model
12 businessmen and really good neighbors. Their
13 doors have always been open to the city of
14 Revere events, including our annual community
15 awards night, helping us to recognize
16 outstanding businesses and individuals
17 throughout our community.

18 For the executive director of the
19 Revere Chamber of the Commerce, having a
20 facility such as Suffolk Downs continue to be
21 fully functioning as a racetrack is very
22 important in order to sustain our small
23 business community.

24 Again, as lifelong resident and

1 property owner in East Boston, a past small
2 business owner, a horse owner's daughter, and
3 the executive director of the Revere Chamber
4 of Commerce, I would recommend keeping live
5 racing at Suffolk Downs racetrack. Thank you
6 for your consideration.

7 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you.

8 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Thank you.

9 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Someone else
10 to speak? Sir. Mr. Brown.

11 MR. BROWN: I'd like to say a few
12 words. I know Anthony covered a lot of the
13 things that are important to us.

14 THE COURT REPORTER: Can you
15 identify yourself?

16 MR. BROWN: My name is George Brown,
17 and I'm chairman of the Massachusetts
18 Thoroughbred Breeder's Association.

19 So I'm speaking for all of the
20 farms. You were kind enough to come and see
21 my farm so -- there's a lot of farms out
22 there like mine, and they're all trying to do
23 the very same thing. And when the gaming
24 bill passed, we thought that we were finally

1 going to get a chance to make this breeding
2 industry into something big, like they've
3 done in all the other states that have
4 casinos and have racing. And so, everybody
5 got all excited and thought we were going to
6 have a great chance to do something.

7 The point is, without Suffolk Downs
8 racing there's no breeder's program because
9 it's funded by money from the -- from the
10 racing. We do have, now with the casino, we
11 do have some money coming from the casinos.
12 But if we don't have Suffolk Downs running,
13 there's no place to race for us so that money
14 can't get back to the farms, and that's a
15 problem.

16 And as Anthony mentioned, I don't
17 know if people realize how many people depend
18 on these farms for their living. I know with
19 all the people that work at my farm, and the
20 blacksmith comes every Friday and spends
21 practically the whole day there shoeing
22 horses. During the breeding season, the
23 veterinarians live at my place, just about.
24 And so they're -- you know, it's a big thing

1 for them. The feed companies and the people
2 that raise hay for us. The bedding. We have
3 a company that recycles wooden pallets and
4 makes them into bedding, and they -- they
5 provide our bedding for us, it's a recycling
6 company. And, also, we have, you know, the
7 farm equipment. So we're always going to the
8 tractor places, either buying equipment or
9 buying parts for them, or buying implements
10 that go with them. And I know Home Depot
11 loves to see me coming because I buy an awful
12 lot of lumber there for fencing, and horses
13 have a tendency to destroy their stalls for a
14 pastime, and so we have to repair the stalls
15 all the time. And so, we're always going to
16 Home Depot to buy lumber, and things,
17 hardware.

18 And the racetrack has been there for
19 an awful long time. And I know that it's --
20 it's a shame, if we can't keep it going,
21 because it's been there since the 30s, and
22 some of the biggest horses that ever raced,
23 raced there. And it's almost like closing
24 down a museum, if we close that track down,

1 because of all of the history, the past
2 history of that track. In fact, I was just
3 thinking last night, I said, if the track
4 does get a chance to reopen, it might be a
5 good idea to create a little museum at the
6 track, or racing museum, where we could
7 showcase some of the things that have
8 happened at that track over the years that,
9 maybe, people have forgotten about. And kind
10 of bring it back up so it's -- becomes
11 important again to people.

12 So I really would like to thank you,
13 and I hope you can do something to keep us
14 old farm guys going. Thank you.

15 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you,
16 Mr. Brown.

17 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Thank you.

18 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Sir, would
19 you like to speak?

20 MR. GUSTAFSON: I will.

21 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: I thought you
22 were getting up.

23 MR. GUSTAFSON: No, no, that's okay.
24 My name's Walt Gustafson. I've been on the

1 racetrack -- on the backside of racetrack
2 since 1972. Don't bother adding that up, how
3 many years that is. And, to say the least, I
4 think I've experienced it all. You know, I've
5 seen the comings and goings of both -- of all
6 the tracks in New England, virtually, back
7 when there was, what, 12, 13 or whatever. And
8 they've all -- they've all fallen by the
9 wayside one by one.

10 We did have -- and I just want to --
11 I want to get back to what Lou said. And
12 Mrs. Moseley is here. And it's because of
13 her husband, her ex-husband -- her husband,
14 he's past, and Lou, who was hired by
15 Mr. Moseley, that we did have -- in my
16 opinion, we had a resurrection. The industry
17 was resurrected, thanks to them. And we
18 really were headed in the right direction.

19 Unfortunately, it went, you know, it
20 kind of went the other way for awhile, and
21 I -- all I'm asking for, I think, is that
22 with the cooperation of you people, the HBPA,
23 Suffolk management, the racing commissioner,
24 Mr. Stoneberger, just the opportunity, again,

1 to bring it back to its glory days, the way
2 it was.

3 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you
4 very much.

5 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Thank you.

6 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Anyone else
7 like to provide comments? Why don't we do
8 this, why don't we take a recess from this
9 hearing, in case there's someone else that
10 would like to come in. We'll hold to -- it's
11 now, what, 11 -- 10:20? Maybe, until
12 11 o'clock. I know traffic is tough coming
13 into Boston sometimes, so why don't we suspend
14 and we'll be back at 11. And if there's
15 anyone -- any additional speakers, we will
16 hear from them at that time. Okay? Thank
17 you.

18
19 (A recess was taken)

20
21 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Okay. It's
22 five minutes of 11. You are all patient and
23 waited and -- but I thought it was important
24 if there was someone that came in late, we'd

1 give them an opportunity. So we'll reconvene
2 at this point. Is there someone who would
3 like to speak at this point? Okay. We will
4 officially close the hearing, then; is that
5 right?

6 COMMISSIONER STEBBINS: Did you want
7 to say something?

8 MR. BROOKER: Yeah, just the only
9 thing --

10 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Okay. Very
11 good.

12 MR. BROOKER: There's a lot of the
13 works on the backside of Suffolk Downs, who
14 would definitely like to see Suffolk Downs
15 reopen. It's been a good source of income for
16 many, including myself, for 43 years. It's in
17 a great location. The income to the state is
18 unrecognizable. Even what will be to the
19 increase of income to the MTA, which badly
20 needs money, will be. You're talking, they
21 pay the state 200 workers. When you consider
22 all the farmwork, the ancillaries, you're
23 talking over 2000 people being put out of
24 work. And a lot of them are at the age, like

1 myself, that when you put in that application,
2 they look at 79 years old, even though I
3 outwork half my age, it goes in the circular
4 file.

5 Same thing, a lot of these groomers,
6 they're good people, honest people. They
7 love horse racing. They put in an
8 application, what have you done for the last,
9 five, 20 years? Very grossly, I shoveled
10 shit. Who's going to hire them? Some of
11 them have good education and are intelligent
12 people.

13 So I would highly recommend the
14 state recharge their law, allow more than one
15 casino, because it's not like Atlantic City,
16 one abutting the other. That's in two
17 separate cities. And you relieve traffic,
18 congestion, and concerns about pollution, and
19 put more people back to work. And I hope you
20 consider this. Thank you.

21 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Thank you
22 Mr. Brook. Could you state your name for the
23 record?

24 MR. BROOKER: Excuse me?

1 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Could you
2 just state your name for the record?

3 MR. BROOKER: Oh, Paul C. Brooker.
4 Director of the International Union Journeymen
5 Horseshoers.

6 COMMISSIONER CAMERON: Okay. Anyone
7 else that would like to speak before we close
8 the hearing? Okay. We'll officially close
9 the hearing. Thank you all for coming, and
10 for providing comments. It's very helpful.
11 Thanks.

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13 (Proceeding concluded at 10:58 a.m.)
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1 GUEST SPEAKERS:

2 Anthony Spadea

3 Lou Raffetto, Jr.

4 Stephanie Scopa

5 George Brown

6 Walt Gustafson

7 Paul C. Brooker

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C E R T I F I C A T E

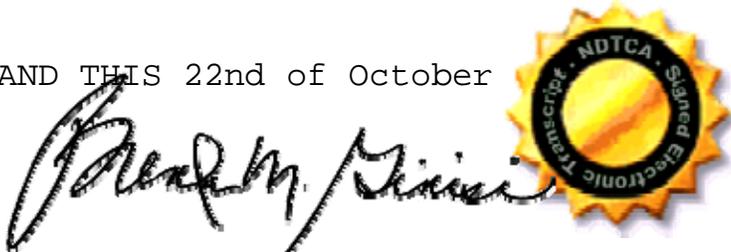
I, Brenda M. Ginisi, Court Reporter, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and accurate transcript from the record of the proceedings.

I, Brenda M. Ginisi, further certify that the foregoing is in compliance with the Administrative Office of the Trial Court Directive of Transcript Format.

I, Brenda M. Ginisi, further certify that I neither am counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which this hearing was taken and further that I am not financially nor otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

Proceedings recorded by verbatim means, and transcript produced from computer.

WITNESS MY HAND THIS 22nd of October 2014.



BRENDA M. GINISI
Notary Public

My Commission expires:
July 11, 2014