

**LOUISIANA STATE RACING COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES – December 13, 2021 Meeting**  
*As transcribed by Barbara S. McGee, Certified Court Reporter*

**COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Benjamin J. Guilbeau, Jr., *Chairman*  
Louis Reine, *First Vice Chair*  
Dr. Patrick Bernard, *Second Vice Chair*  
Thomas B. Calvert  
Lane T. Cortez  
Eddie J. Delahoussaye  
K. R. "Ron" Finkelstein, O.D.  
Roy Griggs  
Peter J. Hamilton III  
Mike R. McHalfey  
Deano Thornton

**ABSENT**

Leslie M. Bouie  
Donald "Don" Cravins

The meeting of the Louisiana State Racing Commission (LSRC) was called to order by the Chairman on Monday, December 13, 2021 at 10:00 AM on the Zoom Conference Call. Roll call was taken; a quorum was present.

**I. ASSOCIATION REQUESTS**

**A. BOYD RACING, LLC d/b/a DELTA DOWNS RACETRACK, CASINO & HOTEL**

**2021-2022 THOROUGHBRED MEET**

**1. ACTION TO ADDRESS LIGHTING ISSUES:**

- a. Consideration** of returning to night racing on Fridays and Saturdays as previously approved for Delta Downs' 2021-2022 Thoroughbred Meet.

Mr. Steve Kuypers, Vice President and General Manager of Delta Downs, informs that the suggested adjustments from Cooper Lighting to fix concerns presented by the jockeys has been completed, including adding lower support brackets to 36 poles, adding 64 new light fixtures to those brackets, and re-aiming fixtures to adjust coverage. He states that they got Mr. John Stewart, President of Encompass Develop, Design & Construct, LLC, to evaluate their lighting and issue a report. He says that Mr. Stewart inspected the lighting on November 30, 2021 and only reported three areas that need to be adjusted, which were all fixed the next day. He states that they met with jockeys and trainers on December 2, 2021 to show them the corrected lighting.

Mr. Benard Chatters, President of Louisiana Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association (LaHBPA), informs that LaHBPA is in support of returning to the previously approved schedule with night racing on Fridays and Saturdays.

Ms. Mindy Coleman, Attorney for Jockeys' Guild, informs that they submitted a letter to LSRC, which covers the grave concerns that the jockeys still have about night racing safety hazards that Delta Downs needs to address with its lighting system.

Mr. Tye Kennedy, Licensed Jockey at Delta Downs, informs that the jockeys are concerned with the inconsistencies of distribution of lighting that include shadows and hot spots on the racetrack. He states that these inconsistencies create racing hazards for jockeys and their horses, especially with shipped-in horses that don't train at Delta Downs and are unfamiliar with the track lighting inconsistencies at race time. Commissioner Calvert asks what he means exactly by inconsistencies. Mr. Kennedy responds that the distribution of lighting is not uniform, as there are various bright spots and dim spots around the racetrack.

Mr. Timothy Thornton, Licensed Jockey at Delta Downs, informs that he agrees with Mr. Kennedy's concerns as stated and is willing to race whenever scheduled at night as long as the lighting issues are resolved.

The Chairman asks if there are specific areas of the racetrack with lighting issues that can be articulated by the jockeys. Ms. Coleman responds that it isn't one specific area of lighting that they want to be corrected but the placement of lighting, specifically that the lights are low-hanging, straight drop down beams as opposed to being higher and projecting out more evenly. The Chairman asks if the Jockeys' Guild has gotten a consultant to present a report of findings on these lighting issues. Ms. Coleman responds that they have not and did not anticipate that it would be requested of them.

Commissioner Reine asks if the parties will continue to monitor the lighting situation and make improvements as needed is if the Commission approves this request today. Ms. Coleman responds that the Jockeys' Guild will continue to discuss this issue with its members but will defer to the opinions and safety of the jockeys. Ms. Janet Boles, Attorney for Boyd Gaming, and Mr. Kuypers respond that Delta Downs already does and will continue to meet with the jockeys to address their concerns.

Commissioner Calvert asks if the lighting situation is so unsafe that any of the jockeys would refuse to ride at Delta Downs at night if the request is approved. Mr. Kennedy responds that jockeys have been unanimously voting to not ride at night at Delta Downs so far with their current lighting situation. Ms. Coleman states that these types of decision votes are done as a jockey colony rather than individuals to avoid retributions that have occurred to individual jockeys expressing their concerns in the past.

Mr. Gerard Melancon, Licensed Jockey at Delta Downs, states that the lighting was supposed to be 170 feet high to properly dispel shadows. Ms. Boles responds that the height of the lighting was decided by the expert recommendation of Cooper Lighting.

Commissioner Thornton requests that the submitted pictures of the lighting be addressed. Mr. Kennedy states that the pictures shared in the Zoom chat were taken on December 2, 2021 when Mr. Kuypers was presenting the finished lighting work. Mr. Kuypers claims that the pictures being presented include some from two months ago rather than December 2, 2021. Ms. Coleman apologizes if that is the case.

Commissioner Reine motions to postpone voting on Delta Downs' return to nighttime racing for 30 days; Commissioner Bernard seconds; motion carries

The Chairman requests that Ms. Coleman and the Jockeys' Guild present a potential solution to this issue that would satisfy their members to return to daytime racing at Delta Downs and that Boyd Gaming meet with their lighting experts and the jockeys to try to address the jockeys' specific concerns. He asks that the Jockeys' Guild resubmit their photo packet to ensure that they reflect current lighting issues.

Commissioner Thornton motions to approve Friday and Saturday daytime racing at Delta Downs for 30 days; Commissioner Bernard seconds; motion carries.

## **II. ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioners motion to adjourn; Commissioners second; motion carries.



---

Charles A. Gardiner III  
Executive Director