



LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY

MIKE STRAIN, COMMISSIONER



MINUTES

LOUISIANA EQUINE PROMOTION AND RESEARCH BOARD MEETING

January 11, 2022

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY
VETERANS MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM
5825 FLORIDA BOULEVARD, 1ST FLOOR
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA 70806

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was held in-person and via Zoom and was called to order by Chairman Dr. Neely Heidorn at 10:00a.m.

PLEDGE

Dr. Neely Heidorn led the pledge of allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken by Dr. Neely Heidorn

Members present:

Jim Gauthier, Dr. Neely Heidorn, Marc Browning, Dr. Frank Andrews, Whitney Boyce, Raegan Comeaux, Bernard Chatters, Edwin Fenasci, Anita Hefler, Bill Davis, Lyle Guillory, Roger Heitzmann, John Boudreaux, and Ron Harrell

Members present via Zoom:

Sky Wright, Anita Hefler

Members absent:

Lt. Governor Bill Nungesser, Dr. Frank Andrews

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

OPENING STATEMENTS

Commissioner Strain called in via Zoom and thanked the board for getting together again and for all the progress they have accomplished. He spoke of the legislative session coming up and all that can be done for this board during this session.



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APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Lyle Guillory made a motion to approve minutes as written; it was seconded by Edwin Fenasci. Motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Bernard Chatters made a motion to add an item to the agenda, to allow Dillon LaCour with the Livestock Brand Commission Enforcement Officers to introduce the department; it was seconded by Marc Browning. Motion passed unanimously.

Dillon LaCour introduced himself and the Director Jesse Perry, who was unable to attend the meeting. Dillon spoke of how the state is broken up into four regions, covered by Brand Inspectors, Carnie Burcham, Jared Steward, J.D. Fail and himself. He also spoke of how they investigate theft of livestock and farm equipment and how they work closely with the Sheriff's offices to help solve these crimes. Dillon spoke about the lifetime brand that will become available on March 20, 2022, and there will be a onetime fee of \$75 to obtain a lifetime brand.

Kevin Wofford spoke about the number of investigations that occurred last year which was about 260 and the recovery of stolen livestock and farm equipment which totaled around \$300,000 in recovery of stolen items and livestock.

Julie Calzone, former employee with the Economic Development spoke about the potential to build an Equine Facility in St. Tammany Parish. She spoke of how she would like the horse industry to be a superstar within the state of Louisiana. She discussed the potential for an Economic Development and spoke with stakeholders and business owners in St. Tammany Parish and how they would support this as a driver for the Parish.

Todd Whalley spoke about how he came from the Tourism side of Government. He spoke about how the business owners in St. Tammany Parish are excited about the prospect of an Equine Facility being built in the parish.

Raegan Comeaux spoke about St. Tammany and Tangipahoa sites and the need to have the facility close to the interstate and New Orleans.

John Boudreaux thanked Julie and Todd for the presentation but said we need to work on getting funding to get this started.

Roger Heitzmann asked that all types of Equine footings are taken care of, Thoroughbreds, Quarter Horses, Cutters, Jumpers, etc.



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Jim Gauthier spoke about the economic impact of the facility in Fort Worth and how research can be done to follow in their plans.

Dr. Heidorn introduced Senator Hensgens and Ronnie Johns who will speak about the sports betting and potential funding options.

John Boudreaux introduced Senator Hensgens as the person who introduced the legislature to form the board and got the Equine Board approved through the legislature.

Senator Hensgens thanked John Boudreaux for bringing the bill to his office and thanked the Commissioner and Farm Bureau for helping him to come up with the draft for the bill.

Ronnie Johns, former Legislator and Senator introduced himself. He spoke about Governor Edwards appointing him as Chairman of the Louisiana Gaming Control Board. He is the head regulator for all gaming in the state of Louisiana. He gave a breakdown of the Gaming Industry and where the money is and where it goes. Legislature determines where the money goes. Gaming Industry is the largest source of private industry revenue for our state budget, right at about a billion dollars a year. Ronnie spoke of the percentage of the funds being distributed for programs. Legislative session starts March 14 and goes to June 6, 2022, so suggestion is to move quickly to for Legislation to be created for funds for the Equine Board. Suggested approaching Senator Cortez to help get bill to create fund for board.

Dr. Heidorn spoke on education of Equine Board and economic impact of having the board.

Bernard Chatters asked if there will be a vote to determine if the facility will be in St. Tammany.

Marc Browning suggested they request a meeting with Senator Cortez as soon as possible.

Amy McInnis thanked the board for being so diligent on completing their Sexual Harassment courses and returning the forms for 2021. Amy spoke on the Annual Report and said it has been filed. Amy also spoke on the Resolution for the Delegation of Authority for Sexual Harassment.

Dr. Heidorn asked for a vote for the Resolution.

Marc Browning made the motion, and it was seconded by Edwin Fenasci; motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None



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DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, February 1, 2022 – 9:00 AM

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Marc Browning asked for a motion to adjourn; it was seconded by Jim Gauthier. Motion passed unanimously.