



Massachusetts Gaming Commission Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: March 16, 2020 –10:00 a.m.

Place: Massachusetts Gaming Commission
VIA CONFERENCE CALL NUMBER: 1-646-741-5293
MEETING ID: 111 844 0957

Present: Chair Cathy Judd-Stein
Commissioner Gayle Cameron
Commissioner Enrique Zuniga
Commissioner Bruce Stebbins
Commissioner Eileen O'Brien

The Commission held this public meeting utilizing remote collaboration technology. Hyperlinks to the corresponding audio are in each time entry.

Call to Order

[10:00 a.m.](#) Chair Cathy Judd-Stein called to order public meeting #293 of the Massachusetts Gaming Commission. This is an emergency meeting in response to the unprecedented circumstances resulting from the global Coronavirus pandemic. This meeting is being held pursuant to [M.G.L. c. 30A, § 20\(b\)](#).

The Chair stated that the agenda-setting meeting for Wednesday, March 18th, is canceled and will be rescheduled.

The governor's office has issued several orders regarding COVID-19 that include the closing of businesses and schools for three weeks, as well as limiting gatherings to no more than 25 people. From this, the Commission determined a need for an emergency public meeting regarding the licensees.

Executive Staff Update

10:03 a.m. **Update on the Temporary Suspension of Operations of Gaming Licensees in light of the Coronavirus**

Interim Executive Director Karen Wells thanked the licensees for working so expediently and quickly with preparations for closing their operations. With her on the call are Massachusetts State Police (“MSP”) Captain/Commanding Officer of the MSP Gaming Enforcement Unit (“GEU”) Brian Connors; Investigations and Enforcement Unit (“IEB”) Assistant Director/Gaming Agents Division Chief Bruce Band, and representatives from Encore Boston Harbor, MGM Springfield, and Plainridge Park Casino.

10:06 a.m. Captain Connors updated the Commission on closing operations from Saturday evening through Sunday morning. Planning and implementing of closing procedures proved smooth across all three properties. Captain Connors also reported that there were significantly fewer crowds at each property than anticipated, which was beneficial. He commended the licensees' staff, security departments, managers, and executives for their collaborative, efficient work.

10:08 a.m. The licensees made remarks regarding the closing process at each property. President of Encore Boston Harbor Brian Gullbrants, Vice President/General Counsel of MGM Springfield Seth Stratton, and General Manager of Plainridge Park Casino (“PPC”) Lance George each stated that their casino’s closing was executed as planned, and all went smoothly.

10:12 a.m. Field Manager of Gaming Operations/Deputy Gaming Agent Division Chief Burke Cain stated that the closings went successfully. He reported all steps taken to secure gaming equipment, alcohol outlets, and commercial outlets. Security and surveillance are staffed and onsite. GEU security will be onsite 24/7 with casino security.

10:14 a.m. Commissioner Stebbins thanked all of the team members and licensees for working well together. He asked whether the MGM Springfield parking garage will stay available for community workers. Mr. Stratton replied that the garage is closed to the public along with the rest of the facility. Proper notice has been issued.

The Chair thanked the IEB, GEU, and casino licensees for all of their collaboration and efforts.

10:19 a.m. **Report on the Operational Status of Simulcasting and Advance Deposit Wagering (ADW) in light of the Coronavirus**

Director of Racing Dr. Alexandra Lightbown reported on the closing operations for racing. With her on the call are Plainridge Racecourse General Manager Steve O’Toole, Suffolk Downs COO Chip Tuttle, and Raynham Park Owner George Carney.

Dr. Lightbown reported that Plainridge Racecourse conducted parallel closing operations with PPC. Suffolk Downs discontinued its operations Saturday at 6:00 p.m., and Raynham Park continued to operate yesterday.

[10:20 a.m.](#) Mr. O'Toole reported that staff members were onsite to inform patrons that they would not be simulcasting for at least a few weeks. He requested an update from the Commission for guidance regarding the upcoming live meet. The Chair noted that she would like this on the agenda to be addressed at a Commission meeting.

Dr. Lightbown stated that there have been cases of COVID-19 in the racing community, now resulting in two deaths. She said that there is a great deal of interaction between the harness horsemen at the tracks throughout the New York and New Jersey region, raising concern about opening day, currently scheduled for April 6th. Dr. Lightbown added that there are also preliminary races to prepare for opening day as well. Mr. O'Toole stated he is concerned that there are numerous horsemen that work in a confined, closed area together. He opined that programs should be postponed at least throughout the month of April, and noted that professional sports have delayed activities as far out as June.

[10:28 a.m.](#) Commissioner Cameron will hold a virtual meeting with Mr. O'Toole and Dr. Lightbown, and be prepared to give a recommendation to the full Commission in the near future by means of a public Commission meeting.

Next, Mr. O'Toole addressed simulcasting. He stated that Plainridge Racecourse's Advance-Deposit Wagering ("ADW") online wagering platform is [Hollywood Races](#), and is still taking wagers at this time unless the Commission feels that they should not do so.

[10:31 a.m.](#) At the Chair's request, IEB Lillios explained the functionality of the ADW online platform. She stated that there might be some tellers working onsite in Massachusetts for telephone betting; however, the number of tellers is below 25. Dr. Lightbown stated that it might be only Raynham Park that conducts telephone betting. Mr. O'Toole affirmed that Plainridge Racetrack's call center is located in Oregon.

[10:33 a.m.](#) Mr. Tuttle stated that Suffolk Downs executed an orderly transition, similar to the other licensees, continuing ADW operations similar to Plainridge Racetrack, as it does not require any employees onsite for that to continue. Employees are all home except for some management and accounting employees, as well as some cleaning staff.

[10:40 a.m.](#) Dr. Lightbown stated that Raynham Park has a small clientele under 250; however, the new directive from the governor's office restricting gatherings no more than 25 people, along with closing restaurants, will affect Raynham Park. Mr. Carney stated that the park will shut down as a result.

[10:40 a.m.](#) In response to Commissioner Cameron's inquiry regarding the closing of Raynham Park, Mr. Carney replied that the operation did not open for business today. ADW operations are also shut down.

Other Business

[10:43 a.m.](#) **Request for Deadline Extension for (Wynn) Independent Monitor’s Report**
The Chair stated that the Commission had extended the reporting deadline for Encore regarding the independent monitor to the end of March. Commissioner O’Brien stated that Encore reached out this morning for clarification on this deadline, under the circumstances. She then moved to extend the deadline to April 30th.

Commissioner O’Brien affirmed that the reason for her motion to extend a courtesy to the independent monitor, as they are experiencing similar circumstances at their location in Las Vegas.

[10:47 a.m.](#) *Commissioner O’Brien moved that the current deadline for the six-month baseline presentation by the independent monitor to the Gaming Commission be extended from its current date to no later than April 30, 2020. The Commission shall reserve the right to revisit the matter periodically, but no later than March 29, 2020. Commissioner Zuniga seconded the motion.*

Roll call vote:

Commissioner Stebbins: Aye.

Commissioner Zuniga: Aye.

Commissioner O’Brien: Aye.

Commissioner Cameron: Aye.

Chair Judd-Stein: Aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

[10:48 a.m.](#) *With no further business, Commissioner Stebbins moved to adjourn. Commissioner Zuniga seconded the motion.*

Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Cameron: Aye.

Commissioner O’Brien: Aye.

Commissioner Zuniga: Aye.

Commissioner Stebbins: Aye.

Chair Judd-Stein: Aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

List of Documents and Other Items Used

1. Notice of Meeting and Agenda dated March 15, 2020

/s/ Bruce Stebbins
Secretary