

Stephanie B. Nixon, *Chair*  
John F. Tanner, Jr., *Vice Chair*  
Bette Brand  
Gillian Gordon-Moore  
Stuart C. Siegel

Waqas Ahmed  
*Executive Secretary*



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### **Minutes of the Commission Meeting Held February 14, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.**

**Location:** State Corporation Commission, Tyler Building, Courtroom C, 1300 East Main Street, Richmond, Virginia

**In Attendance**

**Commission Members** Stephanie B. Nixon, Chair  
John F. Tanner, Jr., Vice Chair (attending remotely due to distance)  
Bette Brand  
Gillian Gordon-Moore  
Stuart C. Siegel

**Commission Staff** Waqas Ahmed, Executive Secretary  
Ada Caruthers, Equine Medical Director  
Andy Conway, General Admin Manager  
Yolanda Lopez Macias, Commission Veterinarian  
Kimberly Mackey, Director of Operations  
Elizabeth B. Myers, Counsel  
Israel Saavedra, Compliance Officer

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The February 14, 2025, meeting of the Virginia Racing Commission (VRC) was called to order by Chair Stephanie B. Nixon at 1:00 p.m. A roll call confirmed the presence of Vice Chair John F. Tanner, Jr. (participating remotely due to distance), Commissioner Bette Brand, Commissioner Gillian Gordon Moore, and Commissioner Stuart C. Siegel. With a quorum established, Chair Nixon began the meeting.

Chair Nixon acknowledged the passing of Larry Johnson. Larry was a longtime owner and former Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association Vice President. Also, the Virginia Racing Commission expressed its sincere gratitude to the Office of the Inspector General for delivering a thorough, one-of-a-kind performance review.

During the initial comment period, Dan Schmitt, Chair of the Board of Supervisors for the Brookland District in Henrico County, spoke regarding the opposition to the proposed Rosie's in Henrico County. John Vithoukias, County Manager for Henrico County, spoke to the location the proposed Rosie's.

The VRC reviewed the minutes from the December 3, 2024, meeting without amendment. A motion to approve the minutes was made and unanimously carried.

Dr. Al Griffin, Co-Chair of the Virginia Gold Cup Association, serves as the Director of Racing for the Virginia Gold Cup. The Virginia Gold Cup will be held on May 3, 2025, and the International Gold Cup will be held on October 25, 2025.

Frank Hopf, Senior Director of Racing Operations gave an update regarding the 2025 Virginia Derby.

The next meeting of the Commission is scheduled for March 26, 2025, at the State Corporation Commission, Tyler Building, Courtroom C, Richmond, Virginia.

Representatives from the Shenandoah County Agricultural Foundation, Inc's team, Darrell Wood, Aidan Turnage-Barney, and Debbie Warnick gave an update regarding activities that will be conducted at the Spring meet to include simulcasting on the Triple Crown races: Kentucky Derby, Preakness, and Belmont Stakes. The VRC reviewed the application for a limited license to conduct race meeting in 2025. A motion to approve the limited license was made and unanimously carried.

The Commission moved to approve the Virginia Downs Foundation limited license to conduct a race meeting in 2025. A motion to approve the limited license was made and unanimously carried.

Debbie Easter, Executive Director of the Virginia Thoroughbred Association, and Debbie Warnick, Executive Director of the Virginia Harness Horse Association, gave an update on the Virginia Breeders Fund Distribution for 2024. The VTA and the VHHA agree \$2,561,846 will be split 80/20: eighty percent to the Thoroughbreds and twenty percent to the Standardbreds. Going forward, rewards be disbursed using this percentage. A motion to approve the disbursement was made and passed with Commissioners Brand, Siegel, and Vice Chair Tanner, and Chair Nixon voting in favor of approving the distribution for 2024. Commissioner Gordon Moore abstained pursuant to §2.2-3112.

The Commission moved to approve the joint request from Colonial Downs Group, LLC and Virginia Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association to reduce retainage. A motion to approve the joint request was made and unanimously carried.

The Commission moved to authorize the Executive Secretary to enter into a Voluntary Implementation Agreement for 2025. A motion to approve was made and unanimously carried.

Pursuant to §59.1-392(S), the Commission moved to approve the Virginia Harness Horse Association's (VHHA) request to "withdraw for administrative costs associated with servicing the interests of the horsemen an amount not to exceed two percent of the amount in the horsemen's (purse) account." A motion to approve was made and unanimously carried.

The Commission moved to approve the Virginia Harness Horse Association's (VHHA) request for disbursement of benevolence funds. A motion to approve was made and unanimously carried.

There were no comments during the last public comment period.

With no further business, Chair Nixon entertained a motion to adjourn. The motion was unanimously approved, and the meeting concluded at 2:30 p.m.

