

Minutes: Meeting of the Metropolitan Government Board of Fair Commissioners
Date: February 11, 2020 8:00 a.m.

On the above referenced date, the February meeting for the Board of Fair Commissioners was held in Expo 3 at the Fairgrounds. Those in attendance were Chairman Ned Horton, Vice-Chairman Erin McAnally, Commissioner Caleb Hemmer, Commissioner Bonna Johnson and Commissioner Jason Bergeron. Also present were Fairgrounds Executive Director Laura Womack and Finance and Administrative Manager Felicia Bowman. Metro Attorney Alex Dickerson was also in attendance. Ron Gobbell and Michelle Scopel with Gobbell Hays Partners (GHP) were present. Ed Henley with Pillars Development was in attendance, as well as Roxianne Bethune with Alliance Synergy.

Chairman Horton called the meeting to order and the Board then went into Executive Session. After the Executive Session, Metro Attorney, Alex Dickerson, explained that the purpose of the Executive Session was to discuss the ongoing litigation and that, because of the client/attorney privilege, this session was private.

The Appeal Announcement was then read, and Chairman Horton moved to the approval of the January meeting minutes. Vice-Chairman McAnally made a motion to approve and Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion. All were in favor and the minutes were passed. Since there were no public comments, Chairman Horton moved to the Financial Report.

Ms. Bowman gave a brief monthly report. Chairman Horton then moved to the Executive Director's Report.

Director Womack reported that Felicia Bowman had given her notice and was moving to the private sector and thanked her for her hard work and added that she would be missed. She stated that they had already started their search for her replacement. Director Womack stated that, as part of the budget process, the Mayor's Office had asked departments to report metrics that were tracked and submit with their budget. She stated that they were just now getting their end of the year projection numbers. She stated that a bill had been filed through the State allowing them to collect revenue on beer and alcohol sales and they were just waiting to hear from that. She reported that they were in the drafting stage with Track Enterprises for the 2020 racing season. There was a discussion on Corporate Sales and sales strategies and recruiting more events and Director Womack stated that she, along with Vice-Chairman McAnally, was working on an Open House for event promoters to see the new space. Chairman Horton then moved to Old Business and the Fairgrounds Improvement Project Update item on the agenda.

Mr. Henley went over the project numbers and updates and reported that there had been no movement on demolition yet. There were a few questions about the soccer fields in Fair Park. Director Womack added that they were meeting with Parks that next week to discuss scheduling of the fields. Mr. Gobbell reported that the Election Commission building had been demolished and that they should be completed with this part of the project in a few months. He stated that they were just waiting on a decision from the Mayor's Office concerning the stadium.

Commissioner Bergeron then spoke about the stadium situation and stated that they were "a long way off" from approving a racing deal and that SMI (Speedway Motorsports Inc.) had nothing to do with the stadium issue and that the buildings needed to be demolished. He then made a motion/resolution stating, "*I make a motion that the Board encourage the Mayor's Office to commence with the MLS stadium project as soon as possible.*" Commissioner Hemmer seconded the motion. Chairman Horton asked if it was proper to make this motion without a notice and Mr. Dickerson answered that it was appropriately noticed enough to vote. There were several comments from the Commissioners, and someone suggested that the Board write a letter to the Administration expressing their support to start the demolition. Mr. Dickerson stated that they would either need to wait until the March meeting to vote on the letter (since it was not noticed) or they could make a motion to appoint one of the Board Members to draft the letter. There was more discussion and Commissioner Bergeron stressed again that these two issues (the racetrack and the stadium/demo) needed to be decoupled and that the racetrack issue still needed to go through the same process that the stadium had to, which was quite lengthy. After a few quick questions about the process of writing the letter, Commissioner Bergeron then amended his motion stating, "*The Board designates Vice-Chairman McAnally to work with the Executive Director on the preparation of a letter to the Mayor's Office encouraging them to approve plans/move ahead for this Fairgrounds and that any thoughts or beliefs from other Commissioners should be directed to the Executive Director.*" Commissioner Hemmer seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion was passed. Chairman Horton then moved to the Contract with Formosa Productions item on the agenda.

Director Womack reported that the 90 days' termination notice for the contract with the Formosa's had occurred. She stated that she had sent both email notices and certified mail notices to the Formosa's as well. She stated that she and staff had done an inspection walk-through with Mr. Formosa on the day before and that they still had some personal property on the site so they would have to follow up once everything was removed. Ms. Bowman stated that approximately \$180,000 was still owed to the Fairgrounds. Commissioner Hemmer then made a motion stating, *"I move to request that the Department of Law take action to recover sums owed to the Fairgrounds as part of the terminated contract with the Formosa's."* Vice-Chairman McAnally seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion was passed. Jim Roberts, the attorney for Mr. Formosa, questioned the 90 days stating that the 90 days would be the following Monday (and not the past Monday) and asked the Board to take that into consideration when moving out of the property. Chairman Horton then moved to the Demolition of the Old Buildings item on the agenda.

Many of the Board expressed the desire again for the Mayor's Office to go ahead and approve the demolition and there was a brief discussion. Director Womack stated that they were having several expenses from the old existing buildings since the demo had been delayed. Chairman Horton then asked Fair Manager, Scott Jones, if he had any comments concerning the State Fair.

Mr. Jones reported that the State Fair was moving forward towards having the fair on the property for 2020 and added that they had been meeting with the Mayor's Office. He stated that, although the fair would not be like the historical fair in the past, he was "pretty confident they could definitely put on a good fair here." Director Womack suggested that the Board designate one of the members at the next meeting to work on the 2020 State Fair contract. Mr. Jones expressed some of his concerns about some of the issues still pending. He stated that there were still a lot of unanswered questions about construction, parking, RV issues, tying down animals, the sanitation lot, etc. He also stated that he was concerned that there would be more issues to come (concerning enough space) for the fair "as you carve off for different uses." Commissioner Hemmer asked that Director Womack be included in the meetings with the Mayor's Office about these concerns. Mr. Jones stated that the Board would need to get with the State Commission concerning the future of the fair and any other footprint that might be big enough. He added that an EOI had been sent out to all the county mayors. Commissioner Bergeron stated again that the Board had not heard from Mr. Rose in a long time and that they would love to talk with him in person. He added that they needed to have good discussions every year to make adjustments.

Commissioner Hemmer then made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Bergeron seconded and the meeting was dismissed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ned Horton, Chairman

Laura Womack, Executive Director