

MARYLAND HORSE INDUSTRY BOARD
Minutes of the Board Meeting
September 12, 2024

Meeting held IN PERSON at “Ruppert’s Roost” Meeting Center, Therapeutic Riding & Recreational Center (TRRC), 3750 Shady Grove Rd., Glenwood, MD 21738

The meeting started at 10:13 A.M.

Present: Sheila Curry (Chr.), Dr. Amy Burk (V. Chr.), Neil Agate, Lisa Watts, Dr. Justin Sobota, Jennifer Sulin, Erin Ochoa

Unable to Attend: Adrian Ford III, Jay Griswold, Connie Sawyer, Jenile Tapscott, Cassie Shirl

Also in Attendance: Dr. Helen Tuel, John Tuel, Cindy Smith, Mike Hopkins MRC, Nancy Heller. Vicky White TRRD, Kathleen Tabor, Rachel Neff, Sabrina Dobbins SMADC, Vicky Carson, April Oakdall TRRC, Becca Staggs TRRC, Bill MacMellon Standardbred Breeder, Marya Pecukonis La Cheval Stable, Kathy Johnson, Emma Haffic, Ellen James, Peggy Morgan, Anne Litz,

Call to Order: Sheila Curry (Chr.) called the meeting to order.

Introduction of Attendees: Hosts: Dr. Helen Tuel, John Tuel, Cindy Smith from TRRC; and Jenn Sulin, Plot Twist Farm

In Memoriam: Ron MacNab

“MHIB has lost three of its most influential former board members this year--Dorothy Troutman, Trish Gilbert and now Ron MacNab, who recently passed at age 75.

Ron served on the Maryland Horse Industry Board for two terms, totaling 8 years, and represented Trails and Recreational Riding until 2016. He was a former President and longtime board member of TROT. Ron was an avid trail rider from Montgomery County, preferring Tennessee Walkers, Appaloosas or Rocky Mountain Horses to explore horseback trails all over Maryland.

He was often accompanied by his wife Janet and their son. He became the acknowledged expert of the state's 105 public access riding trails. MHIB used his meticulous inventory of trails, that even DNR had not catalogued, to publish our 16-page *Guide to Maryland's Horseback Riding Trails*.

That guide is currently being updated. Ron was MHIB's representative on state and national trail riding committees, always advocating for the sustainability and expansion of our trail systems. In his professional life, Ron was a longtime employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, serving as an administrator in its Graduate Degree programs. Thank you, Ron, for your many contributions to Maryland's horse industry.”

Moment of silence.

Welcome & Overview of TRRC and Plot Twist Farm operations: Dr. Tuel, Jenn Sulin

1.Approval of Minutes from August 15, 2024 meeting.

- On a motion by Lisa Watts and seconded by Neil Agate, the board approved both sets of minutes.

2.Monthly Budget Report:

- The board was emailed the MHIB budget template sent by MDA Fiscal Services. Our current FY25 is \$62,254.59. That does not include the First Quarter FY25 Feed Fund revenue of approximately \$50,000+ and ongoing FY25 stable license fees that are currently being collected. So that additional funding is available. During FY24 we spent the \$104,000 that we received from the State in unexpected General Funds. It was used to pay for salaries and an inspector's new car. It could not be carried over to FY25 so it was necessary to spend the total amount in FY24.
- On a motion by Neil Agate and seconded by Sheila Curry, the board voted to move the financial report into the record.

3. Presentations:

- Therapeutic Riding & Recreational Center (TRRC) run by Dr. Helen Tuel, and John Tuel for 40 years. TRRC is registered in Maryland as a 501(c)(3) public charity, dedicated to providing therapeutic support services to its special clients, young and old, in an all-inclusive environment. They offer a safe, accessible environment with staff support so that individuals with special needs can access our services.
TRRC began as a dream inspired by a backyard pony and a child with Down Syndrome. Living in suburban Howard County between Baltimore and Washington, D.C., Helen and John Tuel had a pony for their two growing boys. One day, a neighbor stopped and asked if Helen could teach her son to ride the pony. Realizing that she lacked the knowledge and experience required to teach those with special needs, Helen decided to learn to become a teacher of riding for the disabled. She left her career as a dental hygienist and went on to obtain a doctorate from Vanderbilt University. John concentrated on learning stable management. They looked for land with a house, a barn and adequate pasture. They found it on their current farm site in Glenwood, Md. Twenty-six years and many improvements later, they continue to work to improve and expand the Center. The 55 acre farm includes two heated indoor rings, one brand new indoor ring, two outdoor rings, stabling for 40 horses and ponies, and a comfortable reception center and viewing area for parents, caregivers and visitors.

The Center has earned premier accreditation from the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH International), and is designated as a "Premier Accredited Center." TRRC is a Premier Accredited Program through the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association (NARHA) and is a member of the Federation of Riding for the Disabled International. We participate in the Equestrian Special Olympics competition.

Their mission is to provide both physical and occupational therapy on horseback, treating a wide range of disabilities.

- Jennifer Sulin, leases a barn at TRRC to run her program, Plot Twist Farm, which offers Western and English lessons, trail rides for students, school group visits and partners with local at need schools and programs to give anyone and everyone access to horses. Beginner lessons are offered to anyone ages 5 and up. Lessons are typically held once a week. You may provide your own horse or use one of our highly trained lesson horses. Goats and pigs will greet you upon arrival!

4. Committee Reports & Updates:

- **STABLE LICENSING:**

FY 25 Licensing Renewals. New Stables: So far **708 Stables** have renewed both online and hard copy. **Donna Hill** at MDA is processing hard copy licenses.

FY25 Licensing Still Need to Renew: We have **33 closed** that were due to renew in 2024; and **119** that have still not renewed from FY24. Those stables have been sent 60 Days Past Due notices. There are several new stables that have come to our attention that are not licensed. We are sending them letters as well to bring them into compliance. The MHIB stable inspection team met with **MDA Ass't AG Justin Hayes** on Sept. 9 to review practices regarding stable inspection failures and various other issues.

FY26 Proposed Licensing Legislation:

MHIB will submit legislation to add a Late Fee (starting Sept 1st, 2026) which is in line with MDA's legislative priorities for FY 2026 and has been supported by Ass't Sec'y Cassie Shirk and MDA legislative director Rachel Jones. This legislation is similar to an MDA bill that was proposed in FY25.

- **PROPOSED 2024 MEETING SCHEDULE:**

Thursday, Oct. 17	10 AM	Fairhill Equine Veterinary Clinic, Dr. Kathy Anderson (in conjunction MARS MD 5 Star at Fair Hill), lunch, stable tour & visit to 5 Star, Elkton
Tuesday, Nov. 12	10 AM	Virtual– Google Meets Teleconference
December 2024 – Grants Committee Meeting – TBD		

Dr. Amy Burk suggested holding a Board Meeting at a Western Show/Event next year. Jennifer Sulin suggest J Bar Rodeo or the Maryland Highschool Rodeo Association meets. She will contact both about locations and times for next year's Board Meeting Schedule

Rutledge Ridge Farm, Fallston Bridleless demo Melanie Ferro-Wise and Oak Spring Equestrian, Woodbine Working Equitation demo, TBD in FY25

3. Committee Meetings (10): Mhib Health Advisory; Budget; MD Horse Forum; HOW; Tourism Grant; Horseland; Grants; Sport Horse Registry; Western Riding; Equine Welfare BOARD MEMBERS--Please let Sheila know if you would like to join one or more of these committees

CURRENT ACTIVITY: (9 of 10 Committees have met)

Mhib Health Advisory—DR. JUSTIN SOBOTA (Chr.)—*Met on March 7, 2024 for annual mtg.*

Budget: JAY GRISWOLD, (Chr.), Neil Agate, Sheila Curry, Dr. Amy Burk, Lisa Watts – *Met on June 21, 2024 to review FY25 budget*

MD Horse Forum—DR. AMY BURK, (Co-Chair with Anne Litz & Jen Reynolds)—*Forum held August 8, 2024—next Forum 2029*

HOW (Horse Outreach Workshop)—DR. AMY BURK (Mhib representative)—*HOW meets monthly*

Horse Park Tourism Grant: CONNIE SAWYER, (Chr.) Sheila Curry, Cricket Goodall, Sandy Turner, Kristin Hanna (Anne & Ross staff) plus Marriner team. *Met August 15, 2024 and August 22, 2024* to initiate the planning process for branding/marketing campaign. Next steps: the Marriner team conducts site visits to Horse Park sites.

Horseland 2024 MD State Fair: Christine Reter, Evie Hickman, Mike Reuter (Co-Chairs) with help from industry partners/sponsors MTHA, Mhib, MHBA, Cloverleaf/Rosecroft and Don Litz, Hope Birsh, Bobby Lillis, Elaina Thomas, April Smith, Ahesamahk Dahn, Wild Kid Acres and HDCs Renee Dixon, Roxy Baldwin, Candy Cole and Brenda von Rautenkrantz successfully conducted Horseland for the ninth time at the MD State Fair on consecutive weekends Aug. 22-Sept. 8. Report will be given at October Meeting.

Grants: LISA WATTS (Chr.), Sheila Curry, Neil Agate, Dr. Amy Burk, Dr. Justin Sobota – *Annual Meeting in Dec 2024 – TDB in-person or virtual*

Sport Horse Registry: SHEILA CURRY (Chr.), Connie Sawyer, Kim Egan, Jane Seigler, Kirsten Green (RRP), Peggy Morgan, Ellen James—*Met on August 28, 2024* to discuss Kim Egan's proposal to establish a Maryland Sport Horse Registry and Mhib licensing sport horse breeding farms. The MD Horse Council is expected to introduce legislation in the FY25 General Assembly for Mhib to license sport horse breeding establishments. Neil Agate could not comment on suggested legislation and suggested all questions be directed to Kim Egan and Jane Seigler.

Western Riding: JENNIFER SULIN (Chr.), Sheila Curry, Jessie Flores, Annie Trice, Dee Dee Bandy, Lynda Arnold, Ellen Schultz, Lyn Fick, Corey Jackson, Julie Murphy, Cindy Harris, Chad Walker, Tina Sherman, Ray Parker, Morris Hall, Robin Vandervoort, Ellen James, Peggy Morgan –Jenn, Connie Sawyer and Lisa Watts recently **met by phone** to discuss holding Western riding events at Rosecroft.

Jennifer Sulin reported her daughter is currently 6th in the Country in Barrel Racing. Jennifer is also in discussion with Wild Kid Acres about doing a combined Rodeo with MHRA and his Latino Rodeo group, potentially a trail ride to start. Suggested Battle of the Beast for a future Board Meeting.

Yet to Meet:

Equine Welfare: ERIN OCHOA (Chr.), Peggy Morgan, Ellen James, needs to be re-established; has not met since pre-Covid – Meeting TBD

- **HORSELAND (MD STATE FAIR) DE-BRIEFING:** Co-Chair CHRISTINE RETER will have a report for the Mhib October board meeting. Lisa Watts praised the leaders of Horseland for their organization skills, welcoming nature and attention to the volunteers.
- **2024 MD HORSE FORUM REPORT:**
- Forum Co-Chairs **Dr. Amy Burk, Jen Reynolds & Anne Litz** are cataloguing the comments and compiling the session reports for the final Forum document due to be completed this October.

- **OCTOBER HORSE MONTH:** MHIB is working with Maryland Tourism to promote October Horse Month activities and once again have **Gov. Wes Moore** proclaim October as Maryland Horse Month. New developments this year: Debut of new Public Trail Riding Stable brochure; completion of self-guided driving tour of public MD equestrian sites; immersion of **Marriner Marketing** into the Horse Month activities. Possible issuance of 2024 MD Horse Forum report.
- **OCTOBER TOUCH OF CLASS AWARDS:** As part of October Horse Month, MHIB presents Touch of Class Awards on Oct. 5 at Celebration of the Horse, Tuckahoe Equestrian Center, Ridgely to National Mounted Shooting Cowgirl Champion **Jessica Flores Johnston** from Berlin, MD. Jessie operates **Rusted Star Ranch** one of our licensed stables. On the same day, we present the award to our current national Jousting champions-- **Delaney Hawks** (Novice), **Nicole Solomon** (Amateur), **Michaella Patrick** (Semi-Professional) and **Bob Enfield** (professional)—at the State Jousting Championships at the Anne Arundel County Fairgrounds in Crownsville.
- **2025 GRANTS PROGRAM:** MHIB started accepting FY25 grants on August 1. So far, we've received 10 applications. The deadline is Oct. 4.

MD HORSE PARK SYSTEM UPDATES: Prince George's Equestrian Center: WIHS tickets are now on sale. **Sheila Curry** is working with **Lexi Liu** of Maryland Sister States to organize an "International Night" reception on Oct. 26 for the Washington DC diplomatic community and other dignitaries at WIHS. No announcement yet from Maryland National Capital Parks & Planning about hiring an equestrian manager for the PGEC facility. **Fair Hill:** Ticket sales are ahead of last year for the MARS Maryland 5 Star at Fair Hill Oct. 17-20. No announcement yet from DNR on hiring a manager to oversee the Fair Hill Special Events Zone (SEZ). **MD Horse Library & Education Center:** MHIB and the importance of the state's equestrian industry will be featured in the Howard & Sondra Bender lecture series on Sept. 16. Presenters include **Md Sec'y of Agriculture Kevin Atticks** and **Sheila Curry** and **Anne Litz** from MHIB. **Pimlico Race Course:** MHIB sent a letter to MD Stadium Authority officials notifying them that the new re-imagined Pimlico Race Course is being added as a fourth pillar of the MD Horse Park System. This move was made in cooperation with the Maryland Thoroughbred Racing Operating Authority (MTROA).

10. MD HORSE PARK SYSTEM TOURISM GRANT COMMITTEE: The Horse Park executive tourism grant committee (**Connie Sawyer, chair; Sheila Curry, Kristin Hanna, Cricket Goodall, Sandy Turner, plus Anne & Ross**) met with the Marriner team for introductory meetings August 15 and 22. The next step: the Marriner team will make site visits to the four Major Horse Park sites.

11. NEW MD TRAIL RIDING GUIDES—Packages for public distribution of 50 copies of ***Saddle Up & Ride Maryland***, a directory of 22 Maryland Public Trail Riding Stables, have been mailed to the state's eight Welcome Centers and 11 county tourism centers where the stables are located. In addition each of the 22 stables received 20 copies each. Hard copy brochures were distributed at Horseland at the MD State Fair and will be available for upcoming events such as the Anne Arundel County Fair Horseland exhibit, the MD Tourism & Travel Summit, etc. The brochure is also available online on the www.visitmaryland.org website; the MHIB website and various other websites throughout the state.

12. UPCOMING EVENTS/OUTREACH:

Sept. 16—MHIB Presentation, MD Horse Library & Education Center, Reisterstown

Sept. 27—Promise Ball, Promise Landing Farm, Upper Marlboro
Sept. 27-Oct. 6—Capital Challenge Horse Show, Prince George’s Equestrian Center, Upper Marlboro
Oct. 5—Celebration of the Horse, Tuckahoe Equestrian Center, Ridgely
Oct. 5—MD State Jousting Championships, Anne Arundel County Fair, Crownsville
Oct. 12—Maryland Million, Laurel Park, Laurel
Oct. 17—MHIB Mtg., Fairhill Equine Veterinary Clinic, Elkton
Oct 17-20 - Maryland 5 Star at Fair Hill, Elkton
Oct 21-27, 2024 – Washington Internation Horse Show, Prince George’s Equestrian Center, Upper Marlboro

Other Business:

Pimlico: Mike Hopkins, Maryland Racing Commission

Pimlico closed on Sept 1st and all horses that are continuing to race and their staff have been moved to Laurel. Part of Pimlico’s buildings that have been condemned will start to be demolished this year but the remaining structures and track will stay untouched until after the running of the 2025 Preakness at Pimlico.

House for staff is temporary at Laurel and Laurel will be closed in 3 years when Pimlico is open for racing and training.

The location of the Training Center is still undecided between Shamrock Farm and the location in Aberdeen. Bowie is out of consideration. There will be an hire of the CEO to run the Non Profit which will be running Pimlico by January 1st 2025.

Populous is still working on the final design and rotating the track for better safety of the horses is still on the table. There are also plans for an Equine Rehab Facility, plus a multi-use facility to support the Equestrian and local community.

Stable Reports—see Addendum for Full Reports

Administrative Reports

- **Equine Academic Community (Dr. Amy Burk):** No report but working on the Horse Forum Report for October
- Humane Society – Erin Ochoa: Reports that there has been a high level of turn over in all staff of Animal Control, resulting in lower turn out in training and an effort to meet the new staff once they are hired. Owner 2 Owner (O2O) is very busy with a high turnover rate as well as exploring the discussion of Euthanasian for older horse, a 25 % growth in this humane option with the guidance and education of Days End.
- **Licensed Veterinarians (Dr. Justin Sobota):** Dr. Sobota was recently named to the State Vet Board. He now sits on two boards—MHIB and the Vet Board. He encourages the attendees to attend the Great Frederick Fair and that he will be over seeing the Draft Horse Pull. Dr Sobota has seen an increase in Rainrott and laminitis with the temperature changes and suggests speaking with your vet if you see any symptoms. There was question of increase of West Nile or Potomac Horse Fever, Dr. Sobota said he has not see an increase but if there is a worry, take temperatures, monitor your horses behavior and contact your vet. He again encouraged folks to vaccinate their horses for Potomac Horse Fever. The vaccine isn’t perfect, but it will protect horses for 3-4 months. Microbiological Research is very big right now and the importance of gut health and diversity in the gut for best health of your horse.
- **MD Horse Council (Neil Agate):** The upcoming Photo Issue of *The Equiery* features a horse from Gentle Giants and a full calendar of events. Invite the attendees to come to the Real Rider Cup at

Fair Hill Sept 14th. Complimented Kirsten Green's article about OTTB's as Sport Horses in the MidAtlantic Thoroughbred. The **Retired Racehorse Makeover** will be contested in Kentucky during Maryland's October Horse Month, but has drawn at least a dozen Maryland competitors.

- **Organized Shows & Events (Sheila Curry):** Says to be on the look out all the shows and event in October! She is working with **Lexi Liu** from MD Sister States to host an "International Night" reception for the DC diplomatic community and other dignitaries on Oct. 26 during the Washington International Horse Show.
- **Standardbred Sector (Lisa Watts):** Finished racing at Ocean Downs and the Rosecroft Fall meets starts Sept. 16. Racing will be conducted on Monday and Wednesday evenings at 7:15pm. The Potomac Pace is set for Nov. 17, 3pm. Welcomes everyone to the Great Frederick Fair to watch Harness Racing and enjoy the fair.
- **Trails & Recreational Riding (Jennifer Sulin):** Jennifer is in talked with League of Maryland Horsemen to have one person selected to be the contact the DNR about trails and Horseback riding on the trails. DNR would like to know of one person to listen to as one voice for the trails moving forward. Invites every to Saddle Up for Breast Cancer Trail Ride at Tuckahoe Sept 21st.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Former MHIB board member **Kathleen Tabor** warns everyone that with new Waivery and Liability Clause goes into effect October 1st and to have your Equine Lawyer look over your waivers to be safe. She has put an upate on her website, everyone is welcome to look over <http://www.ktaborlaw.com/maryland-liability-update.html> She also says stable who want to add outdoor riding rings, uncovered are getting push back from the Counties of Harford and Cecil Governments saying the surface is not porous and encourages the MHIB to educate all county Governments that rings are porous.
- **Nancy Heller** Maryland Council for Equestrian Therapies is looking for a location to hold PATH International in July 2025, host about 200 people with nearby hotel options. TRRC offered to discuss having it at their location.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 11: 42 PM.

Tour of TRRC and Plot Twist Farm to follow.

**Respectfully submitted,
Anne Litz**

ADDENDUM: Peggy Morgan/Ellen James Stable Reports attached