News Flash

The Fair Hill Bugle

Fair Hill Foundation Newsletter

July 16, 2024

DNR Meeting Update from Charlie Fenwick

The Fair Hill Foundation is committed to you – our donors – and to being effective stewards of your gifts. Toward that end, we are trying our best to keep you informed about our work with the Department of Natural Resources to bring the historic Fair Hill Races back to this beautiful new racecourse; our comments to the DNR, at today's meeting about this project appear on pages two and three.

You are our stakeholders and as such, you are very important to us; we are especially proud that our cost-per-dollar-raised falls well below the national average. Please follow our efforts through the *Bugle* and reach out to us with any questions or comments at fairhillfoundation@gmail.com.

Charles C. Fenwick, Jr.

President
Board of Directors

Charlie Fenwick in the Fair Hill paddock in the 1970s

George I.E. Harris photo

DNR Stakeholder Meeting Draws Overflow Crowd

More than 100 owners, trainers, donors, and interested community members gathered in the Fair Hill Tea Barn at the invitation of the owners and managers of the property, the Maryland State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) today. Attending from the DNR were Secretary Josh Kurtz, Assistant Secretary for Enterprise Services Julia G. Solomon, Director of Communications AJ Metcalf, and Fair Hill Natural Resources Management Area (FHNRMA) Park Manager Chris Grieco.

"We are grateful to Secretary Kurtz and the DNR for providing an update on the state of the racecourse and giving the community the chance to comment," Fair Hill Foundation President, Charles C. Fenwick, Jr. said. "As the permanent private partner with the State of Maryland raising funds to ensure the Special Event Zone (SEZ) becomes a fully functioning, internationally recognized equestrian facility for eventing, showing, racing and training, we are committed to helping in any way we can and were pleased by the opportunity to participate in this meeting."

Secretary Kurtz opened the 90-minute meeting by saying the focus of the DNR is to bring people together and make more use of the spectacular facilities at Fair Hill.

"There are many opportunities from racing to concerts, as well as local economic development," he said. "This meeting is the first of series of conversations with stakeholders to develop a long range plan for the future."

He also said the DNR is creating a full-time position to manage the Special Event Zone and the advertisement would be published this week.

He then broke the crowd into three groups to provide feedback to DNR staffers, promising to circulate a written summary of comments to everyone in attendance.

Known for its storied 85-year history that began when William du Pont, Jr. founded the Fair Hill Races in 1934, racing was paused after the 2019 spring meet to allow the $20 million reconfiguration of the turf course and construction of arenas in the infield to host the annual MARS Maryland 5 Star presented by Brown Advisory and other future equestrian competitions.

"The Fair Hill Foundation's comments (below) were presented to Secretary Kurtz after the meeting. We look forward to further discussions with the DNR about next steps," Fenwick concluded.

Fair Hill Foundation's Comments

Who We Are

- **The Fair Hill Foundation was founded in 2016 as a 501(c)3 nonprofit by a group of volunteer experienced horsemen and women with fundraising expertise to support the State of Maryland's construction and management of the Fair Hill Special Event Zone (SEZ).**
- **To date, the Foundation has raised more than $5.5 million in gifts and pledges from 150 donors to support this project. Funds have been designated by donors as follows:**
  - **$3.6 million to offset planning, design and construction costs of the new turf track and Maryland 5 Star facilities,**
  - **$1 million to help with start-up operating costs for the Maryland 5 Star, and**
  - **$1 million for general operations including construction of portable timber fences, marketing, fundraising, and accounting costs.**
- **The Fair Hill Foundation has been granted up to eight days of pari-mutuel racing by the Maryland Racing Commission.**

- **Throughout its existence, the Foundation has actively provided legislative assistance to bring about various improvements to the SEZ.**

Our Vision

- **The Fair Hill Foundation will be the permanent private partner with the State of Maryland to raise funds ensuring that the Fair Hill Special Event Zone (SEZ) becomes a fully functioning, internationally recognized equestrian facility for eventing, showing, racing and training.**

Current Issues:

- **Virtually no horses have been allowed on the turf course since construction was completed more than five years ago.**
- **Assurance that the turf course in its current condition is ready for racing and training is essential.**
- **Heavy equipment crossings over the track required for assembling and dismantling the Maryland 5 Star infrastructure puts the turf course out of commission for more than half the year.**

Questions for the Future

- **Which individual/entity within the DNR will be responsible for day-to-day management of the SEZ including the turf course?**
- **What is the best solution to the track crossing problem? A permanent or portable metal bridge, a tunnel, or is there another way to get heavy machinery into the infield?**

The new $20 million Special Event Zone includes a new Maryland 5 Star three-day cross-country course and three new arenas in the infield. In addition, the turf track, completed in 2020, features advanced irrigation and drainage, rail systems, new turf and wider banked turns to ensure footing is maintained to the highest safety standards for horses.

Prior to the Special Event Zone construction project, the Fair Hill Races were run every Memorial and Labor Day weekend on Saturdays and Mondays. FHNRMA is located at the intersection of Routes 273 and 213 north of Elkton.

Maggie Kimmitt photo

The Fair Hill Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. Documents and financial statements submitted to the State of Maryland under the Maryland Solicitation Act and the Commonwealth of Virginia Office of Charitable and Regulatory Programs are available upon written request.

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Proud Past • Infinite Future

The Campaign for Fair Hill

FAIR HILL FOUNDATION

PO Box 1324 • Elkton, MD 21922

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RMC Rural Maryland Council

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