

Alameda County Agricultural Fair Association Ad Hoc Committee Meeting

Tuesday, February 11, 2025
1:00 p.m.

SUMMARY/ACTION MINUTES

Committee Members present:

Nate Miley
David Haubert
Jerome Hoban
Tim Weaver
John Smith
Gordon Galvan
Frank Imhof
Chuck Moore
John Smith

Location: 4501 Pleasanton Avenue
Pleasanton, CA 94566

Webinar URL: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89967893034>

Phone: 1(669) 900-6833

Webinar ID: 899 6789 3034

CALL TO ORDER

Supervisor David Haubert called the meeting to order.

1. Horse Racing at the Alameda County Fairgrounds

Jerome Hoban, Chief Executive Officer, Alameda County Fairgrounds and Event Center, provided an update on Horse Racing at the Alameda County Fairgrounds. Due to the closure of Golden Gate Fields, which was initially extended until June 2024 through legislation, a joint power authority attempted to establish a year-round racing program, Golden State Racing (GSR) and moved operations to Pleasanton. However, due to financial insolvency, GSR was discontinued in December 2023.

A temporary stabling agreement was arranged between Southern racetracks and Pleasanton to prevent mass displacement of horses and horsemen. Currently, the California Authority of Racing Fairs (CARF) is undergoing financial restructuring and is no longer providing racing services.

The Alameda County Fair receives revenue from horse stabling and training but risks losing nearly \$1 million if the barn area closes earlier than expected.

Financial and regulatory challenges affect the continuation of horse racing at Alameda County Fairgrounds. The Committee acknowledged the historical and cultural significance of horse racing but highlighted financial losses and regulatory constraints as major barriers.

The barn area is set to close on March 25, 2025.

Speakers

Several speakers commented on the end of Horse Racing at the Alameda County Fairgrounds, including:

- The economic impact extends beyond the racetrack, affecting local businesses, fair attendance, and the broader equine industry.
- Questions about why other California fairs profit from racing while Alameda County Fair claims financial struggles.
- Calls for an audit to ensure transparency and accountability.
- The displacement of stable workers and their families, some of whom live on-site
- The potential decline in attendance and financial viability of the fair if horse racing is eliminated.
- Workers, trainers, and community members for more time to transition

The Committee acknowledged the concerns, and the Committee called for continued efforts to find a viable solution while recognizing the challenges involved.

This item was informational only and required no Committee action.

2. Hotel Proposal Status

Joni Pattillo, County Administrator's Office, provided an update on a proposed development of a hotel on the Alameda County Fairgrounds property.

The staff continues to assess potential solutions for a hotel at the location, with involvement from the General Services Agency (GSA), County Counsel, and the Fair Board.

Recent legislative developments appear more favorable for such projects, though further analysis is needed before presenting concrete options. Securing financing for hotel developments has become more expensive, as an added challenge in the process.

More information will be gathered and provided at the next Fair Board Liaison meeting.

This item was informational only and required no Committee action.

3. Discussion on the possibility of Housing and/or Services for the Unsheltered on Fairground Property

Supervisor Nate Miley reported that his office has discussed with a City of Pleasanton Councilmember about the need for local services for the unhoused population in Pleasanton.

The floor was opened for discussion for the use of the Fairgrounds to shelter the city's unhoused population.

The discussion included the following:

- The fairgrounds are highly utilized year-round, hosting over 250 events annually, making it difficult to allocate space for shelter or services.
- Issues such as sewer capacity, security concerns, and potential conflicts with existing activities (horse shows, parking, emergencies) were raised as major barriers.
- The fairgrounds are already designated for emergency use (fires, evacuations, medical crises), which could be compromised by a permanent or semi-permanent program.

The Committee felt the proposal does not align with the fairgrounds' strategic vision. Additionally, it was noted that any request should come from the full Pleasanton City Council, not just one member.

This item was informational only and required no Committee action.

PUBLIC INPUT

None.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:27 p.m.