

October 10, 2011

The tenth and final principle relates to oversight and transparency. This principle speaks to more than just a measure of trust; this is a requirement that must be memorialized into law. The State of New York, its governor and elected state representatives, has a moral obligation to fairly and equitably represent the interests of all New Yorkers. Our 2007 Statement of Principles speaks to the fundamental issues of fairness. The analysis of this tenth principle articulates the apparently deliberate yet inequitable treatment the surrounding communities of Belmont Park are subject to when compared with other - State owned; NYRA operated - thoroughbred racing facilities.

TRANSPARENT RESPONSIVE OVERSIGHT CREATES COMMUNITY TRUST

X. The neighboring communities must be involved and considered in any significant change of operations or activities at the facilities. The facilities must be subject to formal local oversight and review to consider all proposed additions, renovations or demolitions at the sites. There should be the establishment of a corporate ethics compliance official and a local community liaison who will be available to the surrounding communities to ensure implementation of both the letter and spirit of this Statement of Principles.

One of the most disappointing aspects of the State of New York's taking over effective control of the 435 acre Belmont Park from NYRA has been the continued lack of transparency associated with its current and future operations. As one of Floral Park's elected representatives, it is frustrating to learn that the Shinnecock Indian Nation was holding informational meetings about their plans at Belmont Park without any representative from the Village of Floral Park being invited to participate. We have made our displeasure known, however, to representatives of Senator Jack Martins, NYRA as well as those knowledgeable about the Shinnecock Indian Nation's proposal. While we are optimistic that promises that representatives from the Village of Floral Park, in recognition of our status as a host community of Belmont Park, will not be "inadvertently" omitted from any future discussions concerning Belmont Park, we would be more at ease if those assurances were written into law rather than merely expressions of apparently good intentions.

Ironically, when the State of New York passed the legislation in 2008 to take over control of Saratoga, Aqueduct and Belmont Park from NYRA, and while a new local community advisory board was created for the communities surrounding Saratoga and Aqueduct, once again the communities surrounding Belmont Park were unbelievably, left out in the cold! Despite the submission of our Statement of Principles in 2007 to the State of New York, which clearly expresses Floral Park's interest in participating in such an advisory board for Belmont Park, the governor signed the bill on February 13, 2008 without establishing a similar advisory board for Belmont Park. We immediately raised the issue with Senator Craig Johnson, who represented our community at the time. Thereafter he introduced an amendment to establish a 15 member

advisory board for Belmont Park, of which 4 members were to be designated by the Mayor of Floral Park, with the approval of Floral Park's entire Board of Trustees. In addition to the 4 designees from Floral Park, 4 would be designated from the Town of Hempstead (3 of whom reside within the Hempstead hamlet of Elmont); 4 would be designees of the Elmont Community Coalition of Civics and 3 would be designated by NYRA itself.

Once again the mysterious ways of Albany resulted in a failure to pass bill S.766-2009 creating a local advisory board for Belmont Park. Now that representatives of the Shinnecock Indian Nation have proposed construction of a casino and hotel facilities at Belmont Park, along with who knows what other changes the backroom discussions in Albany may be scheming to foist upon the communities surrounding Belmont Park in the future, the need of Floral Park to have a formal role as host community of Belmont Park is now greater than ever. While we would want any group overseeing the developments at Belmont Park to include a corporate ethics compliance official and a local community liaison who will be available to the surrounding communities to ensure implementation of both the letter and spirit of this Statement of Principles, at least having a formal board would be a good start. Why the neighbors of Saratoga and Aqueduct have been given a formal voice in what takes place there, while the State of New York continues to ignore the neighbors of Belmont Park begins to look more like an act of commission rather than an inadvertent act of omission. Even a barn yard dog at Belmont Park knows when it has been accidentally tripped over and when it is purposefully kicked; so do the communities surrounding Belmont Park. It's about time the State of New York demonstrates that they will treat us like a member of the family rather than being left out in the cold in Belmont Park's barn yard dog house. They should know by now that our bite will surely be worse than just our bark!