

**Wellington
Equestrian Preserve Committee Meeting
November 6th, 2019
Village Hall
12300 Forest Hill Boulevard**

MINUTES

I. Call to Order

Chair Cleveland called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. Jane Cleveland, Dr. Rachel Eidelman, Robert Bushey, Glen Fleischer, and Carlos Arellano were present. Dr. Kristy Lund arrived late.

Staff Present: Michael O'Dell, Ryan Harding, and D.J. Helkowski.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Remarks by Committee Chair

There were no remarks by the Committee Chair.

IV. Additions/Deletions/Reordering of Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda. The approval of October's minutes did not occur, and will be on December's agenda.

V. Workshop

Chair Cleveland stated that the purpose of the meeting was to continue to work on the State of the Industry report, and that the December meeting would have the same purpose. Cleveland asserted that Wellington is running out of space for barns and stalls so we need to work with surrounding communities to continue the growth of the equestrian industry. Annabelle Garrett stated that last year was the strongest year for Polo in Wellington since the 1980's despite the Equestrian Venues Data report's suggestion that Polo is in decline in Wellington. Dr. Kristy Lund brought up how schooling shows going unsanctioned by USDF could account for the disparity in the data collected from the anecdotal evidence of a strong equestrian season.

Michael Stone, President of Palm Beach International Equestrian Center and Operator of Equestrian Village and International Polo Club, asked the committee "What is the goal of this report?" Chair Cleveland responded that the goal is to get a true measurement of the health of the equestrian industry in Wellington. Ms. Garrett added that nobody has yet studied the effect of the equestrian industry on the rest of Wellington. Mr. Stone commented that it's difficult to track the many different equestrian activities taking place in the area that don't fall under a sanctioned governing body. He gave the example that his own venues changed the way they count horses in 2007, highlighting standardization issues that can arise without such a governing entity to track all equestrian activities. According to Mr. Stone, there is a noticeable trend of equestrians moving to Loxahatchee, as it's difficult to buy land and build barns in Wellington today. He added that we are now seeing horses moving around more during the season than they used to, in part because of how difficult it is to win WEF. The classes here in Wellington are larger than they are in Ocala, so people think that they can be more competitive up there. Mr. Stone asserted that Wellington's advantage over Ocala is warmer weather and its Metropolitan area. He then added that

he is more worried about competition from Europe than Ocala as far as winter equestrian destinations go. Stone said that Wellington is now attracting people who want the equestrian lifestyle as opposed to just the top riders in the world.

Robert Bushey asked Michael Stone "How many more horses could your facilities accommodate?" Mr. Stone responded that adding more than 3,000 horses would be a struggle. He said the biggest issue in adding horses is parking. There's only so much space, and with the development requirements, adding parking uses up a lot of the remaining open space.

Michael Stone, referring to the report, said that while the manure calculation and its translation to number of horses may be accurate for polo, it isn't for horse show purposes. Mr. Stone thus refuted the report's claim that there are 16,000 hunter jumpers in Wellington, stating the number doesn't make sense because you're using manure to determine how many horses there are. Mr. Stone later said that he would like the Village to better understand that with an equestrian season lasting only 3 months each year, building more permanent structures can be hard to justify given high impact fees and costs of adding parking.

Michael O'Dell asked Michael Stone how he believed the Village should be gathering and utilizing horse data. Mr. Stone responded that while it's nice to have your own data, if you're going to make recommendations based upon it then you really have to know what you're talking about. He then suggested working with a private firm on measuring the true impact of the equestrian industry in Wellington on the local economy. Chair Cleveland added that it may be hard to get a true sense of the impact of the equestrian industry due to many non-trackable cash transactions in the business. She then asked if the committee and Village staff could work with the Palm Beach County Sports Commission to try to measure the equestrian industry impacts, to which Mr. O'Dell responded yes.

VI. Staff Comments

There were no staff comments.

VII. Board Comments

There were no board comments.

VIII. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

Jane Cleveland, Chair

D.J. Helkowski, Recording Secretary