



April 30, 2024

Council President Elizabeth Kazinskas
 City of Gardner
 City Hall, 95 Pleasant Street, Room 121
 Gardner, Massachusetts 01440

Dear Madam President and Honorable Councilors:

On behalf of Baystate Racing llc, I write to express our interest in what we believe to be an exciting project for Gardner.

Gardner is known as the Chair City. But nearly 150 years ago, Gardner started to emerge as the premier destination for horse breeding, training, and racing in the state. Local physician Dr. Robert Foster Andrews created what was then called Andrews Park on the site currently managed by GAAHMA, Inc. on Route 140. The first horse race was on September 26, 1875 with more than 600 attendees. Over the course of the next several decades, the site also became the location of the Mid-State Fair, and the Agricultural Fair sponsored by the Gardner Agricultural Society and the Gardner Chamber of Commerce. In later years, Leonard LeBlanc, one of the top trainers in New England, bought the farm to raise and train his horses.

More recently, under the guidance of GAAMHA, the location has become a place for those with substance user disorder and mental health needs find therapy and recovery while taking care of the farm and its animals.

Bay State Park is a natural continuation of Gardner's agricultural legacy. Our proposal is developed by horse and agricultural enthusiasts. It is strongly supported by the Massachusetts Thoroughbred Breeders Association and the New England Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association. Bay State Park will be the location for thoroughbred breeding and off-track retirement programs, training, and racing facilities, while preserving open space for future generations. Additionally, we are collaborating with GAAMHA on equestrian training for clients and providing retired horses for therapeutic programs and partnering with Mount Wachusett Community College Pathway for Jobs around agricultural and veterinarian tech training.

We respectfully request that you schedule a public hearing with seven days notice in the Gardner News in accordance with MGL c. 128A, s. 13A to consider Andrews Park as a location for a Race Meet License.

We will submit a draft Host Community Agreement (HCA) to Mayor Michael J. Nicholson. The HCA is our contract with the City of Gardner. Highlights of our proposal include an annual review of operations with the Mayor and Council, estimated new revenue of \$500,000 a year, cover any costs related to police, fire, and EMS details on festival days, create local jobs, and \$10,000 upfront for the cost of any reviews during the approval process.

We look forward to working with you, your colleagues, and partners in government in the months ahead on this project and be part of Gardner's great agricultural legacy.

Sincerely,

John A. Stefanini

CC: Mayor Michael J. Nicholson