

Racing Commission blocks petition for dog racing dates at Raynham Park

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The state Racing Commission this morning denied a petition for dog racing dates at Raynham Park, which faces a ballot-mandated end to live dog racing at the end of the year.

The three-member panel voted 2-1 to deny the petition from two separate entities that run dog racing at the track, said commission spokesman Jason Lefferts.

Robert Furlong cast the dissenting vote, Lefferts said. Commission Chairman Walter Sullivan and member John Sherman voted in favor of denying the petition.

Supporters of the greyhound racing ban described the decision as "the end of the end."

"It was the right decision legally and it is also a decision that respects the will of the voters," said Carey Theil, executive director of Grey2K USA. "The debate over greyhound racing is over."

Lefferts said park operators did not submit the \$1,800 filing fee or \$125,000 surety bond required with the racing dates application. The fee and application deadline was Oct. 1, he said.

"That was a non-curable item according to the statute," Lefferts said.

The park had requested 322 dog racing dates over 216 days in its 2010 application. The commission allowed the park to have a hearing on the racing application dates because the law outlawing dog racing does not take effect until Jan. 1.

The state's other dog racing park, Wonderland Greyhound Park in Revere, ended live racing in September, but is still conducting simulcasts until the end of the year.

Dog-racing proponents have quietly launched multiple legal, financial and legislative battles to save the sport in its final months.

Among the last-ditch efforts:

Several kennel operators and greyhound trainers have petitioned Lynn District Court for a judicial inquest into the 2008 ballot question that outlawed greyhound racing. The complaint alleges supporters of the ban misled voters by spreading claims about animal cruelty and unfit living conditions for greyhounds.

State Sen. Marc R. Pacheco (D-Taunton) has filed a bill to delay the ban on greyhound racing at Raynham Park, set to take effect Jan. 1. His measure would allow the park to stay open another two years.

In other Racing Commission matters, the panel will hold hearings today on applications for horse racing dates and performances at Suffolk Downs and the Plainridge