

MARYLAND STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION

MINUTES - WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2016

On Wednesday, February 24, 2016, the Maryland State Athletic Commission meeting was called to order by Chairman Arnold “Arnie” Dansicker at 11:15 p.m.. Present were the following: Chairman Dansicker; Commissioner Ben Alperstein; Commissioner Sean Malone; Commissioner Lenny Moore; Patrick Pannella, Executive Director; and Eric London, Counsel. Absent: Commissioner Malik Rahman.

PASSING OF PROFESSIONAL BOXER EMIL BAKU

The Commission held a moment of silence in honor of professional boxer Emil Baku, whose given name was Emil Israfilbekov, who passed away on January 18, 2016 at the age of 43.

Executive Director Pannella noted that Mr. Baku maintained a professional boxing record of 22-2-0 with 17 knockouts, was active as a professional boxer from 1995 to 2003, and competed in 11 professional boxing contests in the State of Maryland.

Chairman Dansicker provided the Commission with the following report. He represented the Commission at services held for Mr. Baku. Chairman Dansicker promoted several boxing contests in which Mr. Baku competed. Mr. Baku emigrated from Azerbaijan, where he was a national hero as an amateur boxer. Mr. Baku chose to shorten his name and use “Baku” as his boxing alias in honor of the capital city of Azerbaijan, which bears the same name. According to Chairman Dansicker, Mr. Baku was very humble and was “just a great guy both inside and outside of the boxing ring.”

PASSING OF PROFESSIONAL WRESTLER BRIAN KNIGHTON

The Commission held a moment of silence in honor of professional wrestler Brian Knighton, who passed away on February 4, 2016 at the age of 44.

Executive Director Pannella provided the Commission with the following report.

Mr. Knighton wrestled under the name of “Axl Rotten”. He was licensed by the Commission from 1990 to 1998, first as a wrestler and later as a second and valet. At the peak of his professional wrestling career, Mr. Knighton spent several years wrestling for Extreme Championship Wrestling (ECW). Mr. Knighton was well-known in the independent wrestling industry located in the Mid-Atlantic area, and was very passionate about professional wrestling.

APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 24, 2015 COMMISSION MINUTES

The November 24, 2015 Minutes of the Maryland State Athletic Commission, which were previously distributed to all Commission members for review, were discussed.

Upon a motion by Chairman Dansicker, seconded by Commissioner Moore, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the November 24, 2015 Minutes of the Commission.

APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 16, 2015 COMMISSION MINUTES

The December 16, 2015 Minutes of the Maryland State Athletic Commission, which were previously distributed to all Commission members for review, were discussed.

Upon a motion by Chairman Dansicker, seconded by Commissioner Alperstein, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the December 16, 2015 Minutes of the Commission.

SHAWSTYLE PRODUCTIONS, LLC **RENEWAL OF PROMOTER’S LICENSE**

Executive Director Pannella reported that Shawstyle Productions, LLC recently renewed its promoter’s license with the Commission as a promoter of professional boxing events in the State of Maryland. Mr. Pannella noted that, in its first year of promoting professional boxing events in Maryland, Shawstyle Productions, LLC held boxing events in the Greater Baltimore area at venues including The Royal Farms Arena, Martin’s West, and The Clarence “Du” Burns Arena. Mr. Pannella

reported that he and Chairman Dansicker interviewed the promoter's representative for Shawstyle Productions, LLC, Thaddeus Shaw. Chairman Dansicker reported that he and Mr. Pannella reviewed the license application and corresponding documentation submitted by Shawstyle Productions, LLC, and were satisfied that this applicant complies with the Commission's licensing requirements.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Malone, and seconded by Commissioner Alperstein, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the license of Shawstyle Productions, LLC as a promoter.

JAMES ELLSWORTH "JIMMY" MORRIS, III **RENEWAL OF PROMOTER'S LICENSE**

Executive Director Pannella reported that James Ellsworth "Jimmy" Morris, III recently renewed his promoter's license with the Commission as a promoter of professional wrestling events in the State of Maryland. Mr. Pannella noted that, in his first year of promoting professional wrestling events in Maryland, Mr. Morris held wrestling events at venues throughout the State. Mr. Pannella reported that he and Chairman Dansicker interviewed Mr. Morris, reviewed the license application and corresponding documentation submitted by Mr. Morris, and were satisfied that this applicant complies with the Commission's licensing requirements.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Malone, and seconded by Commissioner Moore, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the license of James Ellsworth "Jimmy" Morris, III as a promoter.

ASSOCIATION OF COMBATIVE SPORTS COMMISSIONS (ACSC)

Executive Director Pannella provided the Commission with the following report regarding the Association of Combative Sports Commissions (ACSC).

The ACSC is a newly-formed non-profit organization comprised of state and tribal athletic commissions in the United States as well as athletic commissions regulating combative sports in other countries. All athletic commissions will be granted full membership and accompanying full voting rights.

The ACSC is seeking to move in a new direction in working to protect the health,

safety and welfare of combative sports contestants. Linking athletic commissions worldwide that are involved in the regulation of combative sports, the ACSC will stress the importance of *transparency, accountability, strategic planning* and *open communication* in all of its endeavors.

Any athletic commission or similar government entity is invited to be a ACSC member regardless of whether or not is it affiliated with any other organization or organizations whose membership includes athletic commissions or athletic commission representatives.

The inaugural ACSC Annual Conference, to be held from July 9 - 12, 2016 in New Orleans, Louisiana, will feature two initial days of officials training seminars and two following days of meetings. All sanctioning organizations involved in combative sports, as well as those working in the combative sports industry, are invited to attend.

The ACSC's missions, listed in its bylaws, include:

- (A) *To protect the health, safety and welfare of combative sports contestants around the world.*
- (B) *To promote the continual improvement of, and for, professional boxing, professional and amateur mixed martial arts, and other professional and amateur unarmed combative sports (hereinafter, "combative sports").*
- (C) *To reflect and maintain transparency, accountability and strategic planning in all of its endeavors.*
- (D) *To encourage the inclusivity of membership among all athletic commissions, with the provision that any athletic commission or similar government entity is invited to be an ACSC member regardless of whether or not is it affiliated with any other organization or organizations whose membership includes athletic commissions or athletic commission representatives.*
- (E) *To promote the uniformity of health and safety standards and other requirements pertaining to the conduct of combative sports events.*

- (F) *To forge a close and ongoing working relationship with that segment of the medical community which maintains combative sports as its focus or interest.*
- (G) *To encourage communication, cooperation and uniformity in the supervision and regulation of combative sports among all athletic commissions of the ACSC.*
- (H) *To render regulatory assistance or regulatory advice to any ACSC member commission requesting, or welcoming, the same; except in instances when there is an inherent violation of either United States federal boxing law or the laws of the another country, the ACSC will not direct, nor require, any member commission to change its own interpretation of its respective regulations.*
- (I) *To promote the timely and transparent standard reporting of combative sports events between all athletic commissions -- including official results, fighter injury reports, medical and administrative suspensions and other relevant information.*
- (J) *To publish and disseminate medical and training information, and to promote and hold seminars for the continuing education of all officials, ringside physicians, commissioners and commission employees.*
- (K) *To include as a focus of its regularly scheduled meeting a presentation or presentations of timely medical issues or developments in combative sports.*
- (L) *To promote fairness, equity and transparency in the officiation of combative sports bouts and in the regulation and inspection of combative sports events.*
- (M) *To educate member commissions regarding recommendations to consider when approving combative sports bouts to prevent, and to eliminate, the mismatching of opponents.*
- (N) *To maintain an open and ongoing line of communication with those who are working in the combative sports industry, and to serve as a resource for this group with regard to the dissemination of pertinent regulatory information or developments.*
- (O) *To encourage adherence to, and enforcement of, applicable laws by each member commission of the ACSC.*

Upon an inquiry from Commissioner Malone, Executive Director Pannella reported that: (1) The Commission currently pays annual dues in the amount of \$200.00 to the ABC; and; (2) The Commission would also be paying annual dues in the amount of \$200.00 to the ACSC.

Chairman Dansicker and Executive Director Pannella both recommended that, were the Commission to join the ACSC, it continue to remain a member of the Association of Boxing Commissions (ABC). The Commission agreed to do so.

Executive Director Pannella noted that it is not unusual for a commission or board to be affiliated with more than one organization involved in the respective industry being regulated.

Counsel Eric London noted that, in accordance with COMAR 09.14.01.03(A), “The Commission may affiliate with or obtain membership in national or international boxing or wrestling organizations.”

Chairman Dansicker opined that the decision in regard to joining this organization should be made in terms of whether Commission representatives will benefit in the performance of their duties, and that “politics” should not enter into the discussion nor should the Commission be influenced by the same.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Malone, and seconded by Commissioner Alperstein, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) for the Maryland State Athletic Commission to become a member of the Association of Combative Sports Commissions (ACSC).

LEGISLATIVE POLICY FOR THE MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, LICENSING AND REGULATION

Executive Director Pannella provided the Commission with the following report. Kelly M. Schulz, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, announced the Department’s “Legislative Policy” on January 4, 2016 via written correspondence sent to all Department employees. The existing policy reads as follows: “Unless a DLLR employee has been specifically authorized by the Legislative Office, with concurrence of the Department’s Secretary, to testify on

a particular bill, an employee should not contact a General Assembly member with regard to that issue, in his or her capacity as a representative of the Department.” For the purposes of the Maryland State Ethics Law, Commission members are considered employees and, as a result, this policy applies to Commission members conducting any such activity in their capacity as Commission members.

MARYLAND STATE ETHICS COMMISSION REQUIREMENT ANNUAL FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Executive Director Pannella reported that Commission members are required to submit an annual financial disclosure statement to the Maryland State Ethics Commission, and that such a submission may be made either electronically or via paper. Mr. Pannella noted that financial disclosure statements for Calendar Year 2015 must be received by the Maryland State Ethics Commission not later than May 2, 2016.

APPROVAL/CANCELLATION/POSTPONEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING EVENTS

Executive Director Pannella led a Commission discussion in regard to the professional wrestling events currently scheduled to be held in the State of Maryland.

Mr. Pannella noted that, due to the blizzard which the State of Maryland experienced, the following promoters decided to postpone each of the following wrestling events: (1) Promoter James E. “Jimmy” Morris, III postponed a Commission-sanctioned wrestling event scheduled to be held on January 22, 2016 at the OBI Building in Millersville, Maryland; and (2) Promoter Dennis W. Wipprecht, Jr. postponed a Commission-sanctioned wrestling event scheduled to be held on January 23, 2016 at Joppa Market Place in Joppa, Maryland.

Mr. Pannella noted that the following two professional events, replacing the two wrestling events which were postponed due to the blizzard, were approved unanimously via a previous telephone polling of Commission members:

Professional Wrestling Event

Friday, February 12, 2016 - 7:30 p.m. Starting Time
The OBI Building
8855 Veterans Highway - Millersville, Maryland
Promoter: James E. "Jimmy" Morris, III, advertising as
Adrenaline Championship Wrestling (ACW); and

Professional Wrestling Event
Saturday, February 13, 2016 - 7:30 p.m. Starting Time
Joppa Market Place
1000 Joppa Farm Road - Joppa, Maryland
Promoter: Dennis W. Wipprecht, Jr., advertising as
Maryland Championship Wrestling (MCW).

Mr. Pannella noted that promoter Dennis W. Wipprecht, Jr. cancelled a Commission-sanctioned wrestling event scheduled to be held on March 5, 2016 at Joppa Market Place in Joppa, Maryland.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Malone, seconded by Commissioner Moore, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the following professional wrestling events being promoted by Dennis W. Wipprecht, Jr.:

Professional Wrestling Event
Saturday, March 6, 2016 - 7:30 p.m. Starting Time
Joppa Market Place
1000 Joppa Farm Road - Joppa, Maryland
Promoter: Dennis W. Wipprecht, Jr., advertising as
Maryland Championship Wrestling (MCW);

Professional Wrestling Event
Friday, May 13, 2016 - 8:00 p.m. Starting Time
Joppa Market Place
1000 Joppa Farm Road - Joppa, Maryland
Promoter: Dennis W. Wipprecht, Jr., advertising as
Maryland Championship Wrestling (MCW);

Professional Wrestling Event
Saturday, June 18, 2016 - 8:00 p.m. Starting Time

Regency Furniture Stadium
11765 St. Linus Drive - Waldorf, Maryland
Promoter: Dennis W. Wipprecht, Jr., advertising as
Maryland Championship Wrestling (MCW);

Professional Wrestling Event
Saturday, November 12, 2016 - 7:30 p.m. Starting Time
Joppa Market Place
1000 Joppa Farm Road - Joppa, Maryland
Promoter: Dennis W. Wipprecht, Jr., advertising as
Maryland Championship Wrestling (MCW); and

Professional Wrestling Event
Friday, December 30, 2016 - 7:30 p.m. Starting Time
Joppa Market Place
1000 Joppa Farm Road - Joppa, Maryland
Promoter: Dennis W. Wipprecht, Jr., advertising as
Maryland Championship Wrestling (MCW).

Upon a motion by Commissioner Malone, seconded by Chairman Dansicker, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the following professional wrestling event being promoted by Event Services, Inc., A Wholly-Owned Subsidiary of World Wrestling Entertainment, Inc.:

Professional Wrestling Event
“Monday Night Raw” Television Series
Monday, May 23, 2016 - 7:30 p.m. Starting Time
The Royal Farms Arena
100 West Baltimore Street - Baltimore, Maryland
Promoter: Event Services, Inc., A Wholly-Owned Subsidiary of
World Wrestling Entertainment, Inc..

CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

Chairman Dansicker reported that he and Executive Director Pannella met informally to discuss their respective ideas for the Commission in Calendar Year 2016. Chairman Dansicker provided the Commission with the following

information in regard to their plans.

The Commission is seeking to cultivate a “business friendly” environment for the holding of combative sports events in the State of Maryland, while never losing focus of protecting the contestants the Commission regulates and the spectators the Commission serves.

The Commission is actively pursuing, and contacting, venues in Maryland where boxing events, MMA events and wrestling events potentially can be held. The Commission recognizes that, considering the costs attendant to promoting combative sports events in particular, it is difficult for a promoter of a boxing event or an MMA event to be financially successful unless the promoter receives all, or a significant portion of, concessions sold at the event. Subsequently, the Commission is focusing on locating those venues where a promoter may be able to negotiate concessions being sold.

The Commission directed Mr. Pannella to make all promoters who are licensed by the Commission aware of new venues in Maryland where boxing events, MMA events and wrestling events potentially can be held.

FIFTH REGIMENT ARMORY IN BALTIMORE

Chairman Dansicker and Executive Pannella provided the Commission with the following report. Mr. Pannella contacted representatives of the Fifth Regiment Armory in Baltimore to explore the possibility of professional boxing events being held there. The Fifth Regiment Armory, which is operated by the Maryland Military Department, has a storied boxing history dating back to 1926 when legendary boxer Jack Dempsey competed in an exhibition bout there. As recently as the late 1980’s and/or the early 1990’s, a small series of professional boxing events were held at the Fifth Regiment Armory.

Thaddeus Shaw, the promoter’s representative for Shawstyle Promotions, LLC, recently attended a meeting arranged by the Commission with State officials at the Fifth Regiment Armory to discuss holding a professional boxing event at this venue. Both Chairman Dansicker and Mr. Pannella attended the meeting. Mr. Shaw and the Commission are awaiting word from a Fifth Regiment Armory representative regarding whether this can be accomplished.

MARYLAND STATE FAIRGROUNDS IN TIMONIUM

Chairman Dansicker and Executive Director Pannella provided the Commission with the following report. Mr. Pannella contacted representatives of the Maryland State Fairgrounds in Timonium to explore the possibility of professional boxing events being held there.

Thaddeus Shaw, the promoter's representative for Shawstyle Promotions, LLC, recently attended a meeting arranged by the Commission with representatives of the Maryland State Fairgrounds to discuss holding a professional boxing event at this venue. Mr. Pannella attended the meeting.

Shawstyle Promotions, LLC has announced that it will be holding a pro-am boxing event at the Maryland State Fairgrounds on May 14, 2016. Mr. Shaw indicated to the Commission that Shawstyle Promotions, LLC is seeking to hold a series of boxing events at this venue.

Both Mr. Shaw and the Commission are very pleased the Maryland State Fairgrounds will be a new venue for professional boxing events in the State of Maryland.

COMMISSIONER MALIK RAHMAN

Led by Chairman Dansicker, the Commission thanked Commissioner Malik Rahman for his significant contributions during his tenure as a Commission member. Commissioner Rahman was officially sworn in to serve in this position on June 27, 2014, completing the term of the late Commission Chairman William R. "Bill" McCaffrey which commenced on July 1, 2009.

Executive Director Pannella reported that, on behalf of the Commission, he will be presenting Commissioner Rahman with a framed and matted rare promotional photo of Baltimore native actor Charles "Roc" Dutton from the Fox television series *Roc* – depicting Mr. Dutton in an episode as a boxer. Mr. Pannella noted that Mr. Dutton and Commissioner Rahman are related.

COMMISSIONER ALPERSTEIN HONORED DURING MARYLAND-MICHIGAN MEN’S BASKETBALL GAME

Counsel Eric London provided the Commission with the following report regarding the collegiate men’s basketball game between the University of Maryland and University of Michigan held at Comcast Center in College Park on January 23, 2016. Both the 1939 NCAA lightweight amateur boxing champion and the NCAA 1938 featherweight amateur boxing champion, Commissioner Alperstein was the *first* student to win a national title in *any* sport in the history of the University of Maryland. He was invited onto the court during the game to be honored. Commissioner Alperstein received a rousing standing ovation by the entire crowd in attendance.

Counsel London opined that it was especially touching to see the attending University of Maryland students rise from their seats in unison to “embrace” Commissioner Alperstein.

The Commission congratulated Commissioner Alperstein on this special public recognition held at his alma mater.

LEIGH HOYT

Executive Director Pannella reported that Leigh Hoyt, who worked for the Commission as an administrative specialist, recently accepted a permanent State position with the Maryland State Professional Licensing Boards within the Divisional of Occupational and Professional Licensing in the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation. The Commission commended Ms. Hoyt on her noteworthy contributions to the Commission and wished her the best of success in her new position.

SHANEA WHITE

Executive Director Pannella reported that Shanea White assisted the Commission with various administrative duties following the departure of Ms. Hoyt. The Commission commended Ms. White on her noteworthy contributions to the Commission as she returns to her full-time duties with the Lock Box Licensing Unit

within the Divisional of Occupational and Professional Licensing in the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation.

DREAMA ANDERSON

Executive Director Pannella reported that Dreama Anderson is now working for the Commission as an administrative specialist. Mr. Pannella noted that is a pleasure working with Ms. Anderson, and that he welcomed the many contributions which she will be making to the Commission.

THE GAME SPORTS BAR FOLLOW-UP MEETING AS POSSIBLE VENUE FOR BOXING, MMA AND WRESTLING EVENTS

Executive Director Pannella provided the Commission with the following report regarding a meeting which he and Thaddeus Shaw, the promoter's representative for Shawstyle Productions, LLC, had with a representative of The Game Sports Bar. The Game Sports Bar is located at 1400 Warner Street, adjacent to The Horseshoe Casino, in Baltimore. The Commission requested the meeting in the hope of locating another venue in the State of Maryland to hold Commission-sanctioned events and to further the Commission's business friendly efforts.

The Game Sports Bar maintains a large room in the rear of the building which has recently undergone renovations and is available to accommodate a crowd of up to 700 spectators for combative sports events and professional wrestling events. Mr. Pannella noted that, to accommodate the size of a boxing ring, the venue would need to reconfigure the steps and railing which lead to a rear exit. The Game Sports Bar's representative reported that he would convey Mr. Pannella's observation to Jimmy and Ellen Trujillo, the owners of this establishment.

ADDING ASSOCIATION OF RINGSIDE PHYSICIANS TO "LINKS" SECTION OF COMMISSION WEBSITE

Executive Director Pannella reported that the Commission added the Association of Ringside Physicians and its website, www.ringsidearp.org, to the "Links" section of the Commission's website. Mr. Pannella noted that this non-profit organization,

comprised of physicians working as ringside physicians in the United States and abroad, makes many valuable recommendations to the combative sports industry in an effort to protect the safety, well-being and future of combative sports contestants.

APPROVAL OF PRO-AM BOXING EVENT

Executive Director Pannella led a Commission discussion in regard to the professional boxing events currently scheduled to be held in the State of Maryland.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Malone, seconded by Commissioner Alperstein, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the following professional boxing event being promoted by Shawstyle Productions, LLC advertising as Shawstyle Productions:

Pro-Am Boxing Event
Saturday, May 14, 2016
Amateur boxing contests - 5:00 p.m. Starting Time
Professional boxing contests - 7:00 p.m. Starting Time
The Maryland State Fairgrounds - Exhibit Hall
2200 York Road - Timonium, Maryland.

NEXT COMMISSION MEETING

Chairman Dansicker announced that the next Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 30, 2016 at 11:00 a.m. in the Third Floor Conference Room, 500 North Calvert Street, in Baltimore.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Commissioner Malone, and seconded by Commissioner Alperstein, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to adjourn the meeting at 12:00 p.m..

Patrick Pannella
Executive Director