



An Open Letter from Foxfield Racing

To the Charlottesville community,

We write to you as the stewards of the Foxfield Races, a Central Virginia institution for nearly 50 years, to explain what we stand for as an organization and clarify some confusion and misinformation about the future of the Foxfield Races that has taken hold in recent months. Continuing to operate our races safely and serving our community are our top priorities as we prepare to host families, neighbors, and community organizations at the Fall Races on Sunday, October 4, but we'd like to take a moment to reflect on how we got here and what is at stake.

At this time, Foxfield Racing is in a legal battle to purchase the property on which our storied races have been run for nearly 50 years to ensure the continuity of the races as intended by their founder, Mariann de Tejada.

In 2016, concerned members of our community who now serve on our board began a successful, years-long effort to save the land from the development of a 17-home subdivision on the property. Because of their efforts, in 2019, the race course was put in a conservation easement and our non-profit organization, Foxfield Racing LLC, was officially established as the purveyor of the races in 2020.

We also secured a 15-year lease with a commitment from the owner to renew the lease if our management of the races proved successful. Since then, we have invested in safety improvements, hosted dozens of charity events, and made the races profitable, putting us on track to donate \$1 million to the local community over 10 years.

As for the current lawsuit, here is the heart of it: When new concerns over the property's future arose in 2023, one of our new board members at the time offered to purchase the property and hold it until Foxfield Racing had the funds to purchase it officially. Unfortunately, that individual has since refused to honor his commitment, and is even refusing to extend the lease.

Instead, the individual is attempting a hostile takeover of Foxfield Racing without ideas for improvement, community input, or the infrastructure and experience necessary to operate a National Steeplechase Association (NSA)-sanctioned race meet. This attempted takeover is an existential threat to preserving the future of the Foxfield Races as a treasured community asset. Our lawsuit seeks to enforce his obligations and protect the races, and we are optimistic about the outcome.

The leadership of the Foxfield Racing board met numerous times with the individual to seek compliance with his pre-purchase promises and was unable to obtain any commitment to ensure Foxfield Racing can continue to run the races on the property beyond the existing lease. The individual has since left the board, made false claims about our organization, and attempted to confuse the public by dramatically inflating his role, which is solely that of a landlord, in the past, present, and future of the Foxfield Races. To be clear, this individual has zero role in the operation of the Foxfield Races.

Foxfield Racing has taken legal action to protect the continuity of the Foxfield Races – to ensure they continue to be run by a competent board of civic leaders who have earned the trust of the racing community and, most importantly, the Charlottesville-Albemarle community.

With the Fall Races less than two weeks away, we also want to reiterate our commitment to the safety of our horses and riders. Our turf is performing well and undergoing routine compaction and moisture testing and grass-growth monitoring to ensure consistent surface conditions for race day. We also broke ground on the installation of new fencing last week and continuously inspect and repair the inside rail as part of our close collaboration and compliance with the NSA to ensure our facilities are safe for horses, riders, and spectators. Any suggestion otherwise is false and misleading.

As a local non-profit organization serving Charlottesville and Albemarle County, our sole intent in taking legal action is to ensure the future of Foxfield, both in the charity events held on the property and in the operation of safe and successful races. We look forward to hosting Virginia horsemen and those from neighboring states this fall and again next spring as we showcase the best that Central Virginia has to offer.

Your neighbors,

The Foxfield Racing Board

Dr. Reynolds Cowles

Jack Sanford, Jr.

Fred Stump

Locke Ogens

Olivia Branch

Harry Burn

Jay Fennell

Kiwi Hilliard

Cynthia Lorenzoni

John Lyons

John Macfarlane

Nora Seilheimer

Kenny Wheeler

Justin Wiley