

A summer's day in Oceanport offers myriad opportunities, both aquatic (e.g., sailing, boating, water skiing, paddle boarding, fishing, swimming in the Shrewsbury River) and land based (e.g., soccer, baseball, lacrosse, softball, jogging, horseshoes, tennis, basketball in our park system), for the physically active resident. But, to be fair, a lot of towns here at the Jersey Shore can make that same claim. What no other town at the Jersey Shore can stake claim to, however, is that it is home to the most beautiful and elegant thoroughbred racetrack on the eastern seaboard. That's right, only the Borough of Oceanport is home to Monmouth Park.

As articles in the Asbury Park Press and other papers have made very clear over the past few years, the horse racing industry has been undercut by both a drop in horse racing's popularity as a sport in general and, more importantly, New Jersey's racetracks' inability to compete with other states for sources of alternative revenue, the most notable of which is gambling. Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland and New York have adopted the "Racino" business model, placing New Jersey's racetracks at a decided disadvantage when it comes to attracting new clientele and developing alternative sources of revenue.

On November 8, 2016, New Jersey's voters will be given the opportunity to decide whether or not to approve a referendum to expand New Jersey casino gambling beyond Atlantic City so long as it is at least 72 miles from Atlantic City. Unfortunately, Monmouth Park --- an historic sporting jewel on the Jersey Shore that is already built, has rail access and a seven decade "track" record of being able to handle crowds of gamblers from all over the state --- happens to sit just a bit LESS than 72 miles from Atlantic City which, incredibly, means that it cannot be the site of a legalized casino if New Jersey voters should approve the referendum. This simply defies logic and good business sense.

Take a day, or two or twenty this spring/summer and visit Monmouth Park. It doesn't matter if you are a gambler. Monmouth Park is much more than that. It's food, music, miniature golf, bands, people in shorts, people in suits, old people, young people (hopefully, lots and lots of people), horses, restaurants, the smell of the grass, the call of the bugle, the pounding of hooves, the roar of the crowd and much, much more. And it's all part of the fabric of Oceanport. Bring some friends and make a day of it. Then take ten minutes and write to or call your assemblyman and/or congressman and tell them how upset you are that they haven't done more to ensure that this wonderful piece of Americana remains a part of our lives. See you at the 16th pole.