

**THE RHODE ISLAND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MARKETING COMMITTEE MEETING**

August 24, 2004

A meeting of the Marketing Committee of the Rhode Island Convention Center Authority Board of Commissioners was held on August 24, 2004 at 4:30 p.m., pursuant to notice at the Rhode Island Convention Center Boardroom, One Sabin Street, Providence, Rhode Island

Board members present were Committee Chairperson, Dale Venturini, Commissioners Joe Judge, Paul MacDonald and Board Chairman David Duffy.

Also in attendance were Jim McCarvill, RICCA; Brian Whiting and Neil Shriever, PWCVB; John McGinn and Tim Muldoon, RICC; Joanne Sourial, Tracy LeRoux, Jen Leigh, The Link Agency and Eileen Smith, Recording Secretary.

Recognizing a quorum, Chairman Venturini called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. Chairman Venturini announced that the next meeting would be held on Thursday, September 23, 2004 at 12:00 noon.

Chairman Venturini noted that Mr. DePetrillo's name was misspelled several times in the minutes of the July meeting and sought a motion

to approve after correction.

Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Duffy and seconded by Mr. MacDonald it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the minutes after being corrected for the misspelling of Mr. DePetrillo's name.

Ms. Venturini asked Mr. McCarvill the status of Starwood's search for a general manager to replace Mr. Anderson. Mr. McCarvill said that he had interviewed one candidate and another was scheduled for next week. He stated that the first candidate was not the right fit for the Westin Providence. He continued that Starwood is looking both internally and externally. Ms. Venturini said that this is a phenomenal property and wondered why Starwood has not had success in finding a suitable replacement for Mr. Anderson. Mr. Duffy asked if being a State owned property is a problem. Ms. Venturini answered that she didn't think that would be a problem. Mr. Duffy stated that we will hold out until we get the best. Mr. Judge asked if there is any concern because the management contract will expire soon. Mr. McCarvill said that Starwood assured him that it is not a problem. He continued that anyone that is interested in the position wants to be on a short list. Ms. Venturini said that if a potential general manager is coming from a competing company they want to be sure they are in the running. Mr. MacDonald said that Starwood should be able to present more than two candidates. Ms. Venturini said that in her

opinion the looming expiration of the management contract has something to do with the lack of candidates

Mr. Whiting reported that a meeting had been scheduled with Mayor Cicilline and the City's Arts, Culture and Tourism group to view and discuss the launching of a new advertising brochure. Mr. Whiting informed the committee that Dan Peterson has been voted to chair the CVB's marketing committee. Mr. Whiting said that they are working on a new advertising campaign and would like to invite the advertising agency to the next committee meeting. He also said that Evan Smith, President of the Newport CVB had been invited to attend this meeting and sends his regrets that he was unable to attend. Mr. Whiting reported that the CVB's are working together to assemble a tourism package for pre and post conventions. Ms. Venturini asked if Mr. Whiting would have the advertising agency supply the sales materials prior to the marketing committee meeting. Mr. Whiting introduced Neil Shriever, the Convention & Visitor's Bureau new Vice President of Sales. He reported that Mr. Shriever was formerly a Starwood employee and was at the Biltmore in the late 80's. Mr. Shriever thanked the committee and stated that he was pleased to be back working with the PWCVB. He informed the committee of the activity at the CVB to bring meetings and conventions to the City. Following is Mr. Shriever's report.

Trade Shows/Direct Sales

Meeting World New York - July 11-13, 2004 – (Amanda Marzullo)

Total of 373 registered attendees. Rec'd 20 expo card scans, 16 business cards. Highlights - VNU business publications requested PR on hotels for future editorials; Partner in the Tea Expo came by; BTN (Business Travel News) came by took some info and would like to do an editorial on Providence. Did not receive RFP's or immediate leads; as a result, PWCVB will reevaluate future participation.

CESSE (Council of Engineering and Scientific Society Executives) - Miami, FL. July 13-16, 2004 (Susan Deangelis and Tom Riel)

Sponsored the first night's turndown service. Gave away beach towels to tie in the conference theme "Oceans of Opportunity" with RI as the Ocean State. Approximately 600 attendees. PVD hosted CESSE about 7 years ago and the attendees are still talking about how great our city was. This is a relationship building show; this year significant contacts were made. Received 25+ prospects to follow up with. Waiting to receive RFP from the American Society of Agricultural Engineers.

MPI (Meeting Professionals International) World Education Congress - Denver, CO. July 23-25, 2004 (Susan Deangelis and Tom Riel)

Pre-show mailer, playing Yahtzee in the booth and gave out games to the winners. There were 64 planners that stopped by during a 3.5 hour show. Of these, 23 requested immediate follow up (sales kits, phone calls, etc) and of the 23, 5 have RFP's for our city. We also made 4 new prospects for our FAM Tour. Co-op partners in the booth

were: WP, RICC, CP, Biltmore (no-show).

CONFERON – International Society of Arboriculture - Pittsburgh, August 6, 2004 (Tom Riel)

Formal presentation to 60 members of the ISA board. Group was considering 07/09, 3050 rns, 100,000 GSF exhibit space. As a result, group elected to come to Providence. A letter of intent has been issued.

ASAE (American Society of Association Executives) – Minneapolis, MN, August 13-17, 2004 (Patrick Lynch, Neil Schriever)

Target audience is association executives and planners from across North America. Held first ever pre con prior to show with all coop participants to review attendee list/profile and schedule of events. Sent pre show mailer. Approximately 1800 attendees (excluding exhibitors). Booth traffic was constant, 89 pre show mailers returned by attendees, 94 information requests, 11 new leads (RICC and in house business) and 6 RFP's. Arranged and hosted planner social event prior to evening activity. Total attendance was 24; 13 planners/clients, 5 industry partners 6 and coop participants. Coop partners: WP, CP, RICC, SER All America Expo.

Upcoming Shows

Destinations Showcase – Chicago, IL, August 26, 2004 (Amanda Marzullo)

Show geared to Midwest (Greater Chicago based planners) audience in all market segments.

TRAVELFEST - Farmington, CT, August 30, 2004 (Maria Sanchez)

Invitation only show organized by FRIENDSHIP TOURS. Promotes Destination (WaterFire) for day motor coach excursions. Coop Partner – J & W Inn, Seekonk

HSMAI Affordable Meetings East, Washington DC, September 7-10, 2004 (Patrick Lynch)

2 day show, target audience 1500 meeting professionals from Mid-Atlantic/Northeast region. Augmented with targeted sales calls and client entertainment.

II FAM Tour

- Dates – October 13-16, 2004**
- Target – 15 - 20 customers and guests**
- Looking for Airline partners**
- Offer a “Take Away” Educational value in addition to destination knowledge**
- (i.e.: Safety and the Meetings Industry at the S. Main St. Fire Station)**

III Sales Deployment

 Re-evaluate market segmentation, focus on groups that can afford the destination

 Explore vertical market segments for all sales personnel, match to how the industry is trending.

IV Miscellaneous

- HOT DATES (web tool to promote hotel/RICC availability)**

Reformat web calendar to target and highlight need periods for both RICC related business as well as single property opportunities.

Utilize USAE web site as an additional tool (no cost)

- Staff recognition**

- o Patrick Lynch – MPI NE Member of the Year**

- o Neil Schriever – PCMA NE Chapter President; served on 2005 PCMA BOD Nominating Committee**

Ms. Venturini thanked Mr. Shriever for his report. She noted the co-op opportunities with other tourism groups should make a great story. Mr. Whiting asked if there is a relationship with any Providence Journal reporter that would get the message out about the work of the tourism industry. Mr. Whiting said that he could arrange for a FAM Tour of Hartford. He asked that he be given some dates that the committee would be available. Ms. Venturini said that she strongly

recommends that Mr. Whiting and members of his staff get out into the community to educate groups such as the rotary clubs on how the tourism industry plays a major role in Rhode Island. Mr. Whiting announced that Mr. Duffy would be presenting awards at the CVB's Annual Meeting. Ms. Venturini noted that South County is an integral part of the State and she would like their participation at these meetings.

Mr. Whiting and Mr. Shriever departed at 4:55 p.m.

Mr. McGinn had prepared a Power Point presentation (copy attached)

Ms. Venturini asked Joanne Sourial of the Link Agency to address the committee. Mr. Duffy informed the agency that he had expected a story on the escalator relocation would have been completed before this. He said that it is a very important story for the hotel and the Convention Center Authority. He then suggested that Ms. Sourial do some research and look into the history of our efforts to re-direct traffic through the hotel. Ms. Venturini said that we have to be sure that we get the word out that the relocation will be more convenient for the public and make for easier access to and from the mall. Ms. Sourial assured the committee that a thorough search will be done in preparation for the story. Ms. Sourial distributed information on the activities of the agency since the last meeting as well as the agencies

initiatives for the future. (attached) Ms. Sourial informed the committee that she was not able to arrange press coverage for the Indian wedding that was held in the hotel but she developed a working relationship with the religious editor of the Providence Journal who expressed an interest in featuring the story at a later date. Ms. Sourial asked if the Convention Center had a wedding coordinator and was informed that those duties were performed by Louise O'Donnell. Ms. Sourial suggested that she meet with Ms. O'Donnell and Kathy Masino to develop a strategy for promoting the use of the Convention Center for weddings. She also suggested that Ms. O'Donnell be supplied with changeable business cards with the title of wedding coordinator. Ms. Sourial informed the committee that Mr. McCarvill had asked that the agency review a proposal from Providence Business News. Ms. Leroux recommended that the Convention Center advertise in the publication once a month and in their calendar of events. Mr. McGinn said that he had stopped advertising in that publication and Mr. McCarvill noted that Mark Anderson had also stopped advertising in the Providence Business News. Ms. Leroux said that she thinks the publication has value within the community but that there are alternative ways to get the message out. She recommended the bare minimum. Mr. MacDonald suggested that we should promote the fact that the buildings are union when attempting to attract union events. Ms. Sourial and Mr. McGinn concurred.

Ms. Venturini thanked everyone for their participation. Upon a motion

duly made by Mr. Duffy and seconded by MacDonald it was
unanimously

VOTED: to adjourn at 5:55 P.M.