

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

March 23, 2006

A meeting of the Marketing Committee of the Rhode Island Convention Center Authority Board of Commissioners was held on March 23, 2006 pursuant to notice at the Rhode Island Convention Center Boardroom, One Sabin Street, Providence, Rhode Island.

Board members present were Chairman Dale Venturini, Commissioners Jerry Massa and Paul MacDonald.

Also in attendance were Jim McCarvill and Kerrie Bennett, RICCA; Kristin McGrath, PWCVB; John McGinn, RICC; David DePetrillo, RI Division of Tourism; Cheryl Schadone, Dunkin' Donuts Center and Eileen Smith, recording secretary.

Ms. Venturini called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m. Chairman Venturini announced that the next Marketing Committee meeting would be held on April 20, 2006 at noon.

Noting that the February meeting had been canceled because of illness, Chairman Venturini sought a motion to approve the minutes of the January meeting.

Upon a motion duly made by Mr. MacDonald and seconded by Mr.

Massa it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the minutes as distributed.

Chairman Venturini reported that the CVB Board had formed a search committee to find a replacement for Brian Whiting. She noted that Kevin Cameron had resigned from the Board and has applied for the position. Ms. Venturini stated that the staff of the CVB is working diligently and that they are a good team.

Ms. Venturini asked Mr. McGinn to report on sales and marketing for the Convention Center. Mr. McGinn began his Power Point Presentation (attached). Mr. McGinn highlighted contracted events including Estuarine Research Federation Conference in 2007, New England Traditions through 2010, Northeast Society of Orthodontists Annual Meeting and Fidelity ADG Summer Sales Meeting. Mr. McGinn noted several tentative bookings such as the Oceanographic Tradeshow, the New England Library Association Annual Conference, NARPM Training Conference and JLC Live.

Mr. MacDonald had questions regarding the difference in expected revenue from food and beverage shown in the presentation. Mr. McGinn said that the per capita revenue difference is based on planned group meals vs. concessions.

Mr. McGinn reported that Festival of Trees is on again this year with

the zoo as the official charity. Ms. Venturini noted that the zoo does a great deal of work on the event. Mr. MacDonald asked if the FOT was a Convention Center produced event. Mr. McGinn responded yes but a 501C Corporation has been set up and it has a Board of Directors. The Corporation actually owns the event and is fiscally responsible for it. Mr. MacDonald then asked why we do it. Mr. McGinn said that we produce the event for the revenue and activity that it generates during a historically slow period for the building. Mr. MacDonald suggested that we consider another charity. Ms. Venturini said that Citizens Bank sponsors the event and wants to be involved with the zoo. Mr. McGinn noted that the zoo was helpful in getting Citizens as a sponsor and helpful in promotion and building attendance. Mr. McCarvill asked if there is a way to get other charities involved. Mr. MacDonald noted that he works closely with Providence Community Action and that they would appreciate being considered. Ms. Venturini suggested that we look at opportunities to help other organizations. She said that perhaps we could look at other events to see if we can share the charitable dollars with multiple recipients. Ms. Schadone suggested that wreath making activities or wreath purchases go to a charity other than the zoo. Ms. Venturini said that other charities should have a little piece of the pie.

Mr. McGinn noted joint PWCVB and RICC industry participation. He stated that both the CVB and the Convention Center staff will be at NEMICE on April 13th. He said that NEMICE is the New England meeting industry's largest one day conference and tradeshow. Mr.

McGinn stated that the Convention Center had hosted the PWCVB's monthly marketing meeting and in May the CVB, the Dunkin' Donuts Center and the Convention Center will be working together to promote Festival of Trees and weddings at the Business Expo. Mr. McGinn said that the Dunkin' Donuts Center will also be presenting the renovation plans to the business community at the Expo.

Ms. Venturini noted that Mr. Schriever was at a meeting in Newport, therefore Kristin McGrath would address the Committee. Ms. McGrath reported that definite bookings are down for the month of February compared to the same time last year but year to date remains well ahead of fiscal year 2005. Ms. McGrath said that Convention Center bookings include the Academy of Molecular Imaging/Society of Molecular Imaging, US Environmental Protection Agency, International Wire and Cable Symposium and New England Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association.

Ms. McGrath was pleased to report that due to strong booking activity the City is full the fall of 2008. Mr. McCarvill asked if that included the new Renaissance Hotel. Ms. McGrath answered that it includes all hotels. Ms. Venturini said that we need to spread the word that the tourism industry is booming in the City.

Ms. Venturini asked Ms. McGrath to provide sample bid books to the Board members so that they could be aware of how much work is entailed to attracting groups to our venues. Mr. MacDonald noted

that we have been asked to be ambassadors for the State. He said he had asked for some promotional material such as hats to distribute at a convention that he was attending and there was nothing available. Mr. MacDonald suggested keeping a supply of items that can be used to attract attention. Ms. McGrath said that she would make that suggestion to Mr. Schriever.

Ms. Schadone presented highlights from the Dunkin' Donuts Center. Ms. Schadone noted that the timing of events continues to greatly affect the Dunkin' Donuts Center numbers. Ms. Schadone presented highlights of upcoming events. The Providence Bruins, The Harlem Globetrotters, Michael Buble, Coheed & Cambria/Avenged Sevenfold, John Hancock Champions on Ice Tour, Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus and Professional Bull Riding will be the last events before shutdown for construction. Ms. Schadone noted that overall group sales figures are tracking ahead of the 2004-2005 season. Ms. Schadone reported EA Games in conjunction with the Dunkin' Donuts Center will create a video game featuring the Dunkin' Donuts Center and Providence College Men's Basketball. Ms. Schadone also reported that the Dunkin' Donuts Center has invested in the Ticketmaster MailManger system that will allow sales to access anyone who has purchased tickets to the arena over the past two years. Ms. Schadone said that a new advertising client, Pella Windows & Doors will be advertising on the turnstiles used for all public events at the Dunkin' Donuts Center and the Convention Center.

Mr. DePetrillo was asked to update the committee. Below is Mr. DePetrillo's report

Rhode Island Tourism Division update

The Rhode Island Tourism Division's 2006 spring/summer tourism campaign was launched last week with the Governor to a standing room only crowd at the state house.

A brief overview of what is being done to attract prospective visitors, both here and abroad, to spend their vacation dollars in Rhode Island follows:

Four new print ads are being seen in 13 magazines such as Conde Nast Traveler, Travel & Leisure, New Yorker, American Heritage, and Yankee, with a combined circulation of six million.

Our 30 second TV spots will be seen on cable networks that have already proven successful for us, HGTV, A&E, Bravo, Discovery, the Travel Channel and CNN. We have expanded the media buy into upstate New York and the Baltimore area where we our research shows we can pick up some market share. Our 30 second spots begin this week and they'll run 2200 times to build awareness of Rhode Island.

We are reaching out through the internet as well with the online

advertising and have a strong presence on popular web sites, like boston.com and weather.com, where we expect to reach at least 1.3 million total impressions. Just click on our online ads and you'll immediately be linked to visitrhodeisland.com where you can order our travel guide, use our trip planner to arrange every detail of a vacation, or buy a package getaway.

Our efforts to keep group tour business rolling in are in high gear as well. Tour operators from around the country are reading all about Rhode Island in a six page spread in group tour magazine that we sponsor jointly with the industry. Our group tour manager Katrina White is at the national tour association spring meet where, once again, every tour operator and delegate from across America will sport a name badge with the Rhode Island logo. That sponsorship is joint effort with our tourism regions, as is a special section in the current edition of NTA's courier magazine. We are also getting ahead of the competition when next month Rhode Island will host the very first product development tour ever held by NTA.

We can't forget that we compete in a global marketplace. I just returned from our discover New England International Tourism Summit in Boston. This is an event that the six state tourism offices established to give our CVB's, attractions and hotels an opportunity to have one-on-one business meetings with fifty foreign tour operators and press. I heard very optimistic reports from UK and German tour operators who are anticipating double digit increases

this year for New England, well above the U.S. as a whole can expect. Rhode Island has a joint advertising program running in both of those countries right now under the DNE banner. The Germans are coming back strong this year and we had a great deal of interest at our booth recently at the world's biggest travel trade event in Berlin. A German tour operator visited Rhode Island last week and foreign travel writers from Great Britain and Ireland are here now and will generate a great deal of publicity for the area.

We participated in a sales mission to our key markets in Canada. The Canadian dollar is bouncing back and we are expecting the return of many visitors.

The state's official tourism web site visitrhodeisland.com continues to play a big role in our marketing efforts. In 2005 it generated 1.36 million actual site visits, continuing an unbroken record of increases. Last year we launched the Rhode Island Heritage Trails as a web-based promotion. By the end of the year it generated an amazing 91,000 visits on our website. We recently launched the Rhode Island Nature Trails and we're hoping to duplicate that success this year.

The 2006 tourism publications, state map and spring/summer events guide are in information centers and hotels. The Governor unveiled our premier publication, the 2006 Official Rhode Island Travel Guide. Prospective visitors are now receiving the publication if they respond

to our ads in magazines, TV, or on the internet. It can also be ordered from the web site. The Guide is totally supported by private sector ads, and we are able to produce 200,000 copies for distribution.

Mr. McCarvill informed the Committee that the Rhode Island Sports Council is looking for a new home. Mr. McCarvill stated that the Council has done some good things and that our partners in marketing think that it would be good to co-locate and otherwise cooperate more closely. Mr. McCarvill said that Mr. Mousseau has indicated that the Council would be interested in somehow joining the PWCVB. Ms. Venturini said that consolidating makes good sense.

Ms. Venturini noted that she did not want the diversity program to go by the wayside. She suggested that we invite several people from the minority community in the hope that we can get five or six that could point us in the right direction. Mr. McCarvill said that we need to decide our goals and where the opportunity lies. Ms. Venturini said that she would get in touch with some people and we will move forward. Ms. Schadone suggested we consider Hispanic Radio.

Hearing no further discussion, Ms. Venturini entertained a motion to adjourn. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. MacDonald and seconded by Mr. Massa it was unanimously

VOTED: to adjourn at 1:30 P.M.