

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

**February 20, 2007**

**A meeting of the Marketing Committee of the Rhode Island Convention Center Authority Board of Commissioners was held on February 20, 2007 pursuant to notice at the Rhode Island Convention Center Boardroom, One Sabin Street, Providence, Rhode Island.**

**Board members present were Chairman Dale Venturini, Commissioners Jeff Hirsh, Jerry Massa, Paul MacDonald and Patrick Butler.**

**Also in attendance were Jim McCarvill, Kerrie Bennett and Betty Sullivan, RICCA; Neil Schriever PWCVB; Tim Muldoon, Debbie Tuton, Nancy Beauchamp and John McGinn, RICC; Cheryl Schadone, Larry Lepore and Kim Chevia, Dunkin' Donuts Center; David DePetrillo, RIEDC Tourism Division and Eileen Smith, recording secretary.**

**Ms. Venturini called the session to order at 1:30 p.m. Noting that the minutes of the January had been distributed Ms. Venturini sought a motion to approve. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Hirsh and seconded by Mr. MacDonald it was unanimously**

**VOTED: to approve the minutes of the January meeting.**

**Ms. Venturini distributed proposed legislation on the re-distribution of the State room tax revenue. She noted that if the revenue was distributed to the local cities and towns there is no guarantee that it would be used for marketing. She said that we need to get together and be pro-active in our efforts to defeat the legislation.**

**Ms. Venturini asked Neil Schriever to begin his presentation. Mr. Schriever reported that sales activity for the month of January resulted in eleven definite bookings compared to eight in January 2006. Mr. Schriever discussed definite booking highlights as well as tentative bookings that the CVB staff is waiting on decisions from meeting planners. Mr. Schriever reported on lost bookings and the reasons that the groups will not be in Providence. The most common reason is that the preferred dates are unavailable. (power point attached)**

**Mr. Hirsh asked if the coastal areas of the state are promoted by the CVB for summer groups. Mr. Schriever responded that Newport and all Rhode Island coastal communities as well as the nearby Massachusetts coast are referenced as additional reasons to choose Providence for a Summer meeting.**

**Mr. Massa noted that he had been informed by Gretchen Willson that the National Association of College and University Food Services was very impressed with the attention that they had received and the food service was over the top. Mr. Schriever thanked the Convention**

**Center's Food & Beverage personnel for doing such a wonderful job.**

**Mr. MacDonald reported that since the sale of the hotel we have lost contact with management. He recounted a situation that happened over the weekend where he needed to get a large group into the hotel on short notice and had to disturb Jim Procaccianti during his vacation. Mr. McCarvill stated that our relationship with hotel management has diminished although our relationship with the Procaccianti Office in Cranston is great. Mr. MacDonald noted that the Westin is connected to the Convention Center and we should get to know the GM and the sales manager. Ms. Venturini said that we would invite all of the hoteliers to join us at a future meeting.**

**Ms. Venturini asked Cheryl Schadone to address the committee. Ms. Schadone introduced Kim Chevian the newest member of the Dunkin' Donuts sales team. Ms. Schadone reported that "Dancing with the Stars" and the Toby Keith Concert went very well. Ms. Venturini said that the building looked like a night club for Dancing with the Stars.**

**Ms. Schadone was pleased to report that the Dunkin' Donuts Center has secured ten luxury suites deposits and verbal commitments for an additional five suites. She noted that the suites sales campaign began on January 17th. Ms. Schadone stated that all eighteen suites would most likely be sold over the next few weeks. The additional two suites will be used as party suites and be rented on an event by event basis. Ms. Schadone noted that a contact list was developed**

for the suites sales and will be used in the future for special promotions and the party suites.

Ms. Schadone highlighted upcoming events including Providence Bruins Hockey, Providence College Basketball, Monster Jam, Josh Groban and Smucker's Stars on Ice. Ms. Schadone reported that a sold out Elton John concert and the Harlem Globetrotters complete the month of March. April we have Evanescence, WWE, Christina Aguilera, Champions on Ice, the Circus and Bull Riding as well as the P. Bruins. Ms. Schadone noted that the Dunkin' Donuts Center and the Ringling Brothers Circus will team up with Goodwill Industries to promote their annual walk-a-thon. (power point attached)

Mr. MacDonald said that he enjoys Cheryl's report and noted that he thought we were in for trouble when the decision was made to merge the Convention Center and the Dunk. Mr. MacDonald asked Ms. Venturini to recognize the great job that is being done at the Dunk at the full Board meeting. Mr. Butler stated that as a former board member of the Civic Center Authority he would like to acknowledge the efforts of Larry Lepore for keeping the building open.

Mr. McGinn presented the Convention Center's marketing activities for the month. Mr. McGinn reported that tentative events include Whole Health Expo, the Great American Scrapbook Convention and Verizon B2B Business Symposium. Discussions ensued regarding each type of event and the impact on food and beverage and rental

estimates.

Ms. Venturini welcomed Dave DePetrillo and asked that he address the Committee. Mr. DePetrillo's report follows:

### **DOMESTIC GROUP/PACKAGE MARKETING PROGRAM**

Last month Katrina White represented the state at the American Bus Association marketplace. ABA tour operators are the second largest source of group tour business for Rhode Island. Together with the other New England states we hosted a 2 hour wine networking reception that drew 165 operators. The Rhode Island booth was quite busy with appointments with tour operators, and there was a lot of interest in developing new and more creative itineraries, especially around events. We can expect up to 400 busses for Tall Ships, and there was a lot of interest in developing tour itineraries around WaterFire nights and we are working with the Newport CVB and the Providence/Warwick CVB on a tourism packaging workshop on March 8th.

### **INTERNATIONAL MARKETING**

Last Spring I told you we ramped our marketing to Canada because the strengthened Canadian dollar was likely to return Canadians to our state, and in fact it did. We've already stepped up our Canadian marketing efforts this year by coordinating a mission Canada over this past weekend where we hosted one hundred members of the Travel Media Association of Canada at a breakfast –we pitched them

**on story ideas for Rhode Island, showed them our video, and we already have some definite story commitments. Interest was high in culinary tours, spa vacations and nature-based vacations.**

**Next month the six New England state tourism offices will host our annual international tourism summit and marketplace. We'll be bringing in tour operators and travel media from six countries and arrange for them to have appointments with our hotels, attractions and destinations. I'll tell you more next month.**

## **PUBLICATIONS**

**Our official 2007 Rhode Island Travel Guide is at the printers as I speak and I will have fresh copies for you next month. This is our magazine-style primary fulfillment piece that contains information on every region in the state. It's completely supported by the private sector, but still has one of the highest editorial-ad ratios of any state guide in the country.**

## **RESEARCH**

**We are currently seeking a new vendor for statewide economic and demographic tourism research. We're working with our tourism regions to jointly support this research.**

**Ms. Venturini thanked Mr. DePetrillo and entertained a motion to adjourn. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Butler and seconded by Mr. Hirsh it was unanimously**

**VOTED: to adjourn at 2:50 p.m.**