

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

November 27, 2007

A meeting of the Marketing Committee of the Rhode Island Convention Center Authority Board of Commissioners was held on November 27, 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, Jason Fowler and Paul MacDonald.

Also in attendance were Jim McCarvill and Kerrie Bennett, RICCA; Martha Sheridan, Neil Schriever, PWCVB; Debbie Tuton and John McGinn, RICC; Larry Lepore, Cheryl Schadone and Kym Chevian, Dunkin' Donuts Center; Robert Bromley, Senate Fiscal Office; Benjamin Gedan, Providence Journal; Dave DePetrillo, RIEDC; Evan Smith, Ray L'Heureux – IDC / The Newport Experience, Debbie Neves – Newport Harbor Hotel, Joan Ferraro - Newport Marriott Hotel, Marlen Scalzi – Hotel Viking, Bill Clarke – Hyatt Regency Newport Hotel & Spa, John Karchner, GM - Hyatt Regency Newport Hotel & Spa, Jim Paulon – Residence Inn by Marriott, Judy O'Connell – Best Western Mainstay Inn, Member of the Newport County CVB, and Eileen Smith, recording secretary.

Ms. Venturini called the meeting to order at 1:08 pm.

Ms. Venturini asked everyone to introduce themselves. She then explained to the guests the purpose of these meetings which is to partner with stakeholders to market the destination and avoid duplication of effort. Mr. Smith thanked everyone for their hospitality. He noted that the reason he asked to bring the Newport contingent was to have them witness the way everyone works together and observe the ins and outs of collaboration.

Ms. Venturini took a moment to thank the women present for volunteering their time to Habitat for Humanity. She stated that several women that had little experience in construction spent a successful day building a home.

Noting that the minutes to the October meeting had been distributed Ms. Venturini sought a motion to approve. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Fowler and seconded by Mr. Hirsh it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the minutes of the August meeting.

DUNKIN' DONUTS CENTER

Ms. Venturini asked Ms. Schadone to address the Committee. Ms. Schadone said that this month she would be explaining group sales. She reported that a group sale is not just for individual groups like a

boy scout troop or a soccer team. Ms. Schadone explained that major employers, hospitals, school districts, etc. can offer their employees event tickets at the group rate. Ms. Schadone noted that the sales team was working on creating a Super Group program to maximize ticket sales to a variety of events. Ms. Schadone reported that a great deal of effort goes into maintaining an effective contact database, as well as sales and leads database. Ms. Schadone highlighted the group sales target audience and presented a schedule of group sales revenue for the 2006-2007 event Season. A copy of Ms. Schadone's presentation is attached. Ms. Venturini asked if the event promoter takes part in the discounts. Ms. Schadone responded that the amount of the discount is decided by the promoter.

Mr. MacDonald stated that Mr. Lepore and the people at the Dunkin' Donuts Center deserve our thanks for the way that they handled the tragic incident on Friday at the Dunkin' Donuts Center. He noted that Mr. Lepore's kindness and concern for the family were evident from the news report. Mr. Lepore stated that it was a very difficult situation for the staff. Mr. Lepore reported that the Providence Bruins had observed a moment of silence prior to Sunday's game. He also noted that he had been in contact with the pastor of the boy's church and would be meeting with his family. Mr. Lepore said that a scholarship would be set up in the boy's name sometime in the near future.

CONVENTION CENTER

Mr. McGinn reported on several tentative events that the Convention Center staff is working diligently to secure. He noted that Athletic Championships National event would be a repeat piece of business for January, 2011 with the potential for significant revenue. Mr. McGinn stated that contracted events include Imprinted Sportswear Show and Promotional Products Association International that teamed up because of the previous success of both events at the Convention Center. Mr. McGinn also stated that Brown University has become a great source for meetings and forums. Mr. McGinn reported that Fish Expo & Workboat Atlantic show has been sold to Hugger Event Management. He said that Hugger represents other potential business for the Convention Center. Mr. MacDonald asked about the discrepancy in the Food & Beverage numbers for the same attendance. Mr. McGinn explained that some events use only the concessions while others include luncheons or dinners. The Food & Beverage numbers are therefore quite different when catering is included in the event package. Mr. McGinn reported that site inspections include the United States Power Lifting, the International Society of Aboriculture, GF (gluten-free) Culinary Productions and Restore America's Estuaries as well as several other visits.

PROVIDENCE/WARWICK CVB

Mr. Schriever began his presentation by highlighting the total sales activity for the month and year to date. Mr. Schriever reported on Convention Center/Dunkin' Donuts Center definite bookings. He

noted Ironman 70.3 that will be here in July, 2008, Jobs with Justice in May, 2008 and the New England Anime Society, Inc. in October, 2008. Mr. Schriever noted other definite bookings for the area. Mr. Schriever reported on favorable tentative bookings for the complex and October site inspections. Mr. Schriever noted recent sales calls and client events that the CVB participated in.

Ms. Sheridan reported on CVB marketing and communications. Ms. Sheridan noted that the CVB had hosted a press trip in conjunction with the Kenneth Jay Lane exhibit at RISD that yielded an article in the November 15th Village Voice and one to be in Boston magazine scheduled for April. She also noted that the CVB had hosted travel writer from London Daily Mail and the German edition of National Geographic. Ms. Sheridan reported that Seven Stars Bakery was featured in USA Today as one of the Top Ten Artesian Bakeries in the United States and HGTV is returning to film in the next few weeks. Ms. Sheridan distributed US Airways magazine that will be launched in December featuring Providence. Ms. Sheridan stated that work continues on the new web site. She said that the back end of the site is complete and work is ongoing on the skin adding photos and adjusting copy.

NEWPORT CVB

Mr. Smith again thanked the committee for hosting a contingent from Newport hotels. Mr. Smith asked Mr. Karchner, General Manager of

the Hyatt to address the committee. Mr. Karchner reported that the Hyatt had been sold to Davidson Hotels this Fall. He noted that Davidson Hotels had been named as a Preferred Operator of Hyatt Hotels which has limited history with franchise relationships. Mr. Karchner reported that there will be a huge investment by Amstar Group of \$34 million to renovate the property. Mr. Karchner described the planned renovations. Mr. Fowler asked when the project would be completed. Mr. Karchner answered that the hotel would remain open throughout the renovation and should be completed this Spring. Mr. Karchner also noted that the original estimate was a great deal less than the current estimate.

RHODE ISLAND TOURISM DIVISION UPDATE

RICCA MARKETING COMMITTEE MEETING 11.27.07

DAVID C. DEPETRILLO

DOMESTIC GROUP/PACKAGE MARKETING PROGRAM

Last month I told you that our domestic Travel Trade Manager, Katrina White was going to the national tour association marketplace where we had 30 appointments with operators and lured many more to our booth by cooking johnny cakes. Food and wine tours are still very popular, and there was an increase in requests for Agritourism tours as well. All of these leads are distributed to our industry for follow-up.

We continue to get good industry press on our leadership in culinary tourism the latest is in Group Travel Leader magazine.

Our next national travel trade event is ABA in February where we hope to steal the show by trucking in a New England lobster bake from a company in Pawtucket. We are developing some new itineraries to promote and we're expecting a full book of scheduled appointments.

INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

On the international front, you already know that the continuing devaluation of the dollar makes the U.S. Even more of a travel bargain, earlier this month the tourism division was represented by Jayne Panarello at the world travel market in London under the discover New England umbrella. Through this joint marketing organization of the six state tourism offices we've been aggressively pursuing those foreign visitors. This year's delegation to the WTM included 25 representatives from every New England selling the region to tour operators, travel agents and the travel press.

At WTM we also unveiled our 2008 New England publication for the UK market. This guide is an overprint of a special section we produce in a UK travel publication called Essentially America. Rhode Island is not only featured on the cover, but we have the back cover as well

with a co-op ad sponsored by the regions.

On December 14th we are holding international tourism workshop for Rhode Island tourism businesses. It will be led by our new managing director of Discover New England, Sue Norrington-Davis. We hope to encourage more Rhode Island properties to get involved in this lucrative area and to attend the Discover New England Summit next April where they can have one-on one business meetings with tour operators and travel press from five countries.

PUBLICATIONS

We are currently producing the 2008 state map and I expect to have copies for you by our next meeting. The DOT was not able to produce a map in this fiscal year so we worked out a plan to produce 265,000 copies and have it sponsored entirely by ads and advertorial sponsorships from the state's tourism regions, and RIT&BA, and interstate navigation. DOT also contributed towards the placement of a bike map

With regard to our primary fulfillment piece, the official 2008 Rhode Island Travel Guide, sales are tracking ahead of last year. That's important because this is a self-funding publication as well. For the first time this year we will include a virtual version of the travel guide on our [visitrhodeisland](http://visitrhodeisland.com) web site.

Mr. Hirsh asked if the figures for international travel for the year have been released. Mr. DePetrillo stated that the numbers are not tracked by region although local tour operators have indicated a significant increase.

Ms. Venturini thanked Ben Gedan for the green initiative article in the Providence Journal.

Ms. Venturini reported that she and Martha Sheridan had met with the PUC to discuss ways of getting visitors around. Mr. MacDonald noted that some members of the media have not spoken highly of the parking situation in the City. Ms. Venturini suggested that our taxi drivers be trained to see to the needs of guests. Mr. Smith noted that the same holds true for Newport. He stated that both destinations face the same challenges and perhaps together we can get something done. Mr. MacDonald expressed his appreciation for the work being done by the Committee. Mr. McCarvill also noted the partnership with the Tourism Council which is ably supported by the CVB. Ms. Venturini stated that the pooling of resources is working.

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

VOTED: to adjourn at 2:20 pm