

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

March 24, 2009

A meeting of the Marketing Committee of the Rhode Island Convention Center Authority Board of Commissioners was held on March, 24, 2009 pursuant to notice at the Rhode Island Convention Center Boardroom, One Sabin Street, Providence, Rhode Island.

Board members present were Committee Chairman, Dale Venturini, Commissioners Jeff Hirsh and Jason Fowler.

Also in attendance were Jim McCarvill, Kim Keough and Betty Sullivan, RICCA; Tim Muldoon, John McGinn, Arlene Oliva, Debbie Tuton, Amanda Marzullo and Nancy Beauchamp, RICC; Larry Lepore, Cheryl Cohen, Lisa Coelho, Jodi Duclos, Lisa D'Ercole and Eleanor SanAntonio, Dunkin' Donuts Center; Martha Sheridan, Neil Schriever and Kristen Adamo, PWCVB; Steve Habl, VMA; Tom Crocker, Sportservice; Mark Brodner, RI Tourism; Susan Calise, Bank of NY Mellon; Bruce Leach, Legal Counsel and Eileen Smith, recording secretary.

Ms. Venturini began the meeting at 12:33 pm and noted that a quorum was not present and approval of the minutes would be delayed until other Committee members arrived.

DUNKIN' DONUTS CENTER

Ms. Venturini asked Ms. Cohen to begin her presentation. Ms. Cohen reported that the sales team has exceeded the Fiscal Year 2009 objective for sponsorships and signage at the Dunkin' Donuts Center.

Ms. Cohen noted that new advertising proposals have been discussed with Metro PCS, Jameson Whiskey and Jim Beam. Ms. Cohen also noted the trade value received from several media outlets and New England Ambulance. Ms. Cohen reported that Party Suite sales have also exceeded this year's objective. Ms. Cohen noted that the Party Suites are available for select performances of the Circus. Ms. Cohen included in her presentation the local media coverage for Dunkin' Donuts Center events for the month of March.

CONVENTION CENTER

Ms. Venturini recognized Mr. McGinn and asked that he address the Committee. Mr. McGinn presented the Convention Center's progress in meeting the goals of the 2009 Marketing Plan. Mr. McGinn stated that the public shows, trade shows and meetings goal is \$7.2 million. He stated that the sales team is working very hard to close the gap in the amount booked and the Marketing Plan. Mr. McGinn noted that the stand alone catering goal of \$1.3 may not be reached. Mr. McGinn said that it is not likely that the total revenue goal of \$8.5 million will be met although he continues to look for opportunities for the building. Mr. McGinn also reported on new prospects for trade shows

and conventions.

Mr. Fowler and Mr. Hirsh arrived at 12:45 PM. Noting that a quorum was now present, Ms. Venturini asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the February meeting. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Fowler and seconded by Mr. Hirsh it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the minutes of the February meeting.

Mr. McGinn continued his report. He stated that C & S Wholesale Grocers, the 10th largest privately held company, recently held their annual tradeshow at Foxwood and is looking to relocate. Mr. McGinn noted that a City-wide proposal was submitted on March 16th and a site tour of the Convention Center took place on March 20th. A decision will be made in April. Mr. McGinn reported on opportunities and proposals that have been submitted that were the direct result of the phone blitz and participation at SISO. Mr. McGinn reported on repeat business that has been secured for 2010 and accounts that are researching dates. Mr. McGinn noted several tentative events in the negotiating phase. Mr. McGinn was pleased to report on a new contracted event. So Fresh, So Clean Celebrity Custom Car & Bike Show will be in the building in August. Discussions ensued regarding the Custom Car Show.

VMA

Steve Hahl presented a comparison of prior management's activity to the present. Mr. Hahl noted that although there have not been many financially successful events the theater has enjoyed better attendance and increased interest. Ms. Venturini said that there is no way to go but up from the past utilization of the facility. Mr. Hahl distributed the brochure that is currently being used and noted that a new, more colorful handout is being designed. Mr. Fowler suggested that the map on the back of the brochure include the Convention Center parking options. Mr. Hahl reported that at Ms. Keough's suggestion the Ballet, Auditorium and the Temple Restaurant will be holding a Mother and Daughter tea to expose a new audience to the talent that performs at the theater. Mr. Hahl was pleased to note that the building is now recognized on GPS systems. He also stated that that he is working on making the VMA a stop on the Trolley Tour. Mr. Hirsh asked if it would make any sense to add the Convention Center, the Dunk and the Garage to the map on VMA brochures. Ms. Venturini said that we will look at that as part of our web design.

PROVIDENCE/WARWICK CVB

Ms. Sheridan began by reporting that she is taking part in a national campaign Meetings Mean Business to change people's perception regarding meetings and trade shows. She noted that because of the economy and bail outs the public sees these gatherings as a wasteful use of funds. Ms. Sheridan stated that people fail to recognize that a whole industry depends on the convention, meeting and trade show

business.

Mr. Schriever reported on the CVB's sales activity for the month of February. Mr. Schriever noted that the definite bookings for the Complex are down to last year. He reported on several tentative bookings but cautioned that meeting planners and corporations are holding back on committing to specific meetings because of the atmosphere. Mr. Schriever noted several site inspections. He said that when planners visit the City they are impressed with what we have to offer. Mr. Schriever reported that the staff has attended numerous trade shows and hosted client events during the month. Mr. Schriever said that Ms. Adamo would highlight marketing efforts. Ms. Adamo reported that the campaign "One Tank Meetings" was designed to address some of the issues facing meeting planners in these difficult times. Ms. Adamo described the various placements of the campaign. She said that a direct mail piece was sent to meeting planners and pitches have been sent to editors of the Providence Business News, Successful Meetings and many others. Ms. Adamo also noted that work is being done on the PWCVB's web site. She noted that GoProvidence.com is being refreshed to include implementation of Creative Capital graphics. Ms. Adamo stated that the CVB is expanding their social media efforts with promotions on MySpace, Facebook, Twitter and Flickr. Ms. Adamo reported that the CVB's Public Relations Firm, Lou Hammond & Associates, will be in town next week and will meet with Mr. Habl and Ms. Keough regarding the Philharmonic and Ballet public image.

RHODE ISLAND TOURISM

Mark Brodner reported that RI Tourism is concentrating their efforts on promoting Staycations. Mr. Brodner stated that the 2009 Travel Guide is ready and a kick off for this year will be held in Newport. Mr. Brodner noted that the Travel Guide will be distributed as a promotion piece to Doctor's and Dentist's offices. Mr. Brodner said that the theme for the Tourism Luncheon is Tourism Works in Rhode Island to remind people that tourism supports many jobs. Mr. Brodner reported that with a great deal of effort from EDC the Arts Council is sponsoring a video of the State. He said that in spite of the difficult forecast the RI Tourism Division is optimistic that we can hold our own.

Ms. Venturini thanked Mr. Hirsh for all the time that he had given over the past few weeks to the web design project. Ms. Venturini also thanked Martha Sheridan, Tim Muldoon and Larry Lepore for freeing up staff with the technical knowledge to assist with this task. Ms. Venturini reported that an RFP had been issued and a conference call was made available to any firms that had questions regarding the RFP. She stated that approximately 35 firms participated in the call. Ms. Venturini explained the process that was used to narrow the selection from the sixteen proposals that were received to the three that ultimately chosen. Ms. Venturini said that the web design group had invited three firms to make presentation. She said that two of

those were asked back to answer additional questions. Ms. Keough stated that without people with technical knowledge this task would have been much more difficult. She noted that the firms that were brought back for additional questions are both local firms, RDW and Nail. Ms. Keough was pleased to report that we have the local talent to do the job. Mr. Hirsh said that he thought that Nail showed much more enthusiasm for the project and therefore would like the Committee to recommend Nail to the Board. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Hirsh and seconded by Mr. Fowler it was unanimously

VOTED: to recommend Nail to provide web design and branding for the complex.

Ms. Venturini asked that Nail not be notified until after the Board meeting on Thursday.

Ms. Venturini asked for a motion to adjourn. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Hirsh and seconded by Mr. Fowler it was unanimously

VOTED: to adjourn at 1:40 pm