

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

June 23, 2009

A meeting of the Marketing Committee of the Rhode Island Convention Center Authority Board of Commissioners was held on June 23, 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 Dave Duffy, Jeff Hirsh, George Nee and Jason Fowler.

Also in attendance were Jim McCarvill and Betty Sullivan, RICCA; Tim Muldoon, John McGinn, Amanda Marzullo, Arlene Oliva and Debbie Tuton, RICC; Martha Sheridan, Neil Schriever and Kristen Adamo, PWCVB; Cheryl Cohen, Jodi Duclos. Eleanor SanAntonio and Kaitlin Bitier, DDC; Lynn Singleton, PFM; Steve Habl and Patti Neves, VMA; Evan Smith, Tim Walsh, Newport CVB; and Eileen Smith, recording secretary.

Ms. Venturini called the meeting to order at 12:35 PM. Ms. Venturini asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the May meeting. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Nee and seconded by Mr. Hirsh it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the minutes of the May meeting.

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 reported on several new prospects for tradeshow and conventions. He said that the National Association of Oil Heating Managers is contracted for May 2010 and the staff is working with the meeting planner to book the group for 2012 and repeating every other year. Mr. McGinn reported that WB Mason's National Sales Meeting and Tradeshow is looking to the Convention Center for October 2010 and negotiations are under way for an April 2010 tradeshow and convention for the GI Joe Collectors Group. Mr. McGinn noted that a proposal has been submitted to the Northeast Retail Lumber Association for a new tradeshow at the Convention Center for February 2011 and 2012. Mr. McGinn stated that tentative events include the RI Federation of Teachers & Health Professionals and the 2010 SIMULIA Spring Meeting. Contracted events are Rock the Ink in August 2009, Ameriprise Financial Annual Education Day, Tedeschi Food Shops Conference and the IBC USA Conferences. Mr. McGinn reported that the Convention Center had not been successful in signing the C&S Wholesale Grocers and United Natural Foods. He said that the reasons given for choosing to remain at the casinos were that free space was offered and the group preferred being under one roof. Mr.

McGinn reported that he will pursue the group for future years. Mr. Duffy inquired about the Mayor's Conference and if the picketing by the Providence Firefighters disturbed the Conference in any way. Mr. McGinn said that the conference did very well and except for some dignitaries not attending it was a great conference.

DUNKIN' DONUTS CENTER

Ms. Venturini asked Ms. Cohen to present the Dunkin' Donuts report. Ms. Cohen presented an update on the year to date sponsorships and signage at the Dunkin' Donuts Center. Ms. Cohen noted that responses have been received from two restaurants for Restaurant Row. Proposals have been sent to many local establishments and there has been a great deal of interest but few commitments due to the economy. Ms. Cohen reported that a proposal has been sent to ChemArt. She said that they are considering an event sponsorship for the Boston Pops. Ms. Cohen noted that the press box is available for rent for Cirque du Soleil and party suites are available for Demi Lovato, the sold out American Idol show and the Boston Pops Holiday Concert. She also said that tables for the Boston Pops are on sale. Ms. Cohen thanked the CVB for their assistance in advertising Cirque du Soleil in the Boston Market. Ms. Cohen noted that she has been working with Judy Spires and the Bristol Fourth of July Committee. Performers with Cirque du Soleil and the Spirit of America Bus will participate in the parade. Ms. Cohen reported that Ms. Spires would be pleased to include Dunk attractions in the future.

Mr. Duffy asked about the arena in Worcester. Ms. Cohen said that construction has been put on hold but that they are not hosting any events.

PROVIDENCE/WARWICK CVB

Mr. Schriever reported that the Customer Forum was a huge success. He stated that the feedback from meeting planners was outstanding. Mr. Schriever noted that Nail Communications attended and listened carefully to what people are looking for when they access a web site. Mr. Schriever presented the CVB's report for May. He noted that sales activity and room night production saw a significant increase in roomnights associated with events at the Convention Center. Mr. Schriever reported on new tentative or prospective events at the complex. Mr. Schriever noted that the Northeastern Retail Lumber Association is interested in the facility for tradeshow in February 2011 and 2012. Mr. Schriever also noted that the United States Figure Skating Association is seeking proposals for the championship event in 2012. Mr. Schriever reported that there site inspections included Labs21, USPRA, Ameriprise Financial , United Natural Foods, Inc., National Youth Crime Prevention and the Association of State Floodplain Managers. Mr. Schriever stated that the sales team made sales calls in Denver, Vermont, Chicago and Cleveland as well as Providence and held client events here in Providence. Mr. Schriever reported that we had significant media placement in Coastal Living, Preservation and the Boston Globe. Mr. Duffy asked if the CVB had

received any complaints because of the picketing by firefighters. Ms. Sheridan said that the picketing was not a factor. Ms. Sheridan noted that the Mayor's Conference was important to the destination but not our biggest group. Mr. Duffy asked how the Circus did for the Conference. Ms. Cohen said the show was fantastic and the Mayors and their families were very impressed. Ms. Cohen described the show.

VMA

Ms. Venturini asked Steve Hahl and asked that he update the committee on the VMA. Mr. Hahl said that he has been reaching out to prior tenants and letting them know that we are open under new management and ready for business. Ms. Venturini reported that she had recently attended her granddaughters dance recital held at RI College and there was not an available seat in the house. Mr. Hahl said that he and his staff have been contacting local dance studios as well as theater groups and choruses. Mr. Duffy asked Mr. Singleton for an overview of theater bookings. Mr. Singleton reported that things are getting better but they are not good. He said that the Ballet has reduced the number of performances and the Philharmonic will reduce the number of rehearsal days in an effort to save money. Mr. Singleton said that these reductions will make more dates available at VMA for other performances. Mr. Singleton noted that PPAC had a

break even year and recently lost the corporate sponsorship of Citizens Bank.

RIEDC

Mr. Brodier unveiled the 5 star tourism award presented to the State that will be hung in the lobby of the Convention Center. Ms. Venturini thanked Governor for choosing the Convention Center as the home for the award. Mr. Brodier reported that Rhode Island Tourism will host the Discover New England conference in Newport. Mr. Brodier distributed a publication "Road Trips" that will be a helpful tool for visitors and Rhode Island residents planning day trips in the area. Mr. Brodier reported that there is discussion of reducing the tourism budget by 50%. He said that the Tourism Division would be devastated by the cut and that not enough money is budgeted as is. Mr. Brodier reported that the Governor and the Department of Economic Development are very involved in saving funding for tourism. He noted that tourism generates a great deal of income for the state.

NEWPORT CVB

Evan Smith reported that the ferry between Providence and Newport has not been subsidized. He said that he expects that a private company will operate a ferry since RIPTA has decided to eliminate the service. Mr. Smith noted that this year Rhode Islanders will most

likely stay close to home. He said that Newport will be ready for day trippers. Mr. Smith reported that the Newport CVB is working with agents from Collette Tours to include a Providence and Newport tour in their itinerary.

Mr. McCarvill addressed the Committee. He reported that a major issue discussed at the Customer Forum. He noted that the scarcity of direct flights to and from T.F. Green was discussed at length and it was suggested that we inform visitors on how to get to Providence from Logan Airport. Ms. Sheridan reported that the CVB is doing everything it can to encourage use of T.F. Green but will provide alternatives. Mr. Fowler said that more direct flights would also be better for local businesses. Ms. Venturini said that she thinks that Warwick residents are more open to expansion than they were in the past. She said that the issue is revenue for the City of Warwick who would be giving up the property tax on the homes that would be taken for the expansion. Ms. Venturini said that she would like it on the record that we support the airport expansion.

Ms. Venturini asked if there was any other business. Hearing none she asked for a motion to adjourn. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Duffy and seconded by Mr. Fowler it was unanimously

VOTED: to adjourn at 1:50 pm