

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

**September 29, 2009**

**A meeting of the Marketing Committee of the Rhode Island Convention Center Authority Board of Commissioners was held on September 29, 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 Letitia Carter, Jeffrey Hirsh and Jason Fowler.**

**Also in attendance were Jim McCarvill and Kim Keough, RICCA; Tim Muldoon, John McGinn, Amanda Marzullo and Arlene Oliva, RICC; Martha Sheridan, Neil Schriever and Kristen Adamo, PWCVB; Larry Lepore, Cheryl Cohen, Jodi Duclos and Lisa Coelho, DDC; Steve Habl and Pattie Neves, VMA; Mark Brodner, RIEDC; Jeremy Crisp and Josh Oakhurst, Nail; Evan Smith and Tim Walsh, Newport CVB and Eileen Smith, recording secretary.**

**Ms. Venturini called the meeting to order at 12:30 PM. Ms. Venturini asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the August meeting. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Hirsh and seconded by Mr. Fowler it was unanimously**

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

**Ms. Venturini reported that today's meeting we would be concentrating on our web site. She noted that Jeremy Crisp and Josh Oakhurst had prepared a Power Point presentation that will show the progress that has been made to the look and feel of the site. Mr. Crisp and Mr. Oakhurst began their presentation. Lengthy discussions ensued regarding the colors and the consistency of the home page for each venue. Mr. Crisp assured the Committee that there will be a master calendar and this presentation was meant to give an early look at how the site would work. He stated that there is a great deal more to be done and that Mr. Oakhurst will be meeting with the web design team to iron out any issues that they have. Mr. Fowler inquired if there would be any connections for merchandise sales for events that are held in the buildings. Ms. Cohen stated that we do not sell or derive any revenue from the sale of merchandise. Ms. Cohen also stated that we do not want to direct fans to other sites. Ms. Venturini asked when we are going live. Ms. Keough responded that we are still working on the date that the site will be ready. She also said that we will be down for approximately 48 hours and we don't want to interrupt ticket sales etc. Ms. Venturini concurred, saying that there is no reason to rush. Ms. Venturini inquired about a training session. Ms. Keough said that anyone who is responsible for web content will be trained to add or delete information regarding events. Ms. Venturini thanked Mr. Crisp and stated that she liked that the site has been kept simple. Ms. Keough stated that Nail new that we**

wanted each home page to have a similar look and be easy to navigate. Ms. Sheridan commented that the icon for the meeting planner is not prominent enough. Mr. Crisp said that Nail will make that more prominent. Mr. Fowler wanted to know if the wedding piece will be easy to access. He noted that there may be opportunities for future business. Mr. McCarvill explained the issues that we face with weddings. He said that meetings and conventions are our main source of business and that we do not like to commit to a social event more than a year out. Mr. Schriever asked if someone from the CVB staff could be included in the copy for the web site. The representatives from Nail departed. Discussions ensued regarding the presentation. There was concern that the presentation did not provide enough in site into the functionality of the site.

## **CONVENTION CENTER**

Mr. McGinn began the Convention Center's presentation. Mr. McGinn updated the Committee on the Convention Center's progress in meeting their revenue goals for the year. Mr. McGinn said that the total revenue goal for fiscal year 2010 is \$8 million and currently \$7,546,712 in revenue has been booked. Mr. McGinn reported that he is confident that the Convention Center will meet their goals. Mr. McGinn reported on new tradeshow prospects including a GI Joe collectors group for May 2010 and NECO Tradeshow that is looking at dates in the Fall of 2010. Mr. McGinn stated that the Convention Center staff is working with Borders Book Store for a book signing

event and Citizens Bank for a senior management meeting in January 2010. Mr. McGinn presented highlights of several tentative events. Mr. McGinn noted that dance and cheerleading competitions have become a great source of business for the facility. Mr. Hirsh noted that Sysco Boston Tradeshow is a contracted event with attendance estimated to be 500 people. He said that he would think that attendance would be higher. Mr. McGinn noted that the event is not a large show. Mr. Hirsh suggested that a team be put together to investigate more food and beverage opportunities.

## **VMA**

Ms. Venturini recognized Steve Hahl and Pattie Neves from VMA. Mr. Hahl distributed the new VMA brochure that was designed and donated by Artinium. Mr. Hahl said thanked Artinium for producing a beautiful brochure. Ms. Neves reported that banners have now been hung on the front doors of the theater with a calendar of events. Ms. Neves highlighted upcoming events. She reported that Hal Holbrook is doing very well and that the Ultimate Praise and Worship Experience and John Prine are also gaining momentum. Ms. Neves noted that there has been some interest from dance companies to hold their recitals at the VMA. Ms. Venturini asked if the VMA had reached out to the Convention Center to provide catering for events. Mr. Muldoon stated that the Convention Center is now equipped to cater a variety of food choices. Ms. Neves reported that HGTV has been contacted to see if they might be interested in renovating back

stage. Ms. Venturini said that she had witnessed Mr. Habl walking the City and distributing pamphlets. Mr. Habl stated that he does not have a budget for marketing and that shoe leather costs less than other advertising. Mr. McCarvill asked when we can anticipate some cash. Mr. Habl said that at the next Marketing Committee meeting he should have a better idea.

Mr. Hirsh suggested that at some point in the future when money is not as tight, we look into advertising the calendar of events in all facilities. Ms. Cohen agreed saying that we may be able, as an addition to the web site, have touch screen kiosk in each venue to advertise upcoming events. Ms. Venturini asked that research be done to see if this can be done.

Ms. Venturini said that she had to leave for another engagement at 1:29 PM but reminded everyone of the Economic Outlook Breakfast on October 14th.

## **DUNKIN DONUTS CENTER**

Ms. Cohen thanked everyone for their assistance with Spirit of America. She said that the Friday morning show was over capacity and that some school groups had to be turned away. She said that the Army had decided to go to those schools for a special performance. Ms. Cohen reported that the dedication of the War Memorial was a beautiful event. Mr. Schriever reported that the Spirit

of American team had a great experience in Providence and that they are looking to find a way to participate in next year's Bristol 4th of July parade. Ms. Cohen presented a clip from the upcoming Star Wars show. Ms. Carter asked if the full orchestra would be here. Ms. Cohen said that they would be here and that it will be an exciting event.

Ms. Carter departed at 1:40 – no quorum

Ms. Sheridan, Mr. Schriever and Ms. Adamo spoke on CVB activity. Ms. Sheridan noted that room tax revenue is down 4 ½%. She also noted that unemployment in the tourism industry is at 7 ½% compared with 10% for other industries. Mr. Hirsh asked if that means that rate and occupancy is also down. Ms. Sheridan said that they are down in Providence but beating the national average.

Mr. Smith reported that Newport bid on the 2012 Volvo Ocean Race and that they are one of three cities being considered for this prestigious race. He said that the race would be huge for Newport and Rhode Island.

Mr. Brodner and Ms. Sheridan were in Washington recently as part of the US Travel Association and noted that the United States does not have a National Tourism Office. The reason for the trip was to speak to senators and congressmen regarding the Travel Promotion Act. Mr. McCarvill congratulated them both on gaining the support of the

**State's delegation.**

**The meeting ended at 2:00 PM**