

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

December 21, 2009

A meeting of the Marketing Committee of the Rhode Island Convention Center Authority Board of Commissioners was held on December 21, 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, Dave Duffy, Paul MacDonald, Letitia Carter and Jeffrey Hirsh.

Also in attendance were Jim McCarvill, Betty Sullivan and Kim Keough, RICCA; Tim Muldoon, Amanda Marzullo and Arlene Oliva, RICC; Martha Sheridan, Neil Schriever and Kristen Adamo, PWCVB; Larry Lepore, Robert Cappalli, Cheryl Cohen, Jodi Duclos and Lisa Coelho, DDC; Steve Habl, VMA; Evan Smith, Newport CVB; Laurie Stroll, Newport Hospitality and Eileen Smith, recording secretary.

Ms. Venturini called the meeting to order at 12:35 PM. Ms. Venturini noted that the Marketing Committee did not meet in November. Ms. Venturini asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the October meeting. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Duffy and seconded by Mr. MacDonald it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the minutes of the October meeting.

PWCVB

Ms. Sheridan and Mr. Schriever reported on sales activity for November. Mr. Schriever stated that November definite bookings are ahead of last year although definite room nights are tracking lower. Mr. Schriever noted that meeting planners are being cautious about securing large room blocks. Mr. Schriever reported on the definite booking highlights and noted that the Jarvis Green Foundation event was a success. Mr. Schriever reported that Citizens Bank will be holding an event at the Convention Center in January. He also noted that Educause, the International Foundation of Employee Benefit Plans and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers have signed contracts. Mr. Schriever said that the American Choral Directors Association is the first official booking for the VMA that the CVB has produced. Mr. Schriever stated that the CVB staff has been working hard to secure many tentative pieces of business that include MQX Machine Quilters Expo, the Northeast Association of Equine Practitioners the Society of Government Meeting Professionals, National United Church Ushers Association, AMVETS and the International Association of Assembly Managers, Inc. Mr. Schriever noted that several site inspections have taken place since the last meeting. Mr. Schriever reported that the American Contract Bridge League approved Providence as their destination. Mr. Schriever noted that we are competing with DC for the National Strength & Conditioning Association and Raleigh for the Society for

In Vitro Biology. Mr. Schriever reported that the CVB had participated in trade shows and made sales calls in Boston, Braintree, Cape Cod, Louisville and New Orleans. Mr. Schriever noted that our Brown Ambassador program has been a huge success. He said that the attendees at the ASAE were quite impressed that the Mayor was in attendance. Mr. Duffy asked if we will be getting the Bay Colony Dog Show back. Mr. Schriever stated that he is trying and the planners loved the Convention Center and the City. Ms. Adamo addressed the Committee regarding marketing highlights. She said that the video testimonials from meeting planners have been completed and the CVB is beginning to use them in their e-marketing efforts. Ms. Adamo also noted that she is working with the RI Division of Tourism on implementing a couponing, calendar and recipe database program. She distributed a recipe card and measuring spoons that will be part of the campaign. Ms. Adamo said that the PWCVB is working with the Newport and Bristol CVB in planning a June visit by the Society of American Travel Writers. Ms. Adamo reported that she is also assisting RI Monthly with the June City & Regional Magazine Association Conference. Ms. Adamo stated that the CVB is assisting with the procurement of monetary and in-kind sponsors for NCAA related events such as Waterfire, a basketball clinic and gift bags. She said that they are working with the hospitality community to develop hotel packages and special promotions. A comprehensive web site is being developed to serve as a clearinghouse for basketball fans.

DUNKIN DONUTS CENTER

Ms. Cohen updated the Committee on the Dunkin' Donuts Center's primary marketing objectives. She noted that the budgeted sales objectives sponsorship and signage for Fiscal Year 2010 are \$870,923 and to date we are optimistic that we will reach our goal. Contracts have been renewed with Blue Cross, Roger Williams Medical, Don Julio and Bacardi and under negotiations with Coors, Budweiser, Apex Technology, Snookers, Monet, Heineken and Pabst Blue Ribbon. Ms. Cohen noted that the party suite sales objective has already been reached and there are a few events that the suites are still available. Ms. Cohen reported that the events at the Dunkin' Donuts Center have received a great deal of press from our local news media. She said that interviews with the NASCAR Sprint Cup Driver, David Reutiman and our local race car driver, Mike Stefanik ran in the Providence Journal in the auto section and Patrick Little, WPRI CBS News covered the races and did interviews as well as showed video from his ride along in the race car. WHJY promoted an autograph signing and encouraged patrons to bring a non-perishable food donation to the races to support the Rhode Island Community Food Bank. Ms. Cohen said the WCTK also promoted the food drive both on the air and on their web-site. Ms. Cohen reported that Mike Stefanik of Coventry, RI had won the first ever Dunkin' Donuts Coffee Cup trophy in what will become an annual event at the Dunk. Ms. Cohen reported that there will be a skating clinic and mini performance at the Bank of America Skating Center during Disney on

Ice and the performers will visit Hasbro Children's Hospital on Thursday. Ms. Cohen noted that Channing Gray of the Providence Journal did an interview Keith Lockhart of the Boston Pops. Ms. Cohen presented the newest advertisement being placed in industry publications to increase awareness of the venue. Ms. Cohen said that there has been a great deal of publicity happening and it is happening in December. Mr. Duffy asked what is being done about PR for the NCAA Tournament. Ms. Cohen responded that we will be limited by the Tournament rules in what we can do but that we will take every opportunity that we are afforded to promote the building and the City.

CONVENTION CENTER

Arlene Oliva represented the Convention Center. Ms. Oliva reported that Fidelity has returned to the facility. She stated that they had scaled back their meetings during the recent downturn in the economy. Ms. Oliva noted that Fidelity is a very valuable client and that we are pleased that they have returned. Ms. Oliva reported that the revenue goal for FY 2010 is \$8 million and that the Convention Center needs \$250,000 to reach the goal. Ms. Oliva reported that the sales staff is working on securing multiple year contracts from annual tradeshow. She said the trade shows include Emery Waterhouse, New England Regional Turfgrass, New England Winter Sports Reps and machine Quilters Exposition. Ms. Oliva noted that final contract negotiations are underway with IEEE PES ESMO a power and engineering society conference, New England

Independent Booksellers, American Choral Directors Association and the American Society of Plant Biologists. She said that the Convention Center has been working with Mr. Leach on changes to the standard contract for some of these groups. Mr. MacDonald questioned the need to change our standard contract. Ms. Oliva noted that almost all conventions ask for changes to the contract. She said that our boilerplate contract does not always meet the needs of the client.

Ms. Oliva updated the Committee on the Brown University Vendor Fair held on November 18th. She reported that in cooperation with the CVB and the Brown Ambassador program the fair attracted sixty five potential clients. Ms. Oliva stated that follow up emails and phone calls have been made and the Convention Center sales staff will continue to reach out to the attendees for potential pieces of business. Ms. Oliva reported on new tentative events and recently contracted events. She said that the RISD Graduate School Exhibit will be back during May and June. Ms. Oliva also noted that Fidelity has held two meetings in December and that Citizens Financial Group will be having an event in January. Ms. Oliva stated that there were several site tours of the facility by prospective clients.

VMA

Ms. Venturini recognized Steve Habl. Mr. Habl reported that Ms. Neves had been involved in an automobile accident and although she is expected to fully recuperate she will be out of work for several

weeks. Mr. Hahl noted that the boiler in the theater was not working again this morning. Mr. Hahl reported that some contracts have been signed. He said that arrangements for Youth America Grand Prix International Ballet Competition are underway. Mr. Hahl stated that he is close to leasing the first floor office space to the RI Film Foundation. Ms. Venturini commended Mr. Hahl for reaching out to Randy Rosenbaum and the arts community and stated that it is a great partnership for the theater. Mr. Hahl reported that John Prine was a good event for the VMA and thanked Jodi Duclos for her assistance. Mr. Hahl noted that ticket sales were mostly on-line. Mr. Duffy stated that the weekend was great for the City. He said there was the Dog Show, Midget Car Racing, John Prine and something at PPAC and Trinity. Mr. Hahl reported that Ms. Carter had hosted a reception on the stage at the VMA. Mr. Duffy congratulated Kathy Masino saying that the stage looked great and the food was terrific.

WEB DESIGN

Ms. Keough reported that things are going well with the web design and that we should be able to launch early in January. A Power Point presentation highlighted the sites and Ms. Keough stated that maintenance would be easy to accomplish. Mr. MacDonald asked how many people would have access to make changes. Ms. Keough said that there will be six authorized people. She noted that the site will be password protected and certain areas that can only be accessed by an administrator. Ms. Venturini suggested that photos

of key personnel should be included. Ms. Keough responded that she is in the process of making arrangements for photos. Ms. Venturini thanked Ms. Keough and the web-design team for a job well done. She stated that a press release announcing the site should go out following the launch.

NEWPORT CVB

Mr. Smith was unable to stay for the duration of the meeting. Ms. Stroll noted that it seems that Newport tourism will be losing Astors Beechwood for the mansion tours. Ms. Stroll stated that Newport is still in the running for the Volvo race. Ms. Stroll reported that Christmas in Newport is going well. She noted that hotel room rates are negotiable but that meeting planners appear to be getting approval to book meetings.

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. MacDonald it was unanimously

VOTED: to adjourn at 1:45 pm