

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

January 26, 2010

A meeting of the Marketing Committee of the Rhode Island Convention Center Authority Board of Commissioners was held on January 26, 2010 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, John McGinn and Arlene Oliva, RICC; Martha Sheridan and Neil Schriever, PWCVB; Cheryl Cohen, Jodi Duclos, Lisa D'Ercole and Lisa Coelho, DDC; Steve Habl, VMA; Ken Cusson, Newport Harbor Corp. 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 December meeting. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Duffy and seconded by Ms. Carter it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the minutes of the December meeting.

PWCVB

Ms. Sheridan and Mr. Schriever began their Power Point Presentation with a mid year overview of CVB activity. Mr. Schriever compared the mid year goal to actual and noted that although there are fewer groups the number of room nights has significantly outpaced the mid year goal. Mr. Schriever reported that the CVB had attended client events for Gov Energy, UUA site inspection and Board meeting, Brown University and the ASAE Leadership meeting to develop leads, showcase the destination and establish relationships for future events. Mr. Schriever noted that the CVB had attended the American Orthopedic Society for Sports Medicine meeting, the National Conference of Standards Laboratories and the Council of State Governments. Mr. Schriever reported on total sales activity for the month of December and noted that the number of bookings is up to FY 09. Mr. Schriever said that Convention Center bookings are also better than FY 09 and that he is optimistic for the future. Mr. Schriever reported that definite Complex bookings include MQX Machine Quilters Expo, the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, the American Choral Directors Association, the American Society of Plant Biologists in 2013 and again in 2017 and the American Contract Bridge League. Ms. Venturini commented on the number of room nights associated with the American Contract Bridge League. Mr. Schriever stated that the group will be here in November of 2014 over the Thanksgiving weekend. Mr. Schriever noted that the Flower Show has received nationwide publicity including stories on

the AP Newswire and in USA Today. Mr. Muldoon stated that we are benefiting from shows that are not happening or that have been scaled down in Boston. Mr. Schriever reported that Providence is also becoming a well known culinary destination. Ms. Sheridan commented that groups are impressed with the cohesiveness and ease of bringing their groups to the City. She noted that one phone call will get all the interested parties at the table.

Mr. Schriever presented an update of NCAA preparations. Mr. Schriever reported that a pep rally is being planned for Selection Sunday at McFaddens. Ms. Keough stated that she has been working on welcoming sound bites from the Governor, Mayor and Mr. Driscoll. Mr. Duffy suggested that Mr. Gavitt be included. Mr. Schriever said that we want everyone from visitors to residence to have fun in the City. Mr. McCarvill said that we should find Jim Donaldson's Projo article from 1995.

Mr. Schriever concluded that he is cautiously optimistic that we are witnessing the beginning of the end of the decline.

DUNKIN DONUTS CENTER

Ms. Cohen updated the Committee on the Dunkin' Donuts Center's sales and marketing objectives. She noted that the budgeted sale of sponsorships 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 Coors, Budweiser, Heineken and Ketel One/Cuervo Tequila. Ms. Cohen noted that negotiations are ongoing with Snipits, Pizzeria UNO, Russell Athletics and Peter Pan Buslines. Ms. Cohen stated that we have surpassed our party suite sales objective and there is potential for additional sales with select Providence College games, Monster Jam, Chris Daugherty, Harlem Globetrotters, Stars on Ice and Walking with Dinosaurs. Ms. Cohen reported on the marketing objective of maximizing public awareness of events at the Dunkin' Donuts Center. Ms. Cohen presented web site statistics indicating the number of visits, traffic, sources and content. Mr. Duffy stated that he would like to know what SMG has done or is doing for us. Ms. Cohen said that Walking with Dinosaurs and Spirit of America are SMG products. Mr. Hirsh asked if there would be any opportunity to have Walking with Dinosaurs participate in the Bristol 4th of July Parade. Ms. Cohen noted that the show will be over prior to the parade but she would look into it. Ms. Cohen thanked Lisa D'Ercole for all her help in getting the web site operational. She said that Lisa's input was invaluable.

CONVENTION CENTER

John McGinn presented the Convention Center update. He noted that he is confident that the Convention Center will reach their revenue goal of \$8 million. He said that currently \$7,796,791 is on the books and \$203,208 is needed to reach that goal. Mr. McGinn reported that the sales team has submitted proposals to International Wire & Cable

to hold symposiums in 2012 and 2014. Mr. McGinn stated that negotiations are underway with New England Traditions, the National Association of Oil Heating Service Managers and Emery Waterhouse marketplace. Mr. McGinn reported that the sales team is also working towards booking meetings for the American Cheer & Dance Academy that is looking for a home in New England as well as the Fred Astaire Ballroom Dancing Pro Am Competition and The US Finals, a new cheer company that is eager to be in the Providence area. Mr. McGinn noted that contracted banquets include RI Special Olympics Luncheon, the Providence Packers Awards Banquet and an off site catering event, I Heart Providence. Mr. McGinn reported that there were several site tours associated with the tentative events. Mr. McGinn thanked Mr. Nee for bringing the 2010 Saint Patrick's Day Dinner to the Convention Center. Mr. McGinn noted other tentative events including Brighter Futures Luncheon, Hasbro Children's Hospital Gala and the Fidelity Holiday Party.

Mr. Muldoon was pleased to report that attendance at the Car Show was up and the Boat Show held their own. Mr. Duffy said that he had read a wonderful client survey from an attendee of the Dog Show. He asked if we would get it back even though Bay Side is reopening. Mr. McGinn said that negotiations are ongoing and that he is encouraged that the show will return. Mr. MacDonald asked if we get much competition from Foxwood and Mohegan. Mr. McGinn said that we do and that they do more meeting and convention business than you would think. Mr. MacDonald said that he noticed that we have

brochures for Mohegan Sun in the lobby of the Convention Center. Mr. McGinn said that they are members of the Convention & Visitors Bureau and that Foxwood and Mohegan are considered to be area attractions. Mr. MacDonald said that he was just making an observation.

VMA

Ms. Venturini recognized Steve Habl. Mr. Habl reported that that December was a pretty good month. He said that the theater had 50% more event days than in the prior year. Mr. Habl stated that the Rhode Island International Film Festival people had moved in. He was pleased to note that the VMA will be hosting Oscar Night America and there will be live pre and post event coverage. Mr. Habl said that the Philharmonic Rush Hour series has been moved to Friday evenings and that the latest show attendance improved. Mr. Habl reported that he has met several times with the Ballet and they are going back to using a live orchestra for their performances. He said that both the Philharmonic and the Ballet are trying to get more young people involved. Mr. Habl said that he has his fingers crossed that the Nutcracker will return to the VMA. He said that the set designer for Wicked is designing a Nutcracker set that will fit on our stage. Mr. Habl noted that significant progress has been made repairing the theaters relationship with the mayor's office. Mr. Habl reported that he has been submitting events to sites that have free calendars. Mr. McCarvill reported that when he was asked to speak to

the House Finance Committee, he was questioned about what acts we could get with a renovated theater. Mr. Hahl stated that the theater does not meet the basic standards of any actors unions. He noted that the dressing rooms are in poor condition and do not have showers.

Ms. Carter reported that the VMAF board is just about set. She noted that the Foundation has some wonderful branding plans is looking forward to working with Mr. Hahl, the CVB and the Authority. Ms. Carter said that the Foundation plans an outreach program for Rhode Island talent. Mr. Duffy said that it is great news that the VMAF is alive and well again.

RIEDC

Mark Brodner reported that the Economic Development Corporation has a new director, Keith Stokes. Mr. Brodner stated that Mr. Stokes is in the process of developing a strategic plan for the tourism industry. He said that a planning committee is being put together and that we are looking at different avenues for the industry. Mr. Brodner noted that the PWCVB and the Newport CVB were a huge help in hosting the travel writers. Mr. Brodner reported that the prestigious group was very impressed with the State.

WEB DESIGN

Ms. Keough reported that the web site is up and running with some minor glitches. Ms. Keough encouraged everyone to go to the site and make note of any problems that they encounter. Ms. Keough thanked the web design team and said that they had done an outstanding job. Mr. Keough reported that she is putting together a 12 month photo calendar for use in marketing materials. Ms. Keough also noted that Brown University had held a press conference in the building last week. Ms. Venturini thanked Ms. Keough for keeping her informed during the web design process. Mr. Duffy asked that Ms. Keough issue a press release announcing the launch of the web site.

Ms. Venturini said that she had recently attended the Mayor's Conference and was happy to report that our Mayor is highly respected in that group. Ms. Venturini reported that Josh Miller was given an award by the Culinary Institute of America and that Rhode Island was recognized as a culinary destination. 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. Hirsh it was unanimously

VOTED: to adjourn at 2:00 pm