

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

**August 24, 2010**

**A meeting of the Marketing Committee of the Rhode Island Convention Center Authority Board of Commissioners was held on August 24, 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, Amanda Marzullo and Debbie Tuton RICC; Martha Sheridan and Kristen Adamo, PWCVB; Larry Lepore, Cheryl Cohen, Lisa D'Ercole, Jodi Duclos and Bob Cappalli, DDC; Mark Brodner, RI Tourism; Steve Habl, VMA; Chris Cook, Unite HERE and Eileen Smith, recording secretary.**

**Ms. Venturini called the meeting to order at 12:32 PM. Ms. Venturini asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the June Marketing Committee meeting and Marketing Plans that were presented at that meeting.**

**Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Duffy and seconded by Mr. MacDonald it was unanimously**

**VOTED:** to approve the minutes of the June meeting and the Marketing Plans that were presented.

### **Public Relations/Marketing**

**Ms. Keough addressed the Committee. She reported that our website photo gallery is expected to be complete in September. Ms. Keough reported that she has been speaking to our website developer regarding a monthly retainer to assist us with issues that arise that we do not have the expertise to handle. She also stated that she is interested in cross promoting specific events on the website. Ms. Keough said that she is hoping to convince PPAC to have a dropdown tab for the VMA on the PPAC site. Ms. Keough noted that she continues to push our social media efforts. Ms. Keough updated the Committee on public relations for the complex and noted that NBC 10 is working on a story of a Roller Derby girl. Ms. Keough noted that Mr. Hirsh had agreed to place brochures for the Fine Furnishing Show at the Lobster Pot. Ms. Keough stated that she is also working with FirstWorks on a PR plan for Sweet Honey in the Rock. Ms. Keough reported that the Complex is running a center spread in Destination Providence with a listing of upcoming events. This year there will be a parking special for Providence College and Providence Bruins games.**

**PWCVB**

**Ms. Venturini asked Ms. Sheridan to present the CVB's report. Ms. Sheridan reported on fiscal year 2010 results. She stated that definite room nights associated with the Convention Center were 73,733. Ms. Sheridan noted that the CVB had conducted 10 client events, attended 21 trade shows, industry conferences and expositions. Ms. Sheridan was pleased to report that the destination was the recipient of the Meetings & Conventions magazine Gold Service Award, the Successful Meetings Magazine Pinnacle Award and the Facilities and Destinations Magazine Destination Award. Ms. Sheridan presented the CVB's 2011 goals for the destination that include 66,000 definite room nights related to the Complex. Ms. Sheridan noted that for the month of July definite room night production was below the goal set for the month. She was hopeful that most of the tentative room nights would become definite. Ms. Sheridan reported that several local establishments are welcoming back of house tours. She said that Lifespan visited Venda Ravioli, Scialo Bakery and Gasparos. Guests were allowed to watch as ravioli was made at Venda and visit their butcher shop and Scialo opened their kitchen.**

**Ms. Adamo updated the Committee on new collateral. She stated that the Meeting Planner Guide is at the printer and the new visitor map has been completed. Ms. Adamo reported that a new brochure for the Convention Center and the CVB is in the final stages of production.**

**Ms. Sheridan reported that the CVB has formed the R.I. Sports Marketing Commission. Mr. Duffy asked if that meant that the RI**

**Sports Council is officially dead. Ms. Sheridan said that they are not getting any funding but they are not officially disbanded.**

**Ms. Sheridan invited everyone to the Gubernatorial Forum being held at the Crowne Plaza at the Crossings on September 21st sponsored by the Rhode Island Hospitality & Tourism Association. Ms. Venturini said that the candidates will respond to questions on issues relating to the tourism industry. Ms. Sheridan noted that Projo's John Kostrzewa's economic story did not mention tourism as having an impact on the State. Ms. Sheridan stated that we do the best we can to let people know of the importance of tourism.**

### **Dunkin' Donuts Center**

**Ms. Cohen reported that we have Bieber fever in the City. She said that the sold out concert will be a huge success. Ms. Cohen explained some special arrangements made for the Bieber concert. She said that the CVB coordinated hotel rooms for a bus tour from Toronto for a 3 night stay. Sportservice is putting together a food and beverage package for the group from Toronto for a pre-show reception. She reported that a Bieber Fever VIP pre-show reception will be held in the Convention Center where dinner will be served prior to the concert. Parking in the North Garage is also being promoted for the Bieber VIP package holders. Ms. Cohen presented the sales of sponsorships and signage objectives for the fiscal year. Ms. Cohen reported that the Providence Bruins, Dave & Busters,**

**Coca Cola Recycle Sponsorship, WBRU and Hershey Ice Cream have signed contracts. Under negotiation are Panera Bread, Nathan's, Dippin Dots and Cassarino. Ms. Cohen said that Ms. Duclos is busy selling the party suites. Justin Bieber and Aventura have been sold. There are party suites available for Toy Story 3, Back to Stool, Phish, TSO and PC non-conference games. Ms. Cohen stated that she proposes keeping the suite renewal fee at \$50,000 annually. Ms. Duclos has contacted all current suite holders to secure renewals. Ms. Cohen noted that they are looking into incentive programs such as payment option plans and ticket package incentives for suite renewals. Ms. Cohen said that a deadline of February has been set for renewals. Ms. Cohen stated that this will be a challenging year. She said that there needs to be some creative thinking. Mr. Duffy said that we had asked both Global and SMG if they would be any help in suites sales. Ms. Cohen said that SMG is helpful in that they let us know what is being done in other buildings.**

## **Convention Center**

**John McGinn reported a positive trend in the meetings market. Mr. McGinn noted that the fiscal year 2011 revenue goal is \$8.5 million and currently \$1,396,597 is required to reach that goal. Mr. McGinn stated that the sales team is working to secure 35 tentative events and have contracted 37 events that include 4 conventions, 15 meetings, 11 public shows 2 trade shows and 5 stand alone food and beverage events. Mr. McGinn said that there were 18 site tours from**

**July 1 through August 20th. Mr. McGinn noted that the team attended the Meeting Professionals International trade show with the CVB and came away with some prospective clients. He said that from August 21st through the 24th the CVB and members of the Convention Center staff will be manning a booth at the American Society for Association Executives Annual Meeting in Los Angeles.**

**Discussion ensued regarding the impact of the labor dispute at the Westin on future business for the City and the Convention Center. Ms. Sheridan stated that some groups will not even consider the destination because of the labor issue. Mr. Muldoon noted that we have in the short term benefited from the conflict due to some groups that have moved from the Westin into the Convention Center but in the future the dispute will have a negative affect.**

## **VMA**

**Mr. Habl reported that building rental is way up over last year. He noted that there are several shows booked for the coming months and that he is confident that the theater is on its way slowly but surely to a bright future. Mr. Habl described the RI Film Festival noting that local filmmakers had an opportunity to present their work.**

**He noted that the theater received great media coverage. Mr. Habl also noted that the VMA now has a large movie screen. Ms. Keough stated that Mr. Habl works very hard keeping the building together. Mr. Habl said that he takes advantage of Convention Center staff**

**which has been a huge help. Mr. Duffy noted that Aquilla is holding an event at the building and dinner will be served on the stage. He said that the event will be catered by the Convention Center Food & Beverage department and will result in the guests realizing the numerous uses for the theater. Ms. Sheridan asked how many guests can be accommodated. Mr. Habi stated that dinner will be served to approximately 50 people. Ms. Keough said that she would arrange for photos of the event.**

## **RIEDC**

**Mark Brodner said that he was pleased to hear that Ms. Sheridan has stepped up with sports marketing. He said that we need to tap into weddings or family reunions that have out of town guests.**

**Mr. Brodner reported that the Tourism Division is working with Johnson & Wales students on getting us up to speed with social media.**

**Mr. Brodner stated that RIEDC realizes that attracting business and tourism go hand in hand. We have to educate people about all the advantages to locating their business and living in Rhode Island. He said that we have to bring all entities together, the Lottery, the Airport, RIPTA, etc.**

**Ms. Venturini commented that this is going to be a trying year. She**

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

**VOTED: to adjourn at 1:40 PM**