

**THE RHODE ISLAND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY 303rd
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS March 29, 2007**

A meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Rhode Island Convention Center Authority (hereinafter referred to as "Authority", the "CCA" or the "Board") was held on March 29, 2007 at 9:00 a.m. pursuant to notice, at the Rhode Island Convention Center Boardroom, One Sabin Street, Providence, Rhode Island.

Board members present were Chairman, David A. Duffy, Commissioners, Jeff Hirsh, Paul MacDonald, George Nee, Marianne Corr, Patrick Butler, Bernie Buonanno and Dave Gavitt.

Ms. Venturini was unable to attend.

Also present were James P. McCarvill, Executive Director, Betty Sullivan and Kerrie Bennett, Rhode Island Convention Center Authority; Bruce Leach, Legal Counsel; Neil Schriever and Martha Sheridan, PWCVB; Tim Muldoon, Debbie Tuton, John McGinn and Nancy Beauchamp SMG/RICC; Larry Lepore, Cheryl Schadone, Eleanor SanAntonio and Kym Chevia, SMG/DDC; Eric Ahlborg, O. Ahlborg & Sons; Steve Duvel and Larry Bacher, Gilbane; Bill Guglietti, House of Representatives; Robert Bromley, Senate Fiscal Office; Ben Gedan, Projo and Eileen Smith, Recording Secretary.

CALL TO ORDER

Recognizing a quorum, Chairman Duffy called the meeting to order at

9:05 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Duffy entertained a motion to accept the minutes of the 302nd meeting, February, 2007. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Gavitt and seconded by Mr. Buonanno it was unanimously VOTED: to approve the minutes as distributed

Chairman Duffy instructed the Authority office to send the approved minutes to the Secretary of State's Office via electronic mail.

Mr. Duffy announced that Jerry Massa had resigned from the Board. He asked that the Executive Director send a letter of thanks to Mr. Massa for his years of dedicated service to the Authority. Chairman Duffy stated that he had appointed Marianne Corr to Chair the Convention Center Committee. The Commissioners congratulated Ms. Corr.

Chairman Duffy asked Mr. McCarvill to present the consolidated financial review. Mr. McCarvill reported that the Dunkin' Donuts Center continues to outpace budget. He said that Year to Date the Dunkin' Donuts Center is plus \$144,333 to budget but negative \$1.15 million to last year due to the construction shutdown and related costs. The Convention Center combined operations Year to Date are plus \$250,000 to budget and plus \$322,000 to the prior year. Mr. McCarvill stated that the consolidated financial statements which

include all operations and overhead indicate that for February we were plus \$14,000 to budget and plus \$109,018 to the prior year. Year to Date figures are plus \$10,276 to budget and negative \$1,280,818 to the prior year attributed to the Dunkin' Donuts Center and as anticipated in the budget.

DUNKIN' DONUTS CENTER

Mr. Lepore reported that the Dunkin' Donuts Center is still negotiating the Providence College contract although an agreement has been reached on the ticket surcharge. Mr. Lepore stated that negotiations are headed in the right direction. Mr. Lepore noted that the Elton John concert was a great sold out. He continued that the Christine Agulera event is also sold out. Mr. Lepore noted great economic impact of the Elton John concert had on area restaurants. Mr. Lepore informed the Board that his staff had participated in SMG sponsored customer service training. He reported that more attention is being paid to the customer experience. Mr. Lepore said that the SMG secret shopper had attended an event and reported better results than in the past. Mr. Lepore announced that the Providence Bruins had made the playoffs. He noted that attendance was usually not great during the first round.

Mr. Duffy congratulated Mr. Gavitt on being chosen to be the Commencement speaker for Providence College graduation.

Ms. Bennett and Mr. Duvel updated the Board on the progress of renovations. Mr. Duvel reported that Aborn Street and the lobby are going well. He noted that construction is two weeks behind on the north suites but with luck that time could be made up. He said that the Providence College lockers had been removed and the logo in the carpet had been stored. Mr. Duvel stated that the steel for the connecting bridge is in fabrication. Mr. Duffy asked how the building will look for events. Ms. Bennett stated that the ceiling has been removed in the concourse area but we are trying to get the area as clean as possible. She noted that signage apologizing for the appearance during construction would be put up.

Ms. Bennett reported that the Athletic Directors luncheon has resulted in some good leads for the CVB. Ms. Bennett noted that there have been some photo ops of the construction that should appear in local publications. Ms. Bennett stated that the Providence Bruins had hosted the young artists that have been painting the mural. The Bruins provided game tickets and a pizza party for the artists and their family. Ms. Bennett reported that the war memorial Medal of Honor wall will be relocated to the Veterans Cemetery in Exeter.

CONVENTION CENTER COMMITTEE

Ms. Corr asked Mr. Muldoon to update the Board on the ground floor

ballroom project. Mr. Muldoon stated that he was disappointed with the responses to the RFP. He reported that all were significantly higher than expected. Mr. Muldoon said that he would like to move forward on the project only after the re-drawing of the design. He said that at the original estimate of \$825,000 the Convention Center would see a return on investment in five years. The bids that were submitted were between \$1.1 million and \$1.35 million and any return on investment would be delayed for eight years. Mr. Duffy noted that RGB and Morris Nathanson had sold us on a look. Mr. Muldoon said that he was very disappointed but hoped that RGB could meet the challenge of designing a space that would meet our needs and not exceed the \$825,000 original estimate. Mr. MacDonald suggested that some of the work could be done in house. Mr. Muldoon stated that he will be looking at some components of the project that could be done in house. He said that in order to get closer to the number in house talent will be important.

Ms. Corr asked Mr. Muldoon to report on operations at the Convention Center. Mr. Muldoon stated that they are in the process of gathering information on Citywide parking. Mr. Muldoon said that he expects to ask for approval to raise rates at the next meeting. He continued that he was sure that the data will show that we can generate more revenue and still be priced at the mid range of our competitors. Mr. MacDonald cautioned that the cost of parking could affect a family's ability to attend events at the Dunkin' Donuts Center. Ms. Corr stated that family event cost for parking would be taken into

consideration.

MARKETING COMMITTEE

Ms. Venturini was not present therefore Chairman Duffy asked Ms. Sheridan to begin the CVB report. Ms. Sheridan congratulated and thanked Kerrie Bennett for arranging the Athletic Directors Luncheon.

She noted several leads generated from the luncheon. Ms. Sheridan reported that Hoop Group had been sanctioned and would attract many college recruiters and scouts. Ms. Sheridan reported that the CVB is looking to update their web site for the leisure market. She noted that the objective would be to take advantage of the opportunity to reach people that are here for meetings and conventions and entice them to return as tourists.

Mr. Schriever reported on room night production and definite booking highlights. Mr. Schriever stated that Convention Center bookings include the Masello Salon Services Beauty Show in April of 2007 and Restore America's Estuaries in October of 2008. Tentative Convention Center and Dunkin' Donuts Center bookings include the U.S. Figure Skating Association in February 2008 and the Association of National Aerobic Championships Worldwide in July 2008. Mr. Duffy asked when the new hotel rooms would be coming on line. Mr. Schriever answered that the Renaissance is scheduled to on May 1st and the Westin expansion in early summer. Ms. Sheridan noted that the Renaissance generates a lot of press, it's a great story. Mr. Duffy

said that it all good news. Mr. Gavitt asked how many people work for the CVB. Ms. Sheridan answered 14.

Mr. MacDonald asked the process for displaying brochures in the visitor's center. He commented that the Museum of Work and Culture was having difficulty placing information at the center. Ms. Sheridan said that she would investigate.

Ms. Schadone reported that all suites have been sold and the sales team had begun to develop a party suite package. She said that they will be rented on an event by event basis for Birthday parties and small meetings. Ms. Schadone noted that the Dunkin' Donuts Center Marketing team is working hard to gain recognition in trade publications. Ms. Schadone noted the benefits of merging the talents of the CVB and the Convention Center staff. Mr. Duffy asked if things were looking good for next year. Mr. Lepore said that family shows have done very well in Rhode Island and should continue next year. Mr. Nee commented that he would like to see high school basketball return to the Dunk. Mr. Lepore said that he has been talking with the RI Interscholastic League. Mr. Schadone also noted that WWE has sold out and Providence will receive a lot of National exposure. Mr. MacDonald congratulated Ms. Schadone and her staff for getting the suites sold.

Mr. McCarvill reported that Gilbane would like everyone and everything out of the Dunk in May. To that end warehouse space has

been leased at 210 West Exchange Street. He continued that the CVB would be moving out of their space in the Westin on May 1st and the Providence Bruins and the Dunkin' Donuts Center staff would move into their space until the renovations of the Dunkin Donuts Center office level is complete.

Hearing no further business Mr. Duffy entertained a motion to adjourn. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Nee and seconded by Mr. VMacDonald it was unanimously

VOTED: to adjourn at 10:20 a.m.