



Capital Region Development Authority

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**CRDA Venue Committee Conference Call
Meeting Minutes
Connecticut Convention Center
100 Columbus Boulevard, 5th Floor
Hartford, CT 06103
Friday, September 9, 2016
2:00 PM**

Members Present: Venue Committee Chair Andy Bessette (via phone), David Jorgensen, Mike Matteo (via phone), Catherine Smith (via phone), and Sean Fitzpatrick (via phone)

Guests: Chris Lawrence (Spectra)

Staff: Executive Director Mike Freimuth and Kim Hart

The meeting was called to order at 2:02 pm by Chairman Bessette and the minutes of the June 10, 2016 meeting were approved by voice vote. Mr. Freimuth gave the following update regarding the status of the CRDA venues and the various projects associated therewith.

1. XL Center

Capital Improvements – Mr. Freimuth reported that a construction manager is being selected to oversee the elevator and security upgrades at the Church Street Garage and XL Center, as well as the ice slab replacement at XL. Schedule and budget estimates for the ice slab work may be impacted by issues with the insulation layer under the existing concrete slab. Mr. Lawrence indicated that he has reached out to other Spectra facilities that may have dealt with similar issues.

Event Update – Mr. Lawrence noted that the Justin Bieber concert did well this past summer, however, a scheduled comedy show had to be cancelled due to poor ticket sales. Ice making will begin next week and the hockey season will start in early October. Maroon 5 and Blake Shelton concerts are scheduled for September, along with the Mission of Mercy Dental Clinic.

2. Pratt & Whitney Stadium at Rentschler Field

New Parking Lots – Mr. Freimuth reported that a temporary parking arrangement has been worked out with UTC to allow the Stadium to use additional acreage at Rentschler Field for the Virginia and Syracuse games. These are expected to be the best-attended games of the season.

Budget Update – Mr. Freimuth also reported that the Stadium netted over \$600k in non-UConn event revenue for FY16.

Game-Day Changes – CRDA staff has met a number of times with the new UConn AD to discuss changes to Stadium game day operations designed to enhance the fan experience. Mr. Lawrence reviewed the list of UConn requests, including (1) additional parking lot signage, (2) new amenities for season ticket holders, (3) reductions in hot dog and bottled water prices and (4) deferral of the scheduled \$15 to \$20 parking rate increase. The Stadium has agreed to implement all but a few of the requested changes, however, the concessions and parking items could significantly impact the Stadium’s budget. UConn has been reminded that, per their lease agreement, they are responsible for any final budget shortfall up to \$250k.

Capital Improvements – CRDA has requested an additional \$300k from the State Bond Commission to cover paving and concrete repairs to prevent further water damage to the concourse and field wall.

New UConn Ticketing Program – Mr. Freimuth noted that UConn has contracted with Aspire to implement a new ticket sales initiative for all its sports programs. The University’s lack of a dedicated team and concerted effort to boost attendance has been a serious concern of CRDA’s for a number of years.

3. **Convention Center**

Budget Update - Despite an off year in terms of events, the Convention Center has performed ahead of budget projections. The building is expected to do well in the current year, with a significant number of events booked.

Capital Improvements – Work on the new box offices and video board should be completely shortly. Additional issues related to water infiltration on the outside concourses will need to be addressed.

4. **Tennis Center**

Tournament Report – A final reconciliation of the event is expected soon, however, it was noted that attendance remained steady. Sponsorship totals are down, however, the number of sponsors represents an increase over 2015. Commissioner Smith and Mr. Jorgensen noted that they were optimistic that the new sponsorship consultant hired by the Tournament earlier this year will be successful. Mr. Freimuth cited a report listing the CT Open as the fourth highest attended women’s tournament in the world.

The next meeting / conference call of the Venue Committee is scheduled for October 7, 2016.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:37 PM