

River's Edge Convention Center Advisory Board

Meeting Notes – February 14, 2017

Present Jodi Domeier, Marty Mahowald, Scott Raden, Alvin Yu

Not Present Dan Barth, Linda Feuling, Patty Gaetz, Julie Lunning

Staff Present Bill Dunsmoor, Rich Gallus, Tony Goddard

1. The meeting was convened at 3:35 pm at the Convention Center.
2. Members introduced themselves to our new member: Prof. Alvin Yu of SCSU's Travel and Tourism Department. Dan Barth's term on the Board expires at the end of this month. Goddard noted that he has secured tentative agreement from another business person to join the Board.
3. Raden asked for a summary of the previous week's City Council Study Session. Goddard responded that the Board's Operational Review of the MAC was very well received; the Mayor and a clear majority of the Council are enthusiastic about a major improvement project at the MAC in 2018. Goddard is at work assembling a more detailed financing proposal. Key to the project is the Administration's proposal, supported by the Council at their regular meeting on 2/13/17, to increase hospitality taxes. Neither the Food and Beverage Tax nor the Hotel/Motel Tax has been raised since 1987. Increased rates would provide for debt service on capital expenditures and increased operational funding. The Advisory Board's recommendations were a critical part of generating this level of support and Goddard expressed his thanks for the Board's efforts. Raden commented that the capital plan, as we have discussed, should incorporate a systematic accumulation of reserves for future upgrades, so that the City does not wind up in the same situation in the future. Raden also asked about parking revenues; Goddard responded that the Parking Ordinance has not yet been amended, but management is meeting soon to draft the changes.
4. Raden moved acceptance of the minutes of December 13, 2016 as submitted; Mahowald seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
5. Goddard distributed draft year-end 2016 financial statement; the posting of expenses are correct, but revenues are still not fully reconciled. We will have a final 12/31 statement available for the March meeting. Despite the lack of December income postings in several categories and incomplete accounting for receivables, the year looks good. The group discussed the heightened level of competition for weddings in the area; this has been a significant revenue stream for us, but is weakened.
6. Dunsmoor provided an update of recent operations at the facility and laid out the next few months, which are a very busy time of the year, particularly for consumer shows. We expect 22,000 patrons in February, participating in 27 events. Last weekend was the Vex Robotics Show, with 3,500 attendees over two days. This is an exciting and growing event, a good example of how the facility has worked with a local promoter (in this case, the Technical College) to nurture a new event. This is the fifth year. It is a wonderful event for the RECC, and also fills a lot of hotel rooms. Coming soon: Sportsmens Show, Boat Show, RV Show, Farm Show – the annual rush of consumer shows.

7. Goddard provided an update on the Capital Improvement Plan. The MAC arena upgrade will be programmed for 2018 in the Plan. Goddard is working on a comprehensive capital plan for the whole Community Services and Facilities Section.
8. Gallus distributed a social media marketing report and the Board commented on how we might utilize the information in our marketing efforts.
9. The Board discussed the draft management Dashboard discussion that had been distributed. The next iteration will come to the Board in March.
10. Next Meeting: Tuesday March 14, 2017, 5:00 pm
11. Adjournment at 6:10 pm.

Submitted by Tony Goddard