

River's Edge Convention Center Advisory Board

Meeting Notes – August 9, 2016

Present Jodi Domeier, Linda Feuling, Marty Mahowald

Not Present Dan Barth, Patty Gaetz, Julie Lunning, Scott Raden

Staff Present Bill Dunsmoor, Tony Goddard

1. The meeting was convened at 5:00 pm at the Convention Center.
2. Mahowald moved acceptance of the minutes of July 12, 2016 as submitted; Feuling seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.
3. Goddard reviewed the draft 6/30/16 financial statements that had been distributed with the packet. He noted that these were the first revenue statements management had received in 2016, since the institution of the new finance system. There appear to be some anomalies in the report at this point and management is working with Finance to develop more accurate reports. In addition, there have been some changes in how some types of expenses are booked, making year-to-year comparisons harder to interpret. The committee discussed several revenue categories in detail; catering commissions, large room rental, and concessions.
4. Bill Dunsmoor provided an update on Convention Center operations:
 - Parking ramp should be completed by the end of October
 - The space on the north side of the ramp will become Lincoln Plaza
 - The Beaver Island Trail extension should be done by late September
 - We are looking at possible use of the trail plaza area for event-related functions
 - July and early August were a very busy maintenance time: floor sealing, table & chair repair, granite cleaning, filter replacement, and more
 - We are replacing many of the heavily-used curtains
 - Big Rock Sports show – one of the large shows – coming soon
 - We now have LED lighting in all exhibit halls
 - Putting together a capital plan that will include refreshing the railings and exterior stairways on the river side of the building; looking at carpet replacement
 - Upcoming events: Tattoo show; hip hop concert, Christian rock concert
 - Dunsmoor departed.
5. Goddard and the committee discussed the preliminary conclusion and recommendation document, which is appended. Additional comments and ideas:
 - The two most basic points are that (a) the MAC is a very important amenity for the City and area and (b) the current financial model is not sustainable
 - It is critical that the City catch up on deferred maintenance; we are falling further behind every year
 - The City should strongly consider reinstating the former practice of subsidizing operations with significant tax resources
 - Management should consider differential pricing for some fees, particularly ice time

- Consideration should be given to ending the practice of setting fees by ordinance; it would be better to allow management the latitude to be more dynamic and responsive to time of day, demand, etc.
 - Fees should be set to maximize revenue without driving away users
 - We should distinguish among different kinds of users – non-profit and community groups should have more attractive pricing than for-profit ventures
 - Recognition of the value of the MAC to the hospitality industry should be improved and more assistance given to the tournaments that bring visitors to town
 - We need a better accounting for the economic impact of MAC-related visitors to St Cloud; it should be the facility's job to accomplish that; probably the CVB
 - The MAC cannot provide for its own capital costs through operations, the City, together with interested parties, must attend to capital needs
6. Next meeting: September 13.
 7. The first presentation to City Administration will be at a Council Study Session on September 19.
 8. Adjournment at 6:50 pm.

Submitted by Tony Goddard