

River's Edge Convention Center Advisory Board

Meeting Notes – May 10, 2016

Present Jodi Domeier, Linda Feuling, Patty Gaetz, Marty Mahowald, Scott Raden

Not Present Dan Barth, Julie Lunning,

Staff Present Tony Goddard

1. The meeting was convened at 5:00 pm at the Convention Center.
2. The committee accepted the minutes of April 12, 2016 as submitted, by acclamation.
3. The committee reviewed the draft research report from the SCSU School of Public Affairs Research Institute, which had been distributed via email in advance of the meeting.
4. Goddard distributed copies of the April 12, 2016 Focus Group minutes and described the follow-up meetings on April 28, for which we don't yet have reports. Marty Mahowald gave his impressions of the focus group he attended.
5. The committee then had an extended discussion about the information gleaned from the reports before them:
 - Do we have information on local facility competition? [Goddard responded that that was part of the charge to SCSU, but not included in the draft.]
 - Desirable to have facility comparison charts, with MAC included – usage, rates, staffing, etc.
 - Does SCSU National Hockey center depress ice rental rates in the area?
 - Do we have occupancy statistics for stadium, with comparisons to other facilities?
 - The final report should make clear that the athletic facilities are a community asset and should not necessarily be expected to cover all their operating costs.
 - Should MAC be subsidized as recreational sports are?
 - What sources are available? – property taxes, hotel/motel taxes/sales taxes.
 - How do other cities pay for their facilities?
 - Baseball participation seems clearly to be declining nationally.
 - Should stadiums be converted to multi-use – soccer or lacrosse, for example?
 - Lacrosse is growing in popularity, but is it a paying spectator sport?
 - The report should list all possible solutions, including City sale of the facilities.
 - Part of the analysis should be to calculate what the necessary user rate would be to break even, then determine if that is supportable in the market.
 - The stadiums have been growing more dependent on tournament business – should that become their primary focus?
 - Golf course should be thought of as an amenity, then operated as efficiently as possible.
6. Next meeting: June 14.
7. Adjournment at 7:05 pm.

Submitted by Tony Goddard