

**CRDA Venue Committee Meeting
Meeting Minutes
Connecticut Convention Center
100 Columbus Boulevard, 5th Floor
Hartford, CT 06103
November 1, 2017
6:00 PM**

Members Present: Venue Committee Chair Andy Bessette, David Jorgensen and Mike Matteo

Staff: Executive Director Mike Freimuth, Anthony Lazzaro, Kim Hart

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m. by Chairman Bessette and the minutes of the October 13, 2017 meeting were approved on a voice vote.

1. Dillon Stadium

Following the introduction of Venue Committee members, the three respondents to the Dillon Stadium RFP – Civic Mind, Hartford City FC, and Hartford Sports Group - gave presentations on their proposals. Copies of these presentations can be found on the CRDA website at <http://crdact.net/>.

Following some brief questions from the Committee, members of the public were invited to comment:

- a. John Heslin – Identifying himself as a Hartford resident who involved in youth sports, Mr. Heslin offered his support for Hartford Sports Group’s proposal, citing their business and philanthropic experience.
- b. Leslie Hammond – Ms. Hammond related how excited she had been about previous proposals to develop Dillon Stadium and how betrayed she felt by the last development team. She emphasized that the City and CRDA need to do careful vetting of the proposing teams. She also raised concerns about whether the Hartford City FC proposal was dedicating enough money to redevelopment of Dillon.

- c. Jaima Schiffer – A transplant to Hartford, Ms. Schiffer talked about her involvement with Hartford City FC and offered her support for their proposal. She questioned the validity of Hartford Sports Group’s numbers and suggested that community events should be the anchor tenants of the facility and not a professional team.
- d. Micah Kerr – A member of the Agents of Hale (the Hartford City FC supporters group), Mr. Kerr said that as a taxpayer, he was not supporting one particular proposal nor the expenditure of public funds to upgrade Dillon. He indicated that league playing in the facility was not as important as the engagement of fans. He cited the example of Detroit City FC fans raising the funds necessary to renovate that team’s home stadium.
- e. Margaret Girard – Introducing herself as a “soccer mom” and the treasurer of the Hartford Soccer Club, Ms. Girard called the renovation of Dillon “a great opportunity” to bring soccer to Hartford kids and adults.
- f. Michael Glasson – Mr. Glasson expressed his support for Hartford Sports Group’s proposal and a USL team, emphasizing the need for a substantial investment in Dillon to make it usable again.
- g. Donna Swarr – Active in the Hartford Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission and the Friends of Colt Park, Ms. Swarr raised concerns about the lack of emphasis on what the Dillon proposals mean for Colt Park. She cited parking and pedestrian safety as huge issues that will need to be addressed. She expressed concerns about the validity of the pro formas presented and emphasized the need for Dillon to remain available to the community.
- h. Alyssa Peterson – A South End resident, Ms. Peterson suggested that the presentations should be offered again at City Hall to allow more people to participate. She also suggested that the Hartford Sports Group proposal was the most attractive and that the City should look at establishing a Public Recreational Authority (as outlined in CGS §7-130) as a means of financing the project. She also suggested that CRDA might not be the best entity to manage the facility.

There being no further business, the forum was adjourned at 7:45.

The next meeting of the Venue Committee is scheduled for January 5, 2018.