

**CRDA Venue Committee Meeting
Draft Meeting Minutes
Connecticut Convention Center
100 Columbus Boulevard, 5th Floor
Hartford, CT 06103
October 10, 2018
4:30 PM**

Members Present: Committee Chair Andy Bessette, Board Chair Suzanne Hopgood, David Jorgensen (via phone) and David Robinson

Staff: Executive Director Mike Freimuth, Anthony Lazzaro, Bob Saint and Kim Hart

Guests: Bruce Mandell, Hartford Sports Group (HSG)

The meeting was called to order at 4:46 p.m. and the minutes of the September 7, 2018 meeting were approved on a voice vote.

1. **Dillon Stadium** – Mr. Lazzaro and Mr. Freimuth briefed the Committee on the terms of the Dillon Stadium Use Agreement to be signed by the City, Hartford Sports Group and CRDA. Committee members raised questions on the funding structure of the project and the order in which funds would be expended. They also inquired as to how the management structure for the building would work and the dual role played by Spectra Venue Management – that is, running game day operations under an HSG contract and day-to-day stadium operations under a CRDA contract. The City’s role in overseeing community use, as well as their permitting process for larger events, was also discussed.

After some discussion, a resolution approving the Dillon Sue Agreement term sheet was adopted on a voice vote.

2. **XL Center** –
 - a. **Sale RFP** - Mr. Freimuth reported that Oak Street’s responses to the six questions posed by the Venue Committee had been reviewed. Given the upcoming election, Committee members agreed that they were not comfortable moving forward with further discussions until the new gubernatorial administration was in place.

- b. **Acquisition of Northland Property** - Mr. Freimuth reported that CRDA was still awaiting a copy of Northland's appraisal of the Trumbull block and that the document was promised by the end of the week. The Board will need to decide next steps based on whether the appraisal is sent, and if so, what is presented in the document.
 - c. **New Planning Focus** – Mr. Freimuth reported that SCI Architects would be presenting its new plan for renovation of the lower bowl and new premium seating options on Friday, October 12th. In response to Committee members' questions, Mr. Saint confirmed that moving forward with the lower bowl project would not preclude CRDA's implementation of the larger XL transformation project should additional funding be made available at a later date.
 - d. **Events** – Ms. Hart reported that the Elton John concert held on September 19th exceeded Spectra's budget expectations, although the J. Cole concert held the following week did not perform as well as expected. Upcoming concerts include Maroon 5 and Mumford & Sons.
 - e. **Capital Projects** – Mr. Saint updated Committee members on current capital projects in the building, including LED light conversion, elevator and escalator repairs, chiller replacement and installation of new retractable seating.
3. **Pratt & Whitney Stadium** – Mr. Freimuth noted that the Stadium is dealing with the ongoing failure of chair back seating in the bowl. The plastic seats and hinge mechanisms are original to the building and are failing at an alarming rate. Funds have been expended to replace 124 of the seats, but the seats number close to 4,000 and total replacement could cost as much as \$300,000.

A second soccer game has been scheduled, with the U.S. men's team hosting Peru on October 16th. The event is expected to do well and Spectra hope that revenues will offset expected revenue losses from UConn football.

The opening game of UConn's 2018 football season saw only 15,700 fans in attendance. Final loss/revenue numbers are not yet available, but food and beverage numbers were strong. Expanded menu options and new craft beer stands, as well as additional tailgating hours and shuttle service for fans have been instituted by Spectra in order to help attract fans to the games.

- 4. **Tennis Center** – As reported in the Hartford Courant, financial problems have forced the Tennis Foundation to lay off a number of staff. The Foundation is looking to reprogram the Connecticut Open, perhaps to another time of year and/or with lower prize money payouts.
- 5. **Convention Center** – No new capital projects are being undertaken, although there is some crosswalk repairs work planned within the nearby Front Street district.

The next meeting of the Venue Committee is scheduled for November 2, 2018.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:04 pm.