

CRDA Venue Committee Meeting
APPROVED Conference Call Minutes
November 6, 2020
2:00 PM

Members Present via GoToMeeting: Committee Chair Andy Bessette, Board Chair Suzanne Hopgood and David Robinson

Staff Present via GoToMeeting: Mike Freimuth, Anthony Lazzaro and Kim Hart

Guests Present via GoToMeeting: Tim Hollister (Shipman & Goodwin)

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bessette at 2:02 p.m. The minutes of the March 6, 2020 meeting were approved on a voice vote.

Mr. Freimuth provided updates on each of the venues, noting that all were experiencing serious financial issues in light of the pandemic and subsequent shutdowns.

Pratt & Whitney Stadium – The Stadium continues to host Foodshare and a drive-thru COVID testing site – both of which have seen large attendance numbers. The facility also continues to serve as home field for Toronto FC, with six matches played to date. Fans were allowed at the most recent match and Spectra worked to ensure that all necessary COVID protocols were in place. Some 2,600 tickets were sold and over 1,400 people attended the match, despite torrential downpours.

Toronto is expected to make the playoffs and the Stadium could see additional matches. A second MLS team has also expressed an interest in using the Stadium in the event that their home state limits play.

Connecticut Convention Center - The Convention Center will soon host its own drive-thru testing site and may serve as a “surge facility” for COVID patients in the coming months. With no events schedule until next July and facing a budget shortfall, the Center is unable to expend any funds for these operations, relying on the State and organizers to cover all expenses. Staffing is also an issue, with most of the Convention Center staff laid off when the building was shut down.

Dillon Stadium - Dillon is essentially closed down for the winter, with only limited use by Hartford public school sports programs.

XL Center – With the AHL season delayed until at least February and UConn moving all its hockey and basketball games to campus, this shutdown period presents a unique opportunity for the XL Center to move forward with renovation projects, as has been noted by a number of Board members.

An RFP for a construction manager has been released and SCI continues working on four design scenarios, each emphasizing renovation of the lower bowl and atrium. Acquiring control of the atrium space remains a significant hurdle.

A public hearing for the updated XL Center plan will be held once set by the full CRDA Board.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

The next Venue Committee conference call is scheduled for **December 4, 2020.**