

CRDA Venue Committee Meeting
APPROVED Meeting Minutes
April 9, 2021
2:00 PM

Members Present via GoToMeeting: Committee Chair Andy Bessette, Board Chair Suzanne Hopgood, DECD Commissioner David Lehman, DECD Deputy Commissioner Alexandra Daum, David Jorgensen, David Robinson and Andrew Diaz-Matos

Staff Present via GoToMeeting: Mike Freimuth and Kim Hart

Guests Present via GoToMeeting: Ben Weiss (Spectra Venue Management), Mike Costelli (Waterford)

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bessette at 2:03 p.m.

- a. Vaccine Passports: Commissioner Lehman explained that neither Governor Lamont nor the federal government will mandate the use of vaccine passports, leaving the private sector to adopt its own policies. Although State facilities, the Convention Center, XL Center and Pratt & Whitney Stadium will also need to weigh the pros and cons of adopting such a policy.

Mr. Weiss and Mr. Costelli indicated that they would implement such a policy if CRDA requested it, but both felt it was not an expectation of venue attendees nor was it a practical move. Mr. Weiss raised concerns about fraud and the short time frame available to implement a program before events such as UConn graduation and NCAA lacrosse take place. Mr. Costelli noted that while proof of vaccine might be practical for a small number of events, a blanket requirement was problematic. Both general managers noted that none of the promoters and event organizers that they have spoken with have inquired about a vaccine passport program.

Chairman Bessette spoke briefly about COVID precautions being taken at this summer's Travelers Championship and questioned whether the public would expect similar precautions at CRDA venues. Mr. Freimuth noted that the three venues will not be fully operational until late summer or early fall when the vaccine rates should be much higher, COVID restrictions eased and, presumably, people are more comfortable with public gatherings.

- b. COVID Testing / Vaccination Site Updates

Mr. Weiss noted that he expects Foodshare to wrap up their distribution efforts shortly. The testing site previously on Stadium property has been relocated to the mass vaccination site on the UTC-owned runways adjacent to the Stadium.

Mr. Costelli reported that the field hospital at the Convention Center should be moving out in June, while the vaccination site will be in place until mid-August. It is unclear when the testing site will be shut down., but Mr. Freimuth suggested that the soon-to-be completed Bushnell South garage might be a practical alternative location.

- c. GBAC Accreditation - Mr. Costelli reported that the Convention Center has received accreditation under the Global Biorisk Advisory Council's Star Accreditation program. This highly coveted accreditation means that a facility has established and maintained a cleaning, disinfection, and infectious disease prevention program to minimize risks associated with infectious agents, including the COVID-19 virus.
- d. Other Business – Mr. Freimuth noted that the State Bond Commission will be meeting next week and, among other projects, will consider \$1.5 million for additional repairs at the Convention Center. Mr. Freimuth will also be testifying before the Appropriations Committee in support of additional funding for CRDA venues as part of the deficiency appropriations process.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:39 p.m.

The next Venue Committee conference call is scheduled for **May 7, 2021.**