

CRDA Venue Committee Meeting
DRAFT Meeting Minutes
June 10, 2022
2:00 p.m.

Members Present via Microsoft Teams: Committee Chair Andy Bessette, Commissioner David Lehman, Andrew Diaz-Matos, Alexandra Daum and David Robinson

Staff Present via Microsoft Teams: Mike Freimuth, Bob Saint, Anthony Lazzaro, Joe Geremia and Kim Hart

The meeting was called to order at 2:02 p.m. by Chairman Bessette and the minutes of the May 12, 2022 meeting were approved on a voice vote.

I. XL Center – Sports Betting Lounge

Mr. Freimuth reported that an agreement template is being reviewed by both CRDA and the CT Lottery (CLC). The agreement will stipulate that CLC will operate the betting components of the new facility through its subcontractor, Rush Street Gaming. CRDA, through Spectra Venue Management, will operate the food and beverage component, along with maintaining the facility as part of the XL Center. Net betting proceeds will flow to CRDA through the Office of Policy and Management.

Mr. Freimuth also indicated that SCI is working with Rush Street's design consultant on the layout of the new facility. Mr. Saint noted that demo work has begun and that CRDA's construction contractor, Dimeo, will soon be entering into subcontracts for structural concrete, structural steel, kitchen equipment and the curtainwall system. Installation of the curtainwall is expected to include a long lead time for delivery.

Mr. Freimuth reported that the facility is expected to open in late 2022 or early 2023. In response to a question from Mr. Diaz Matos, Mr. Freimuth confirmed that CRDA will only be responsible for the costs of SCI's design work and not that of Rush Street's sub.

II. OVG Partnership

As noted at previous Committee meetings, OVG – the new owner of Spectra Venue Management - has been evaluating XL's potential to host premier concerts, with a focus on seating and load-in capacity. That evaluation has concluded that the seating bowl can be reconfigured to accommodate the 13,500 seats and staging layout required for large concerts. Improving the venue's load-in and load-out

capacity will be more problematic, but potential solutions have been identified. Additional improvements and a “refresh” of the XL concourse will also be required.

The next step will be estimating the cost of the desired improvements and a proposal from OVG is expected in late June or early July. That proposal will be reviewed by CRDA and then likely forwarded to the Governor and General Assembly.

On a related note, Mr. Freimuth noted that with the partial conversion of the neighboring Hartford Hilton to residential, there are areas of the hotel that will no longer be utilized. These areas are adjacent to the bridge linking the XL Center to the Church Street garage and may prove useful to the venue for office, admin or other back-of-house space.

Mr. Freimuth also noted that with the loading ramp system closed for renovation and construction of the sports betting facility, the XL Center will essentially be closed until September.

III. Pratt & Whitney Stadium at Rentschler Field

Mr. Freimuth noted that the NCAA Lacrosse Championships held at the Stadium over Memorial Day weekend exceeded Spectra’s revenue estimates. Some 45,000 people attended games over the three-day weekend and per caps were well over \$20. Having hosted the quarterfinals in 2019 and the finals in both 2021 and 2022, it’s not likely the Stadium will host any lacrosse tournaments until the next NCAA site selection cycle begins in 2025.

Populous is finishing up cost estimating associated with its Stadium building assessment and will submit a final draft next week. The assessment and its recommendations will form the basis of the facility’s long-term capital plan. As noted at the last Committee meeting, this report comes at a critical time with the expiration of the OPM/UConn lease, the OPM/CRDA Stadium operating agreement and the CRDA/Spectra management agreement.

Mr. Freimuth also reported that on June 8th CRDA and Spectra staff walked the Stadium with UConn Football Coach Jim Mara and the Governor’s staff.

IV. Connecticut Convention Center

Mr. Freimuth reported that the number of Convention Center events and attendees remains down, but these are expected to increase over the next year. The plaza repair work between the Convention Center and the Marriott is nearly complete, while design work on the second elevator continues. The cooling tower replacement project is expected to start this fall.

The next Venue Committee conference call is scheduled for **July 1, 2022**. Given this is holiday weekend, members expressed a wish to reschedule the meeting and a new date will be selected in the coming week.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.