

CRDA Venue Committee Meeting
DRAFT Meeting Minutes
November 1, 2024
11:30 a.m.

Members Present via Microsoft Teams: Committee Chair Andy Bessette and Andrew Diaz-Matos

Staff Present via Microsoft Teams: Mike Freimuth, Bob Houlihan, Joe Geremia, Anthony Lazzaro, Terry Mitchell Smith and Kim Hart

Guests Present via Microsoft Teams: Ben Weiss, OVG

Chairman Bessette called the meeting to order at 11:31 a.m. and the minutes of the September 6, 2024 meeting were approved on a voice vote.

I. Infinity Theater Funding Request

Mr. Freimuth reminded members of Infinity's request for \$50,000 in operational funding, as presented at the October Board meeting. Mr. Geremia indicated that he was working with the Theater on the ask and that he would have more substantive information at the next Venue Committee meeting. Chairman Bessette raised a question as to whether this fit into the Authority's capital project mission and Mr. Freimuth noted that such assistance would be comparable to operational subsidies for our venues. Mr. Diaz-Matos also questioned whether the Theater had reached out to other potential funding sources since the October Board meeting and Mr. Geremia indicated this was part of his discussions with theater management.

II. XL Center

- a. Construction Update – Mr. Houlihan updated Committee members on the status of construction work at the XL Center, highlighting plans for new locker rooms, an event-level kitchen and bunker suites. Some 30-40 construction workers are currently on site and that number is expected to grow as work progresses.
- b. Ticketing RFP – Mr. Freimuth reported that Mr. Weiss and Ms. Hart were working on an RFP for a new ticketing provider, which would be released later this month.

- c. Event Update – Mr. Weiss reported that the Wolfpack has played five home games to date and that UConn hockey would play its second XL game this weekend. He noted that UConn basketball will play their first XL games of the season next week – with the women playing on November 7th and the men on November 9th. In response to a question from Mr. Bessette, he noted that there are no major concerts scheduled for the rest of the year as there are few performances touring during the holidays. Mr. Weiss also noted that holding events with construction in the building has been a challenge, but his staff was managing.

III. **Connecticut Convention Center**

- a. Event Update – Ms. Hart noted that upcoming events include the Annual Home Show and the Connecticut Children’s Gala this weekend and the Greater Hartford Arts Council’s Night of 1,000 Stars on November 7th. The building will once again host “Glow”, an indoor holiday light festival that will run from November 29th through December 29th.
- b. Construction Update - The waterproofing and paver repairs on the Convention Center’s riverfront esplanade are about 60% complete, while repair of the building’s outside elevators remains on hold while parts are being secured. Work on the P3 stairwell of the garage - including concrete repairs and railing replacements - will begin shortly.

IV. **Pratt & Whitney Stadium at Rentschler Field**

- a. Construction Updates – Mr. Houlihan shared photos of the Stadium Tower roof, which is set to be replaced next summer. He highlighted the significant amount of HVAC and cell tower equipment that will need to be relocated during work and the water leaks in the Club ceiling that originate on the roof. Mr. Houlihan noted that bids for an architect to design the required Stadium repairs are due in December and that a construction manager would be hired early next year. Ms. Hart also outlined the next tranche of Rentschler bond requests for IT upgrades and metal detectors.
- b. Events – Mr. Weiss noted that following the UConn Huskies final game tonight and the CIAC High School Football Championships on December 14th, there will be no more bowl events until the spring. There are, however, events scheduled in the Stadium’s Club Room and the “Magic of Lights” holiday display will run in the parking lots from November 22nd through January 4th.

- V. **U.S.S. Hartford Bell** - Mr. Freimuth reported that CRDA staff met with Riverfront Recapture and their architect to discuss use of a vacant ticket office on Mortensen Riverfront Plaza to display the bell. The architect has been tasked with developing a concept plan for the display that will be used to secure City approval for the project as well as funding for implementation of the plan.

The next Venue Committee conference call is scheduled for **December 6, 2024**.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.