

# Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

February 28, 2007

## Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

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**Board Present:** Rena Cotsones, David Preece, Patrick Ryan, Scott Sullivan, Judith Barnard, Patrick Curran, Janyce Fadden, Brent Brodeski, Cyndie Hall, Tim Dimke, Bob Burden and Matthew Provenzano.

**Board Absent:** Jim Ryan, John Chadwick, Jan Herbert, Patti Thayer, Bob Rhea, Heather Markhardt and Mike Ginter.

**Staff Present:** John Groh, Amy Trimble, Valerie Tippitt, Janet Jacobs and Wanda Figueroa.

### Call to Order:

Chairman Rena Cotsones called the meeting to order.

### Governance Process:

- **Minutes:** Motion was made by Janyce Fadden to approve Minutes of January 26, 2007. Patrick Ryan seconded the motion. Minutes were approved as submitted.
- **Internal Monitoring Report:** *Monitoring report 1.0 – Global Ends; Deferred until next reporting cycle due to newly approved Ends Policies.* Monitoring reports 2.3 – Financial Planning/Budgeting & 2.4 – Financial Condition & Activities. Janyce Fadden moved to accept the financial reports as presented; Scott Sullivan seconded the motion. IMR's were approved as submitted.
- **Audit Committee:** Amy Trimble presented the annual audit report to the Board for approval. At our December 13, 2006 board meeting, Jim Millikin presented the audit report, but the Board could not vote on it because the audit was incomplete due to the delay of the SBA Grant. The action taken by the Board was to wait to approve until a complete and final audit report was given. The issue has been resolved. Brent Brodeski moved to accept the audit as presented; Patrick Ryan seconded. The audit report was approved.
- **Government Affairs Plans:** John Groh handed out a memo which updates the development of the Rockford Global Alliance, which will combine the efforts previously handled by the Springfield based Results Coalition and the Washington, D.C. based Renewal Coalition, which are inactive at this time. The memo lists a sample of results and the priorities for Spring, 2007. The previous coalitions had no bylaws or articles of incorporation. The Rockford Global Alliance will be more structured.

A Political Action Committee for "friends of tourism" and other parties interested in advancing quality of life issues is on hold until the Rockford Global Alliance is established.

Janyce stated the RAEDC Executive Committee has agreed to fund up to \$9,000 for the spring session to allow time for the Mayor to put the RGA organization together. RAEDC wants to have an active part in creating the RGA bylaws.

**Event:** ICCVB Lobby Day in Springfield on March 7<sup>th</sup>. Board members are invited to attend. The event is put on by the Illinois Tourism Alliance (formerly known as Visit Illinois).

- **Attracting and Retaining Talent To the Rockford Area:** John Groh reviewed some highlights of Rebecca Ryan's presentation. The report focused on three areas: economic changes, local and national demographics and psychographic trends. Rockford is rated above average in Vitality (air and water quality, parks, trails and recreation areas, and the overall well-being of the community). Recommendations were made in the categories of Place, People and Pride. All board members are encouraged to sign the "Positively Rockford" pledge and encourage others to do the same.

As part of an effort to attract young workers (mid-20's) back to the Rockford area, there is discussion of holding job fairs during Labor Day Weekend, in conjunction with On The Waterfront and during Thanksgiving weekend, when people are returning to visit families.

- **FAM Tour Report:** Valerie Tippitt gave a summary of the FAM Tour conducted by the RACVB in February. Nine meeting planners from Springfield and downstate and from the Chicago suburbs came to Rockford February 21-23. They visited various sites in Rockford and were given tours of hotels, restaurants and meeting spaces. Another FAM Tour for Religious Groups is planned for March 21-23. The Board is invited to participate in this tour and greet/welcome our visitors to Rockford. David mentioned that these tours have a focus on selling. Ongoing product development has improved many of the sites for these visits. Bigger and better meeting space is anticipated in the future.
- **CEO Report:**
  - **Regional Branding Project:** David reminded the Board that the Brand Launch event will be at the Coronado Theater on Tuesday, March 13<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m. All who have been given a preview of the new brand have given positive feedback.
  - **Organization Update:** RACVB is fully staffed, with the exception of the position of VP of Sales. Some interviews are being scheduled and it is hoped that the position will be filled soon.

New Product Development: RACVB, in accordance with global ends, is working to help enhance the tourism product. It is important to advocate for a better product. One example is our involvement, along with the city, county and hospitality industry, to improve the appearance and safety of the I-90 Hospitality Corridor with landscaping, signage and sidewalks.

A lot of interest has been shown for new hotel projects in Rockford. Both new properties and improvement of existing properties are being considered or are in the works. RACVB will help direct these developments so they fit the market.

The City, the Park District and the Riverfront Museum Park are interested in converting the Armory into a possible conference center with hotel (possibly 2-4 hotels).

RACVB is involved with developing the indoor portion of the Ingersoll Whitewater project. In early March, the water will be lowered at the dam to allow for structural and environmental studies. There is still a potential for this site to be used as a venue for the 2016 Olympics.

Tim reported that the RPD is working on three major projects, all planned for 2009-2010:

- RMP expansion
- Conservatory on the river (replacing the Greenhouse)
- Major expansion of Sportscore 2

Patrick reported that Holiday Inn Express will be going thru some updating and renovations mid August.

Judy mentioned that the Swedish American Cultural Center will be next to the Erlander Museum.

Cyndie Hall mentioned that the Sister Cities are getting more visibility, and the City of Gardens and America in Bloom are working on events.

- City of Gardens – June 2007
- American in Bloom – September 2007

Strategic Planning: The Board was pleased with the strategic plan presented to them by David. **Action:** Action items remain to be determined. More detailed information will be shared with the Board after David meets with the staff. Rena suggested having a one-page summary that has the Global Ends. Tim provided a copy of the Park District's summary as a guide. Judy suggested setting up a leadership training program to bring more diversity to the Board.

David mentioned the possibility of having periodic seminars regarding board membership.

**Miscellaneous:** David has been invited to write a guest column for the Rockford Register Star in support of the sales tax referendum.

**Other Topics:**

Rena reminded the Board that there will be no board meeting in March. Our next board meeting will be April 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Upcoming Events:**

March 7<sup>th</sup> – Lobby Day in Springfield

March 13<sup>th</sup> – New Brand Launch Event at Coronado Theatre

March 30<sup>th</sup> – Opening for Vallien Exhibit at RAM

April – E-Days in Chicago (April 18<sup>th</sup> reception at RAM)

Meeting was adjourned at 8:55 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Scott Sullivan, Board Secretary  
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**Next Board Meeting:**

**Wednesday, April 25, 2007**

**7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.**

**Rockford Art Museum – Gift Shop**

**711 N. Main St.**

**Rockford, IL 61103**