

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

August 22, 2007

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Board Present: Rena Cotsones, David Preece (by phone), Patrick OKeefe, Solomon Foley, John Chadwick, Bob Burden, Tim Dimke, Jan Herbert, Jim Ryan, Scott Sullivan and John Ekberg.

Board Absent: Cyndie Hall, Janyce Fadden, Brent Brodeski, Patrick Ryan, Patti Thayer, Matthew Provenzano and Patrick Curran.

Staff Present: John Giantonio, Amy Trimble, Carrie Skogsberg, Stacy Kiejko, Wanda Figueroa and Janet Jacobs.

Guests: Mayor Lawrence J. Morrissey and John Groh.

Call to Order:

Chairman Rena Cotsones called the meeting to order.

Governance Process:

- **Minutes:** Motion was made by Patrick OKeefe to approve Minutes of June 27, 2007. John Chadwick seconded the motion. Minutes were approved as submitted.
- **Internal Monitoring Report:** *Monitoring report 1.3 – Communicate with Constituents; Deferred pending benchmarks and new data (as with IMR 1.0, 1.1 and 1.2).* **Follow-Up:** David will provide the Board with an Interim Progress Report for IMR's 1.1, 1.2 & 1.3 at the November meeting. The IMR's will remain on an annual cycle.

Monitoring reports 2.3 – Financial Planning/Budgeting – 2.4 – Financial Condition & Activities & 2.6 – Emergency Executive Succession. John Giantonio has been designated as the person to take over as interim successor, if necessary.

Monitoring report 2.8 – Communication & Support to the Board – This report is on the calendar for review in August. However, the report was not presented to the Board for review or approval because staff needed clarification as to who was responsible for creating such report; RACVB to the Board or from the Board to RACVB. Bill Charney of Charney & Associates clarified that IMR 2.8 should be presented by the organization to the Board, which will be done at the September meeting.

Patrick OKeefe moved to accept the IMR's as presented; Tim Dimke seconded the motion. IMR's were approved as submitted.

- **Finance Report:** Amy Trimble presented the June financials. RACVB is not in compliance with monitoring report 2.3.2. The bureau is supposed to be at a zero line of credit as of June 30, 2007. This is due to ongoing delays in SBA grant reimbursements as reported at the June meeting. The line of credit is at \$100K+. We are paying \$300-\$400 a month in finance charges. The line of credit limit is \$250K. A hotel tax check is expected soon. State funding will come when the budget is approved. RACVB does not have a cash reserve outside the line of credit, other than a one month cash reserve for payroll. The Board believes that our dependence on grants suggests a need for a cash reserve program. **Follow-Up:** Staff will determine an appropriate cash reserve amount and create a development strategy.
- **Rock River Partnership Proposal – Mayor Morrissey:** The Mayor is proposing a partnership between public and private organizations with a vested interest in the revitalization of the river corridor. The primary facets of the partnership are to create a comprehensive action plan and to oversee the plan's implementation. The suggested investment areas include the Cultural Corridor, Madison Neighborhood, Central District, Block Five, Founders Village and South Gateway. The primary focus is setting consistent development standards and coordinating the development of City-owned parcels.

This approach is aligned with RACVB's Ends Policy 1.2 – Enhance Tourism Product, because the entire region will benefit economically through improved tourism. RACVB will not be directly investing in development but will help lead planning and oversight. Private sector partners will be expected to pay an annual fee to be part of the group, and the partnership will help guide public infrastructure investment to support the effort.

After the Mayor left the meeting, Rena asked the Board for their input. There is general support, but with reservations about how much time David will need to devote to it. David currently spends a significant amount of time on product development, and this new collaborative structure may make his effort more efficient.

The RACVB includes project development expenses in its budget, and this proposal should not make a significant difference except in the focus of the spending. This subject will be discussed further at the September meeting.

- **Topics for Board Discussion and Development:** Rena mentioned that Bill Geist, Zeitgeist Consulting would be giving a presentation at the September meeting. However, the Board felt that he should probably do this at the November meeting so they may have more time at the September meeting to continue their discussion about the Rock River Development Proposal.

At the September meeting, Jim and David will expand on the structure and specifics of the Mayor's proposal based on a pending meeting of the proposed group. Following the presentation, the Board will have an opportunity for an open discussion.

- **CEO Report:**
 - **Organization Update:** RACVB is recruiting for John Groh's replacement. The bureau would prefer to hire someone locally who is familiar with the community, tourism and RACVB, but will expand the search if necessary to find the most qualified candidate. David will keep the Board informed of progress.
 - **Summeroriginals Promotion – Carrie Skogsberg:** Carrie reported on media spending and the responses to special packages put together for visitors, including discounted hotel rates and passes to local attractions. On our websites we can count the number of visitors and trace where they go on the website and how much time they spend there. The most popular links are the calendar, things to do and hotels and attractions. The e-mail newsletter, which is sent to those who request it, has a good click-through rate, both for opening the e-mail and going to links. A wrap-up report for the Summeroriginals promotion will be prepared soon.
 - **Regional Brand Report – Stacy Kiejko:** There is a good variety in the number of different ways the logo is being used. There are logos or links on several websites, Blackhawk Bank's bumper sticker, Coronado Corner's t-shirt, Coronado PAC season brochure, EDC's banner, Morrissey Law Office stationary, RMTD buses and RACVB premiums. A list is available upon request. Stacy also mentioned that RACVB still needs sponsorships for our Annual Meeting Event on October 24th. She encouraged the Board to help get the word out.

Other Topics:

RAEDC has requested that RACVB increase its investments in their organization. No increase will be considered until our financial situation improves.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:05 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Scott Sullivan, Board Secretary
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Next Board Meeting:
Wednesday, September 26, 2007
7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.
RACVB – Board Room
102 N. Main Street
Rockford, IL 61101

Note: No board meeting in October due to our Annual Event on the 24th.