

**Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau**  
**September 27, 2023**  
**Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**  
**RACVB Annex**

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**Board Present:** John Groh, Carol Schuster, Shelton Kay, Richard Shuga, Geno Iafrate, Kirk Weitzel, Jennifer Furst, Ricardo Montoya-Picazo, Todd Cagnoni, Dana Martin, Tiana McCall, Jay Sandine, Patricia Diduch, Mick Gronewold, Bobbie Holzwarth, Darrell Snorek

**Board Absent:** Nathan Bruck, Sonya Hoppes, Caitlin Pusateri, Kevin Frost, Patrick Thompson

**Staff Present:** Joanne Nold, Kristen Paul, Lindsay Arellano, Brandi Liantonio

**Guest Present:** Jake Thompson of Benning Group, and David Seiferth and Jordan Musall of SMARInsights (virtually)

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:31 a.m. by board chair Carol Schuster

**Approval of Meeting Minutes:**

It was moved and seconded to approve the July 26, 2023 meeting minutes. Motion carried.

**Destination Master Plan – Brand & Image Study Report:**

John Groh introduced David Seiferth and Jordan Musall from SMARInsights to share the results from the Brand and Image Study, which was conducted online with approximately 2,000 respondents. The study's purpose is to understand the identity of Rockford and perceptions of the region including opportunities and challenges in comparison to several key markets (Cedar Rapids, Des Moines, Davenport, Champaign, Springfield, Chicago, Madison, Milwaukee, Peoria and Bloomington).

**FY23 Audit Presentation:**

John Groh and Mick Gronewold introduced Jake Thompson of the Benning Group to present the FY23 consolidated financial audit. The audit did not uncover any corrections or misstatements. A clean report was presented. Joanne Nold was thanked for her meticulous efforts and professionalism in managing the organization's finances. The Audit/Budget Committee recommended acceptance/approval of the Audit. Motion carried with unanimous approval.

**Internal Monitoring Reports:**

After discussion, it was moved, seconded and approved to accept the Internal Monitoring Reports, including John Groh's CEO Interpretations, for monitoring on:

- 2.0 Executive Constraint
- 2.6 Emergency CEO Succession
- 2.7 Compensation and Benefits

**CEO Report:**

John directed attention to Lindsay Arellano and a display of the RACVB's new Play Rockford branding that was created for the sales team for tradeshow and marketing of the sports market. Lindsay shared that she was excited for the refreshed look and would be utilizing the new displays and promotional materials at the TEAMS tradeshow the following week.

John reported on Stroll on State preparations. He shared that there are still some financial needs for the festival, congratulating Kristen Paul on all she has accomplished so far in fundraising for the event. We are currently sitting at \$238k in sponsorships, which is \$34k away from the first threshold goal and Dasher Dash is 2\$4k away from its threshold goal. Kristen shared details on available sponsorships. She also encouraged the board to share any contacts for the open sponsorships.

**Partner Updates:**

Todd Cagnoni shared that the Social District ordinance was approved by the City Council the previous week and that the city would be working with the River District Association to get information out in the next 30 days. Todd mentioned that for Davis Park the city is working with consultants on the new design for the park and plan on sending out bids for construction in 2024

John shared that Representative Maurice West was successful in securing \$1.5 million in funds to assist distressed restaurants that through compliance with COVID19 state mandated shutdowns had increased unemployment insurance payments. The IL Dept. of Commerce will need a financial partner to distribute the funds and Rep. West has begun conversations with John and RACVB to be that fiscal agent.

Jay Sandine shared that the Lockwood Park Indoor Equine Center has broken ground and will be open in the summer of 2024. RPD continues to seek funding for Clarence Hicks Memorial Sports Park for a turf field and 8 lane running track around that field and are partnering with the Chicago Bears. The Park District is partnering with Hard Rock to bring a concert venue to Levings Park. On Saturday, Sept 30, there will be a dedication for Oxford Park's new fully accessible playground at 11 a.m. On October 12 there will be a dedication at Harmon Park with Representative Maurice West for the completion of a new walking path. October 4<sup>th</sup> Riverview Ice House will host a pre-season game with Rockford Ice Hogs for its reopening.

Geno lafrate shared that the Hard Rock construction is ahead of schedule and under budget and anticipates opening at the end of summer 2024. The targeted Grand Opening will be Labor Day weekend. In early October Hard Rock will also achieve their one millionth visitor at the temporary casino in just under two years of operation.

The board adjourned at 8:44 a.m.

**The next meeting is Wednesday, Next Board Meeting: October 25, 2023, at Midway Village Museum.**

Respectfully Submitted,



Darrell Snorek, Board Secretary

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