

**CIVIC CENTER COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
April 26, 2018**

**Attendees:**

CCC Members: Chairman John Harrity, Commissioner Jim Knowlton, Commissioner Patrick Lowe, Commissioner Lowell Alexander (Absent), Commissioner John Brissette (Absent)

City: John Odell, Candee Raphaelson

SMG: Sandy Dunn & Julia Iorio / Jim Moughan(Absent)

Minutes Prepared by: Paige Williamson, SMG

**1. Call to Order:**

Chairman Harrity brought the meeting to order at 12:34pm and offered a congratulations and thank you to the Worcester Railers for a successful first season and run into the playoffs. Chairman Harrity also congratulated SMG and Sandy Dunn for the great facilities and support given to the Worcester Railers. Chairman Harrity requested that this be extended to Cliff Rucker and his organization on behalf of the Civic Center Commission. Ms. Dunn affirmed.

**2. Acceptance of the Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Knowlton motioned to accept the meeting minutes from March 22, 2018; Commissioner Lowe, seconded the motion. (3 yeas, 0 nays) *Motion passed.*

**3. Major Ongoing Projects- John Odell**

**a. Capital Projects**

WiFi – System is operational with a few punch list items remaining that are currently being addressed. LightTower has received the clearance from National Grid for a June date to have the full “gateway” opened (despite the efforts for an earlier date). Presently the facility is operating on a 100 kilobit line. Commissioner Harrity inquired if there have been any issues with WiFi thus far. Sandy Dunn replied that there have not been any issues to this point, noting that events have had up to 500 attendees in the Convention Center and have been successful with no glitches. The WiFi connection is currently open public access. Ms. Dunn noted that the real test will be during the upcoming Republican Convention with many more users in the facility.

Vault Improvement – There is significant concern on this bid. Initially, National Grid (NG) reported that two vendors would be willing to bid on the work in an energized vault space, however, that has since been retracted. NG reports de/re-energizing the vault would take an estimated two week before and after the project, losing one month of operation not including the actual construction. There are three courses of action that are being reviewed: 1) locate a vendor willing to work in the energized space (unlikely); 2) proceed with taking the Convention Center offline to facilitate the work (likely 12-14 weeks); 3) build a new vault above ground and transfer the power when completed (likely a couple of days). Building a new vault will require significantly more monies but this option is being vetted for better estimates. SMG has reported to Mr. Odell that based on current bookings in the Convention Center, a dark 12 week period would be 2 years from now. Also, just providing repairs to the current vault to bring it back to its original state would be another option. In 20 years it has flooded once.

Chairman Harrity asked who is working on locating vendors that could work in an energized vault. Mr. Odell confirmed that Tighe/Bond is currently pursuing along with other inside City sources. Being a high voltage enclosed area, costs are expected to be at a premium. These were factored in but with limited bidders (if any) it may go higher. Chairman Harrity extended the Commission’s help as needed and asked that the Commission be updated as information becomes available. If special meetings are needed, the Commission is willing to arrange. Sandy Dunn further commented that options should also be reviewed by Populous (the Master Plan architect). If the vault is moved above ground there may be other goals that

could be accomplished including meeting room space. Two options mentioned thus far for relocation of the vault are: 1) the north Plaza or the room of the Convention Center.

Commissioner Lowe inquired as to the size of space required and the time frame. Sandy Dunn compared the size to half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Office Conference Room space, at least. John Odell stated that the work was planned to be completed by this fall. Only temporary measures are in place in the current vault for cooling and pumping of excess water. Chairman Harrity requested that Mr. Odell be sure that the City Administration be made aware of the seriousness of this project. Mr. Odell affirmed.

**Boiler Replacement** – Moving forward as planned with 90% of designs expected within the next 3-4 weeks before the bid process begins.

**Master Plan** - Recommended Phase II Improvements were presented for review and consideration to the Commission. John Odell asked the Commission to authorize the City to further explore the highlighted items (and/or any others adds/deletions). The authorization is not a commitment of any additional funds. The authorization will permit the City to move forward with Populous on developing pricing/phasing for next steps - designs and bid specs. Chairman Harrity expressed concerns with proceeding with the vote prior to having the vault resolved. Commissioner Knowlton agreed. As a new member, Commissioner Lowe asked for a summary on how the improvement list under review was determined. John Odell reviewed the process with Populous including the comprehensive facility assessment provided. Sandy Dunn stated the list did not include all the items high on SMG's priority list but the focus was on facility infrastructure. She also felt that the vote should be taken to assist the City in moving forward on a parallel course with the vault since monies are available for additional work but that Populous needed to undertake additional phasing reviews and the vault work might tie into the recommended phasing of work. John Odell reaffirmed that the vote provided no commitment of monies at this time.

Commissioner Lowe motioned to authorize the City to continue to explore the highlighted items and engage with Populous in developing pricing/phasing proposals for design and bid specs; seconded by Commissioner Knowlton.

(3 yeas, 0 nays) *Motion passed.*

Commissioner Lowe also inquired about the “non-highlighted” items and whose responsibility these items would fall under – specifically the security bollards. John Odell stated that it would be determined by the property line. Mr. Odell said he would look at whether there might be other funding sources for this or other work based on the exterior location.

#### **4. SMG Reporting Sandy Dunn/Julia Iorio (detail included in monthly packet)**

- a. Monthly Highlights / Financial Statements February 2018** – A general review was made of the monthly report sent to the Commission in advance of the meeting.

Additional highlights:

Brew Woo had another record high number of vendors capping out at 110 for this festival, but will continue to allow more growth, both sessions were sell outs, and currently under review is the possibility of adding a Fall event similar to this one – by request of the vendors. Brew Woo is ranked in the Top 5 Craft Beer Festivals in the state.

NCAA for 2020 has not been awarded yet and the organization is currently in discussions about possibly changing up the tournament. Years past included 6 teams, not 4. This might be something they would return to. It has historically been every other year event for the DCU and the hope is that would continue. The DCU Center is an excellent central location for all of New England fans to travel.

- b. Sales Report** – Rock and Shock Convention will be returning this fall – a 10 year annual event. The summer months are more active than recent years. In addition to increasing the number of events this year, convention planners are spending more money on catering and other ancillary

services including off property events providing for enhanced economic impact to the city of Worcester. Commissioner Harrity inquired whether the Indian Festival had returned. Ms. Dunn affirmed.

Price Waterhouse Coopers Annual Survey was included in this month's packet. Sandy Dunn highlighted that the DCU Center Convention Center generally compares with other facilities such as those located in Albany, NY; Chattanooga, TN; Portland, Maine; and Peoria, Illinois to name a few. Peoria's facilities are similar to Worcester's having an arena, convention facility and theatre just outside a major city. Regarding differences in pricing, the DCU Center staff conducts market studies and service comparisons for space rental rates, electrical, internet, and phone lines, etc. during the summer months when event activity is slower and will be providing any recommendation for pricing changes to the Commission after this review.

## **9. Adjournment**

Commissioner Harrity motioned to adjourn; seconded by Commissioner Lowe.  
(3 yeas, 0 nays) Motion passed.

Chairman Harrity reminded the Commissioners to schedule an in depth look at financials and next year's budget with herself and Julia Iorio, Director of Finance, over the next couple of months. Dates can be booked with Paige Williamson, Executive Assistant at 508-929-0106 or pwilliamson@dcucenter.com (1/2 -1 hour time frame).

Meeting Adjourned at 1:17pm.

### **Next Meeting:**

*Thursday, May 24, 2018 at 11:45am (Lunch), 12:30 Meeting – DCU Center Conference Rm*