

**CIVIC CENTER COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
September 27, 2018**

Attendees:

CCC Members: Chairman John Harrity, Commissioner John Brissette, & Commissioner Patrick Lowe
Commissioner John Brissette and Commissioner Lowell Alexander

City: John Odell, Candee Raphaelson

SMG: Sandy Dunn, Jim Moughan

Minutes Prepared by: Paige Williamson, SMG

1. Call to Order

Chairman Harrity brought the meeting to order at 8:09am.

2. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Lowe motioned to accept the Meeting Minutes from June 22, 2018; seconded by Commissioner Alexander. (5 yeas, 0 nays). *Motion passed.*

3. Major Ongoing Projects

a. Capital Projects

i. Vault Improvements

The cost to move the vault would add approximately \$1 million dollars to the project. John Odell spoke with the City Manager and he recommended continuing with upgrading the existing vault and to move forward having the design completed. The electric feeder lines have been detected and are located in close proximity of the loading dock. The only major change would be moving the stairwell, which most likely will add more expense to the design cost. More information will be forthcoming. Commissioner Harrity inquired about flooding concerns and whether any changes will be made to prevent a repeat of the damage previously done. Mr. Odell confirmed that yes, the pumps will be moved along with the relocation of the controls to an upstairs location. The project currently sits at \$790k, but with the movement of the stairs, that could increase. Chairman Harrity asked whether this was at the recommendation of Tighe/Bond and additionally, what was National Grid's standpoint. Mr. Odell confirmed that this path forward was the recommendation of Tighe/Bond and that National Grid's preference was to have the vault moved upstairs. NG is however, pleased with the work that is going to be done. Commissioner Brissette inquired if National Grid offered any funding assistance to have the vault moved to an upstairs location. Mr. Odell stated that no offer of financial assistance was proposed. Mr. Odell said that the design work should be ready within 1 month. Sandy Dunn stated that a back-up plan would definitely be in place and asked Mr. Odell if the fan and pump were still in temporary mode. Mr. Odell affirmed, adding also that since the prior flood incident, SMG staff and the City have learned how to effectively divert shift the waters away from the vault location. Lastly, as work is completed, a generator will be on site at the DCU Center, such that at no time will there be a loss of power. Construction is currently scheduled to occur Winter/Spring 2019.

ii. Boiler Replacement

Mr. Odell presented the Commission with photos of "Before and After" pictures of the boilers. New equipment is currently being brought in. Units are looking to be functional in about two weeks. The new boilers are smaller and provide the redundancy and efficiency that the old boiler did not have. Chairman Harrity inquired if this project would be complete by the end of October. Mr. Odell stated that it should be mid-October for completion of the project, if not sooner.

iii. Master Plan – Phase 2- Status Update

Mr. Odell explained to the Commission that Phase 2 of the Master Plan Project involves three principal players beyond the City:

- 1) An Architect to produce the design and bid documents
- 2) A General Contractor to oversee the work, and
- 3) An OPM (Owner's Project Manager) to serve as the City's day-to-day onsite manager

It was anticipated that the OPM position could be filled by a DPW staff member; however, with the Polar Park project also underway, the DPW may not have the manpower to fill this need. If this turns out to be the case, a new hire will be required. More information should be forthcoming over the next few weeks.

Chairman Harrity inquired as to whose responsibility it is to maintain the exterior maintenance of the facility, i.e. flowers, weeding, mulch, etc. Sandy Dunn confirmed that it was SMG's responsibility; and therefore, SMG is looking into a service agreement with a landscaping company. Current operations staff has undertaken this task to date, but that will not be a long term solution as the facility does not have the staff throughout the season. Chairman Harrity underscored the importance of the exterior upkeep with the increasing activity being generated around the City, as well as, a first impression for returning and potential clients to the DCU Center. Ms. Dunn affirmed Chairman Harrity's concern.

4. SMG Reporting - Sandy Dunn

a. Monthly Highlights / Financial Statements

The DCU Center performed significantly well compared to budget. Family shows, the Worcester Railers, & MA Pirates all contributed to a \$1 million revenue increase. Meetings were also up by \$200k, however concert traffic was significantly down. Adding to the revenue was the per ticket facility fee.

Chairman Harrity requested an update on the three upcoming tests that were to be conducted on the WiFi system. Ms. Dunn explained that these tests were to be focused on the antenna range throughout the facility, not the equipment itself. Three events were selected to test out the coverage in various areas of the complex, 1) Opening Night of the Railers (anticipated sellout crowd – potential for max usage), 2) Cole Swindell (floor seating in the arena set), and the STEM Conference (Convention Center event with large Wi-Fi demand). There may be a punch list generated after the testing is complete, but otherwise the project is finished.

With seven confirmed concerts to date a great upcoming season is anticipated. The MA Pirates had an excellent inaugural season and will be returning next year. The Pirates received 10 Awards from the National Arena League, two of the awards being MVP and Coach of the Year. Luke Combs, country artist, quickly sold out his March 2, 2019 show. Brew Woo Harvest Fest is premiering November 3rd, with marketing focus toward the upper-class college crowd. The brewers themselves encouraged this fall festival in order to theme around their Octoberfest brews, Pumpkin Ales, etc.

Chairman Harrity requested an update on Figs and Pigs. Sandy Dunn stated that there had been a turn in direction since meeting in June. The Poke concept has pulled out, despite SMG working with the owner for close to a four month period. SMG had hoped to have someone in the space by October 1st, however because the decision came in September, SMG has decided it will continue with current in-house operation for this season. Chairman Harrity asked if the backup party had been re-approached. Ms. Dunn affirmed they had, but unfortunately, the space would not work for them, definitely too small. A new manager posting has been made and new competitive price menus are being planned. The successful hours of operation will be maintained and the Railers have been encouraged to use the space for pre/post game functions.

Commissioner Lowe inquired with reference to the new Polar Park facility coming on board and was looking for SMG's standpoint on concert competition and anticipated loss of business if any. Ms. Dunn

responded that the addition of Polar Park venue is complementary. The more people come in to the City to experience what Worcester offers from entertainment venues, to restaurants, to hotels accommodations, etc. the better for all involved. The Polar Park plan includes hosting outdoor concerts and even potential winter classic type events. Typically the DCU Center Arena does not tend to host summer indoor concert events anyway. The artist will promote their tours as outdoor / summer concerts. Commissioner Brissette added that the more the City can show incoming promoters /artists, etc. ALL that Worcester has to offer, the more likelihood they would be to return and recommend to others.

b. Sales Report – Jim Moughan

Commissioner Brissette inquired if Framingham State University was pleased with their graduation event. Mr. Moughan affirmed that they were and that they would be returning in 2019 for their next graduation.

Jim also reported that since the announcement of the Worcester Red Sox, he has had many positive comments from clients looking forward to the team moving here.

Proposals – The New England Fire Chiefs event has booked for the next three years, beginning in 2020-2022 with potential arena expansion to have the ability to raise ladders to full capacity on display. The event draws approximately 4,000 people, and books an estimated 1,000 hotel nights.

Mr. Moughan also presented to the Commission the Occupancy Rate Comparison results.

5. Adjournment

Commissioner Lowe motioned to adjourn; seconded by Commissioner Alexander. (5 yeas, 0 nays)
Motion passed.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:42 am.

Next Standard Meeting:

*Thursday, October 25th, 2018 at 7:30am (Breakfast), 8:00am Meeting – DCU Center
Conference Room*