

CIVIC CENTER COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

2-25-2021

Attendees:

CCC Members Present: Chairman John Harrity, Commissioner Jim Knowlton, Commissioner John Brissette, and Commissioner Penelope Herideen

Absent: Commissioner Lowell Alexander

City: John Odell

SMG: Sandy Dunn, Jim Moughan, Melissa Bishop

Call to Order: Chairman Harrity brought the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. John Odell took the roll call. Four Commissioners present.

Chairman Harrity asked for a moment of silence for Lillian Eid, a former commissioner and chairperson of the Civic Center Commission in the 1980s. She passed away on February 16th. She was the first woman appointed to the Commission.

Acceptance of Meeting Minutes: Chairman Harrity asked for a Motion to accept the Minutes of January 21, 2021. Commissioner Brissette so moved. All in favor.

Cousy Statue Update:

The Bob Cousy statue will be unveiled on Friday, June 18th at 2:00 p.m. on the upper plaza outside the arena. Chairman Harrity invited all to come. Chairman Harrity said that the verbiage was approved by the Cousy family. John Odell confirmed the statue design is complete and there were no issues expected. He confirmed that a crane would be used for the base and the statue as is weighs 14 tons.

Project Status Updates:

The vault is still in design phase (total timeframe 6-8 weeks) based on new requirements from National Grid and internal changes. Mr. Odell expects an estimate for the next meeting.

The cabling RFP will be online shortly. The phone and camera portions bids are already started and once all three are under contract the work will begin. Chairman Harrity asked when Mr. Odell thought it would be ready to go. Mr. Odell expects six to eight weeks and completed in the summer. Next new item is the antennae system that Sandy and her team have been working on. This will enable any guest in the arena to use their own network to access the internet. At this time only the DCU network is available. Mr. Odell explained that the high bidder in this instance will allow other networks to access and this will cost the City/DCU nothing. The City/DCU would receive a monthly flat fee as well as a usage fee adder. This will be variable based on the month but between \$50 and \$100 thousand is expected each year. Sandy explained that the cell phone service in the concrete building was sketchy at best so

that calls were extremely difficult to make. Chairman Harrity asked about people using cell phones to order food and beverages and Sandy explained that they wanted to be inclusive of everyone-people who preferred cell phones and those that may not have a cell phone and prefer cash to credit cards. Commissioner Herideen commended Sandy for including multi modalities for all users.

SMG Reporting:

Sandy updated the latest number at 7 for the field hospital. It has been under 10 for the last two weeks. UMass is in contact with FEMA about reducing capacity and staff but still too early to discuss closing. Chairman Harrity asked about timeline to empty the equipment out. Sandy said the plan is to do it in stages so that unlike last time, people would not be tripping over each other. The first week would be the hospital equipment and the second week the contractors.

Melissa Bishop reported the box office is open one day a week and that Human Recourses still had full time job openings. She reported FY21 still shows a significant loss but the good news is as of February 5th with the rent from the field hospital able to pay for some of the overhead for the building. Sandy spoke of the little revenue coming in but that marketing was picking up. She froze the advertised full time facility position since the field hospital would be closing and they had not filled it quickly. However, the plant manager and electrician jobs were still open. She also said that the building was being used for training in inclement weather for the recruits and for Emergency Management when needed.

Jim Moughan discussed sales and there were several proposals coming in including the Republican Convention in January of 2022 as well as some possibilities in fall of 2021 including US Regional Cheering which is a large event as well as SHINE which includes international travelers. Discover Central Mass and other city hospitality sites are working on a joint marketing plan to include a video for social media. Discover Central Mass has hired a part time sales person who is working ten hours a week on reaching out to the DCU Center's 1200 client data base to update what is happening. Jim reported that although the hospitality industry has been seriously impacted, Worcester has fared better than most with the field hospital bring in 9,600 overnight hotel guest thru January. Sandy also mentioned the colleges renting out the hotels and the field hospital rentals returned money to the DCU through the DIF. Chairman Harrity asked Jim about the SHINE for 2022 and 2023 and what it was. Jim explained it was electronic gaming and that as the event has grown recently, they may need the arena as well. Commissioner Herideen expressed how important and forward thinking it was to have the DCU ready with the new Wi-Fi and now linking together with the cell phone usage to host such an event. Sandy mentioned that she expects information from the Governor in the next four weeks but being closed for a year obviously there are challenges. Rebuilding staff, zero inventory - there are costs to restart and she is working with the City on how to fund. The Pirates are going forward with their opening day on May 22nd regardless if there are zero spectators, 10 percent or 50 percent capacity allowed.

Chairman Harrity asked for a Motion to Adjourn at 9:41; Commissioner Brissette made a motion, second Commissioner Herideen. All in favor.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 25 2021 at 9:00 a.m. via WebEx.