

**MINUTES OF THE JOINT METRO COUNCIL/METROPOLITAN EXPOSITION
RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING**

Tuesday, February 16, 2010
Metro Council Chamber

Councilors Present: David Bragdon (Council President), Kathryn Harrington, Rod Park, Carlotta Collette, Rex Burkholder, Robert Liberty, Carl Hosticka

Councilors Absent: None

Commissioners Present: Commissioners Ray Leary, Judie Hammerstad, Elisa Dozono, Chris Erickson, Cynthia Haruyama, Karis Stoudamire-Phillips

Commissioners Absent: Terry Goldman

Council President Bragdon and Commission Chair Leary convened the Metro Council Work Session Meeting at 2:03 p.m.

1. OPENING COMMENTS/INTRODUCTIONS

Council President Bragdon said that this meeting provided an opportunity for MERC and Metro to get together and share information, especially for the benefit of the new MERC Commissioners. Chair Leary said that this session could help MERC move forward in its mission.

2. EXPECTATIONS FOR MEETING

COO Michael Jordan expressed his thanks to everyone for their hard work in the past few months. He said that MERC will use the information and input from today's meeting to move forward with strategic planning. He also asked for input on how communication between MERC and Metro has been working and for input on the General Manager job description, which he would like to release soon.

Interim MERC General Manager Cheryl Twete echoed Mr. Jordan's thanks, especially for everyone's work through the budget process.

3. BRIEFING: Financial and strategic opportunities/challenges for:

a. Portland Center for the Performing Arts

Robyn Williams, Executive Director of the Portland Center for the Performing Arts, said that at PCPA things are, for the most part, "business as usual" thanks to strong current and forecasted ticket sales. PCPA will post a mostly self-imposed deficit resulting from subsidizing its resident companies, but it has established strategic reserve funds that can help manage this deficit. The main concerns for PCPA at this time are the health of its resident companies, and the need for a long-term funding strategy for capital improvements to buildings.

b. Oregon Convention Center

Jeff Blosser, Executive Director of the Oregon Convention Center, said that the main objective for the OCC continues to be booking conventions. He mentioned that OCC will reach out to client focus groups to determine what factors might make OCC a more attractive place to potential clients who are looking to

hold a convention. One challenge the OCC is facing is that consumer shows, which have been an important revenue source, are not doing very well. Additionally, lodging tax revenues are down, making budgeting a challenge. On the positive side, OCC would like to capitalize on the early success of the Stir lounge. In addition, Mr. Blosser discussed OCC's ongoing efforts in sustainability and "green" practices, as well as a program to teach people about the food business in partnership with Aramark.

c. Portland Metropolitan Exposition Center

Chris Bailey, Executive Director of the Expo Center, explained that his primary business is to bring consumer shows and other similar events to the Expo Center. He said that revenues are down, in part because many events have been downsized to save money. Expenses are also down, however. He mentioned a study done by business students at Portland State University that looked at trends and forecasts for the industry. He also discussed the need to update the Expo Center's master plan and to explore how the Columbia River Crossing project could affect Expo's business and transportation options.

Members of MERC and the Metro Council discussed the briefings from the three Executive Directors and asked questions about reserve funds for each of the three facilities, marketing opportunities for the Expo Center, market changes and their affects on MERC venues, prioritization of capital projects, and other topics.

4. STATUS REPORT ON MERC/METRO BUSINESS PRACTICES STUDY

Mr. Jordan initiated a conversation on business practices across MERC and Metro, and the Deputy COO Scott Robinson has been project lead on a study into business practices. Mr. Robinson said that the business practices study focused on whether business practices needed to change, what kinds of synergies exist between the two agencies that can be leveraged to lower costs and improve efficiency, and what the impediments to taking advantage of those synergies are. The study also showed that the predominance of employees in MERC and Metro are in the business of guest services and delivering services to customers, and that there is no real Metro or MERC culture rather but 'venue-driven culture'. As a result, we need to be able to support a continuum of business activity that happens across MERC and Metro, from real-time projects to the longer-term planning that Metro is known for. Mr. Robinson said that the next step is to tap into those synergies that have been identified, and he gave a timeline for the process.

Commissioners and Councilors commented and asked questions on Mr. Robinson's presentation, mainly on what kinds of synergies have been identified and how to leverage them.

5. COUNCILOR & COMMISSIONER COMMENTS/QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION

Councilors and Commissioners discussed the issue of a "headquarters hotel" for the Convention Center and what options are on the table. They also discussed the idea of developing a "story" as a way of communicating about the economic impact and cultural value of the three venues and as a way of marketing the venues. The issue was also raised of how communication between MERC and Metro can be better facilitated, and how an ex-officio MERC Board member might function as a liaison between the two agencies.

Council President Bragdon acknowledged the nomination of Councilor Park as the first ex-officio liaison to MERC. Chair Leary thanked everyone for their hard work and said he looked forward to moving ahead with MERC.

MERC Chair Leary adjourned the meeting at 4:05 PM

Prepared by

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sheena VanLeuven".

Sheena VanLeuven
Council Policy Associate

**ATTACHMENTS TO THE PUBLIC RECORD FOR THE MEETING OF
DATE, 2010**

Item	Topic	Doc. Date	Document Description	Doc. Number
1	Agenda	02/16/10	Agenda: Metro Council regular meeting, February 18,2010	021610cw-1
3	Attachment	02/16/10	Venue Background Information	021610cw-2
3	Attachment	02/16/10	MERC Venue Fast Facts	021610cw-3
4	Attachment	12/21/09	Economic and Fiscal Impact Analysis- MERC Final Report	021610cw-4