

**Sports Advisory Board  
Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism  
One Constitution Plaza, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Hartford, Connecticut  
Main Conference Room  
September 16, 2009  
9:30 a.m.**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Present:** Jim Abromaitis, Capital City Economic Development Authority  
Lynn Carlotto, Arena at Harbor Yard  
Robert Doherty, Special Olympics CT  
Gene Doris, Fairfield University  
Jill Ferraiolo, Connecticut State University System  
Oz Griebel, MetroHartford Alliance  
Nathan Grube, Travelers Championship  
Bill Humphreys, BikeGuy  
Curt Jensen, Greater Hartford CVB  
Jack McDonald, Quinnipiac University  
Patricia Meiser, University of Hartford  
Marie O'Brien, Connecticut Development Authority  
Joe Oros, Connecticut Department of Economic & Community Development  
Larry Perosino, Connecticut Boxing Commission  
Gloria Ragosta, Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges  
Michael Savage, CT Interscholastic Athletic Conference  
Chuck Steedman, Northland AEG  
Joyce Wong, Eastern Connecticut State University

**Excused:** Dana Ciaifi, Pilot Pen Tennis  
Scott Ciecko, State Department of Higher Education  
Wayne Dean, Yale University  
Charlie Dowd, Dodd Stadium – Connecticut Defenders  
Ron Drapeau, Connecticut State Golf Association  
Jeffrey Hathaway, University of Connecticut  
Rick Hazelton, Trinity College  
Don MacKenzie, Boats Incorporated  
Larry McHugh, Middlesex Chamber of Commerce  
Michael Mehigen, Office of Policy and Management  
Ann Miron, Sacred Heart University  
William Mudano, Connecticut Sports Management Group, Inc.  
Michael Murtha, Athletic Department Mohegan Sun  
Michael Roth, Wesleyan University  
Sara Willcox, Pilot Pen Tennis  
John Willi, New Britain Rock Cats

**Guests/Staff** Amy Healey, Greater New Haven, CVB; Leigh Johnson (Recording Secretary), Commission on Culture & Tourism; Karen Senich, Commission on Culture & Tourism; and Stacey & Tom Pavano, CT LPGA Now

I **Call to Order**

Chairman Abromaitis called the Sports Advisory Board meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

II **Approval of Minutes**

*On a motion made by Gene Doris, second by Lynn Carlotto, the Sports Advisory Board approved the minutes of April 14, 2009 as circulated. (Y-17, N-0)*

III **Updates: State Budget, Status Sports Advisory Board – Jim Abromaitis/Karen Senich Reporting**

Chairman Abromaitis addressed the members on the State budget. It was proposed in one of the Governor's earlier versions to eliminate a number of Boards and Commissions. In current budget the SAB remains intact. The current budget, however, does not allocate any funding source for the Sports Advisory Board.

Since the Board was created last year, it [the Board] has had a busy year developing recommendations in the legislative report to the Commerce Committee including a recommendation to establish a Sports Authority. There has been continuous open dialog and sharing between sporting entities and members of the Board, along with analyzing various economic impact sporting models to use to help further the Board's goal of evaluating the value of sporting events.

Karen Senich reported the Commission's tourism's statewide marketing budget was reduced to \$1 in the current State's budget. This is the funding source used to market the state, publish the yearly Vacation and Special Events Calendar Guides, which included the maintenance and retooling of CTvisit's website.

With the new budget, the way of promoting and marketing Connecticut to the leisure and business markets will change – it will no longer be business as usual.

IV **Old Business**

***Recap on June 23, 2009 Panel Event – Marie O'Brien Reporting***

Marie O'Brien thanked the members of the Planning Committee (Lynn Carlotto, Chuck Steedman, Beau Doherty, Maria Jannace, Bill Humphreys, Patrick Murphy, Pat Meiser, Curt Jensen, Karen Senich and Jim Abromaitis) that convened to develop the panel event held in June, and she thanked Nathan Grube for volunteering Travelers to host the event at TPC River Highlands.

***Planning Process***

The committee began by establishing three goals for the event:

1. Establish the fact that the sporting event sector of Connecticut's economy is an important revenue generator for the State.
2. Establish the realization that a more formal approach to the business of sports can be an immediate, measurable and impactful endeavor that will bring new business to the State and grow our economy.
3. Create an opportunity for legislators to identify next steps to support publicly the Board's objective to further organize the business of sports.

Another objective/goal for the committee was to get the message to all legislators by having an event that CT-N could cover. The Committee believes it met its goals in that the two co-chairs of the Commerce Committee were in attendance at the event.

The Committee did an excellent job in selecting a wide-range of panelists from the sporting industry for this event. The panel discussion was moderated by Jeremy Schaap of ESPN. Panelists included Skip Barber, Skip Barber Racing School; Beau Doherty, Special Olympics; President Walter Harrison, University of Hartford and representing NCAA; Richard Krezwick former President of the Fleet Center in Massachusetts; and Ron Galimore, USA Gymnastics Association; and Donna Fiedorowicz of the PGA.

The event was of high quality with a panel that represented diverse sporting interests. The presentations were informative and touched on many of the issues that had been raised by the SAB. Most importantly the panel clearly stressed the importance of sporting events to the economy and that Connecticut should expand its current efforts.

While the event was a success there were some issues that may have hindered even greater success. The timing coincided with a breakfast event in Middletown, the legislature was in session, lack of representation of the remaining Board members, logistics at the TPC and accessibility of parking.

#### ***For the Future***

Some of the points made by the panelists should be formally recorded and documented. When the Board is required to go in front of the Commerce Committee, the Board should present many of these points made by the panelists as reinforcement of our recommendations.

It was suggested that CCT obtain a copy of the CT-N video.

#### ***A few comments from the Planning Committee members on the panel session***

- *Attendees at the session were enthusiastic about growing the sport business in Connecticut*
- *Speakers pointed to plenty of successes in other places*
- *It is obvious there is a real foundation to build on – if only for seed money to launch this to the next level*
- *Very positive step for the SAB to take, and comments made by individuals on a voluntary basis were very encouraging for the SAB's efforts*
- *If the message that was delivered by the panel was delivered to a broader audience, it would have satisfied more of the Board's goal*
- *Need to find a way to galvanize the message delivered by the panelists and use that as a platform to spread the word would be a key takeaway.*
- *The turnout for the session was a disappoint, but the dialog was very important and it is the place for which we need to move forward from*
- *The State is loaded with educational institutions and on those alone (Divisions 1, 2, 3 levels) the championship opportunities are extensive*
- *The Board would be missing an opportunity if it [the Board] cannot find away to energize this into a formal format to get the money necessary to move forward*
- *Who was the real audience and if they were not there, how do we go about getting them in the room and not to give up on this one time effort. If we know who the audience is the Board should do another session again*
- *Even though there was very little media attention, it did seem clear that the media would back this, and the media is eager for a story about business and business growth in Connecticut, The timing for this could be ideal if we are able to get out there with another event and bring in the*

*right people, and less competition for coverage on the same day of the event would have been an enormous benefit to us which could have further launch us.*

- *Timing of the year for the event was not conducive*

Five (5) key audiences were identified for the event

- Connecticut legislators
- Connecticut business and sports media
- Corporate philanthropists
- Sport Advisory Board and guests
- Other business representatives (Metro Chambers, CVBs, tourism districts, municipal economic development officials)

### ***Statewide Event Update***

Each member of the committee had an opportunity to update the SAB on the events planned or being hosted in their area currently and for the future.

## **V. New Business – Next Steps**

Chairman Abromaitis asked “how do we package what already has gone on [panel debate] and combine it with what we [the Board] want to do going forward, and what are the other venues around the state which this can be delivered to (i.e. chambers) and who is/are the right advocates to deliver this message?”

It was noted, if the Board’s intension is to heighten awareness, stress the importance of and obtain backing for sports/sporting events in Connecticut, it must be very clear and concise in what is being conveyed to the audience. Putting together a panel for a broad-public event/discussion may not necessarily be what the Board is trying to accomplish. For example, a targeted event to important management leaders or potential sponsors to endorse the Board’s goal may be more prudent. The more concise the Board is as to “what” is needed – the more likely the Board would be at successfully obtaining its goal.

It is important for the Board to go before the legislature to get the legislature involved with the Board’s mission by even having key legislators create a placeholder bill for the next legislative session. However, it is obvious that what the Board is trying to accomplish, cannot be accomplished by the legislature alone, it will take a concerted effort from the many parties involved along with the business community’s support.

It is important to note that success in getting participation by the business community will only be achieved if it is clear that there is a benefit to the business community.

A suggestion was made to develop an organizational structure and business Proforma for a Sports Authority (if that is the ultimate goal of the Board – one stop entity) and determine what auspice the Authority would be created under and reporting to – a private entity; public entity; or an entity of both private and public funding interests.

Chairman Abromaitis asked members to volunteer to sit on a sub-committee to help define our objective and develop an outline for the plan to achieve that objective. The work of the sub-committee would be presented at the next full Board meeting. Volunteers: Beau Doherty, Nathan Grube, Lynn Carlotto, Jack McDonald, Gene Doris (to reach out to Tom Chiappetta of Fairfield’s Sports Commission), Pat Meiser and Bill Humphreys. Lynn Carlotto offered to host the sub-committee at the Arena in Bridgeport for their first meeting.

***Pending Items***

1. Format for collecting sports related/sports events (for the last four years) be developed and sent to SAB members.
2. Gathering information on other Authorities around the country to help determine a possible model for here in Connecticut.

VI. **Next scheduled meeting**  
To be determined