

**MINUTES OF THE METROPOLITAN ENTERTAINMENT & CONVENTION  
AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – MARCH 16, 2018**

A meeting of the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Entertainment & Convention Authority (“MECA”), a Nebraska nonprofit corporation, was called to order by Chairwoman Diane Duren at 8:30 a.m. on March 16, 2018, in the MECA Board Room at CenturyLink Center Omaha, 455 N. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Omaha, Nebraska.

**Roll Call:**

Present: Chairwoman Diane Duren, Ms. Susie Buffett, Mr. Tom Kelley, and Mr. Jay Noddle. Ms. Dana Washington was not in attendance.

**Proof of Publication:**

Notice of the meeting was published in *The Daily Record* on March 9, 2018, and in the *Omaha World-Herald* on March 9, 2018.

A copy of the Open Meetings Law was posted on the table near the side entrance to the MECA Board Room.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Ms. Buffett moved for approval of the minutes of the February 13, 2018, MECA Board Meeting, seconded by Mr. Noddle.

Motion carried: 4-0.

**President/CEO Report:**

Mr. Roger Dixon reported that MECA is in full swing, making preparations for the upcoming National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Men’s Midwest Regional Basketball Tournament being held at the CenturyLink Center Omaha (CLCO) on March 23 and 25.

Planning is also in the final stages for the NCAA Men’s College World Series (CWS) at TD Ameritrade Park Omaha (TDAPO). Mr. Dixon noted that Mr. Ron Prettyman, the NCAA managing director of championships and alliances, has resigned effective March 9, and Mr. Keith Martin with ticketing and marketing has also left the NCAA. Mr. Randy Buhr is now the acting executive director, and although it is unclear if a national search for a replacement will be conducted, Mr. Dixon believes the CWS planning will be in good hands with Mr. Buhr.

**Other Business:**

**Convention Center Sales & Marketing Update**

Ms. Denise Niebrugge stated that there are currently 135 events on the books, utilizing 258 event days for the fiscal year 2017-2018. Since the February 13, 2018, Board meeting, 16 events with over 45 event days and over 17,000 hotel room nights have been added. Six of these events are citywide.

In April, the Omaha Convention & Visitors Bureau (OCVB), Hilton Omaha and the MECA team will be attending the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) XDP (Experience, Design, Project) Business Focus Conference. The first day of the conference will be spent at round tables in a lab type setting with a collaborative learning environment, where the group will share ideas and talk about

industry issues with meeting planners. The second day will be spent doing one-on-one meetings with the meeting planners to talk about future dates and how Omaha can help them.

Ms. Niebrugge was happy to discuss a success story that came from hosting the Northern Lights 18 Qualifier & January Thaw Volleyball Tournament at CLCO in January 2018. CLCO was only supposed to have this event for 2018 because they were bumped from Minneapolis due to the National Football League (NFL) the Super Bowl being hosted there. The bid was lost back to Minneapolis for 2019; however, after hosting their conference and volleyball tournament, Ms. Niebrugge received a call saying that they want to come back to Omaha. The coaches and teams both loved the city, and they felt the competition was much better in Omaha. Ms. Niebrugge is now looking at CLCO hosting this event for the next five years.

### **Corporate Sales & Marketing Update**

Mr. Tom O’Gorman stated that in case anyone hasn’t heard yet, the NCAA Men’s Basketball Midwest Regionals are coming to Omaha and the excitement is high. Although CLCO has hosted multiple first and second rounds, this will be the first time the State of Nebraska has ever hosted the basketball regionals.

Last week, *Omaha World-Herald* staff writer, Mr. Kevin Coffey, published an article about a study done by SeatGeek.com, ranking Omaha #10 out of 100 of the largest U.S. concert markets. MECA is very excited to host so many top 10 shows.

Work continues on securing an agreement for naming rights. Mr. O’Gorman is very happy to be moving forward along with the help of the consultants, Professional Sports Partners. The next couple weeks will be very busy conducting numerous meetings with prospective companies being looked at for naming rights proposals.

### **Operations and Technology Update**

Mr. Kevin Raymond acknowledged and thanked his staff for all their hard work. They do a fantastic job to ensure the events run smoothly, which can be a challenge when you have events such as the President’s Day Classic Volleyball Tournament in the convention center and a nearly sold out Nebraska School Activities Association (NSAA) State Wrestling Tournament happening simultaneously in the arena. Wrestling ended a bit late on Sunday evening around 6:30 p.m. and shortly after 7:30 p.m. the doors were already opening for the Creighton University men’s basketball game against Marquette.

The majority of the stadium at TDAPO has been de-winterized and preparations are being made for the Creighton University Men’s baseball season. Although the baseball game today was cancelled due to rain, Mr. Raymond is hopeful the games on Saturday and Sunday will still take place. Last week the installation on the back stop netting was finished (extending it to the end of the dugouts). The results look very nice with visibility at approximately 93%. The netting is very hard to see until you are right behind it.

The installation of the new walk-thru metal detectors was completed this week at CLCO. Training sessions have begun for the staff and the first use of the machines will be for the Kid Rock concert.

Finally, Mr. Raymond stated the plans for NCAA Midwest Basketball Regionals are being finalized. Lots of preparation is being done, but it is very exciting and everyone is eager to host this prestigious event.

Chairwoman Duren noted that she had heard from several guests about how well the wrestling tournament went in regards to guests bringing in bags like they had from the past. The change of policy/procedure seems to have gone over very well.

### **Levy Food & Beverage Update**

Ms. Chris VanDorn reported that February's financials, as projected, generated the highest sales from any month, actual or projected for the entire fiscal year. February sales were higher by 20% to the next closest month in sales. At this point, Levy will be working non-stop at CLCO and TDAPO from now until the end of summer.

As part of Levy's global ongoing commitment to safety and sanitation, Levy received a building wide food safety inspection on February 27 which happened to be the last Creighton University men's home basketball game. The auditor inspected 16 locations, which is a combination of the pantries, warehouse, main kitchen and fixed concession stands. The average score was 97%. The scores for the inspections over the course of the entire fiscal year are what determine which locations are awarded the President's Excellence Awards for Sanitation, which Levy has received annually since the program was started in 2013. It's a great start for this year as well.

This weekend is the opening for Creighton University men's baseball; however the weather may not cooperate. Levy has cancelled all staff for today and pushed back food production to be ready for a game on Saturday and Sunday. The staff is also working diligently to move product in place today in anticipation of a busy Kid Rock concert tomorrow, especially with the combination of St. Patrick's Day.

Ms. VanDorn stated that Levy is in full preparation mode for the NCAA Midwest Regional basketball tournament set for March 23 and 25. Merchandise is arriving daily and Levy is finalizing all the signature food items that will be showcased for the tournament. There are a couple items being added to the concourse along with the traditional fare. The team of Levy's Chefs has been creative with fun names that will tie into the tournament such as the "Ball Hog Brisket Dog" which is a jumbo hot dog topped with smoked brisket, BBQ sauce, fried onions and pickles. A "Triple, Double Sliders" will be added to the burger stands. These are three hand pattied in-house burgers topped with bacon, two types of cheese, sweet & smoky Aioli sauce and served on toasted mini brioche rolls. There will be a "Ham Dunk" which is a double-decker melt sandwich with ham, grilled onions, cheddar cheese and served with a side house-made cheese sauce. Guests observing Lent will have options such as the fish taco baskets. The Lexus Club carving station will feature Midwestern Banh Mi house smoked brisket, chef carved, topped with pickled vegetables and their choice of sauces that the guest can add. Ms. VanDorn will work with Levy's director of corporate communications and MECA's team as well to get this information out on social media channels next week and tie into the March Madness trending hashtags there.

### **Public Relations Update**

Ms. Kristyna Engdahl stated that MECA has enjoyed quite a bit of great publicity over the last month. Just this week, local media was invited to come to TDAPO for a first look at the newly extended backstop netting. While they were on site, Ms. Engdahl was also able to touch on all the new security measures taking effect in 2018 – like MECA's new clear bag policy, and the wandering of guests at all stadium events. Additionally, media was also invited to view the completed installation of the walk through metal detectors. The units were turned on, and they learned how they work and how advanced they are. Coverage like this gives the public a beneficial sneak peek that security will look different this weekend for Kid Rock concert. MECA is staying active on social media with the message of new security measures, and encouraging people, as always to arrive early.

There have been a lot of inquiries about set-up and excitement for NCAA Midwest Basketball Tournament. MECA has been featured in a couple of in-depth *Omaha World-Herald* articles, and also had early interest from a few TV stations. Ms. Engdahl anticipates a large media turnout for the basketball court installation which is happening next Monday.

Ms. Engdahl noted that there was a lot of support from local and state media, as well as the NSAA to successfully spread the message of MECA's policy change and how it would affect the legacy wrestling events. Mr. Dixon added that the NSAA has requested to re-up for another multi-year contract to hold their event at CLCO because they enjoy the facility.

### **Committee Updates:**

#### **Internal Governance Committee**

The Internal Governance Committee did not meet in March. There will be an update from this Committee at the next Board meeting on April 10.

#### **Real Estate Committee**

Mr. Jay Noddle reported that the Committee has reached a point to ask the MECA Board of Directors to vote on the Lot B Agreement today. Last month there were discussions, asking the group to consider some changes with terms of the Committee members on the standing committee. The standing committee will provide oversight and guidance when proposals are received by the City, whether they are requested or unsolicited. All those involved thought it was a good idea, so the changes were adopted into the document. The Agreement is now ready to be voted on and then sent to the City. The Committee expects the City will process this Agreement quickly and move it to the City Council for their approval. Mr. Noddle, Mr. Dixon and Chairwoman Duren could be available to attend the City Council meeting if it makes sense to do so. Mr. Noddle added that it has been a worthwhile effort and will provide a great roadmap for whoever is involved with this in the future.

Chairwoman Duren added that it has been about two years now since MECA started the discussion about Lot B being given up for development, and the resulting discussion about what needs to happen to replace the Lot B parking. That was when Mr. Ken Stinson stepped in and convened a group consisting of the City, a variety of community members and MECA. It's been a good process and now MECA is in the final steps of making sure everything has been covered, in regards to all the covenants and restrictions being recorded. The Chairwoman thanked Mr. Noddle for all his hard work on this project as it certainly was appreciated.

Mr. Tom Kelley inquired if Mr. Noddle had a sense on what the City's resolve is to construct the parking facility from a timing standpoint, or if it is completely open ended. Mr. Noddle stated that he believed it is open-ended. From what the Committee can foresee, there is quite a bit of planning and work that needs to be done to Lot D infrastructure, which will take some time. The approval of the Agreement may trigger a little more focus by the Public Works Department on Lot D, specifically the utilities. It may be a couple of years before the planning and actual work can be done on Lot D. Mr. Noddle does not expect the City will be in a big hurry to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP); however, if someone is searching the Omaha area, Lot B could look very attractive next to the Riverfront initiative and other things that are happening downtown. Interest could be spawned very quickly, but it will probably be three years at minimum before anything starts happening on Lot B. Chairwoman Duren added that Lot B being adjacent to the river should make it very attractive for development, especially

considering what Creighton University and Kiewit are doing in the area which will really put a focus on future projects in this area.

**Lot B**

**RESOLVED**, that the Lot B Development Agreement and Declaration of Easements, Covenants and Restrictions between MECA and the City of Omaha for future development of Lot B, as more specifically set out on the attached summary, are hereby approved, and Roger Dixon as President/CEO is authorized on behalf of MECA to execute the Agreements following their finalization in a form reasonably approved by counsel.

Chairwoman Duren invited public and further Board comment and asked for a motion.

Board Counsel Mr. Bob Freeman noted that copies of these documents are included today's public documents book and available for public review.

Moved by Mr. Kelley seconded by Ms. Buffett.

Motion carried: 4-0

**Contract Approvals:**

Chairwoman Duren indicated there is one contract requiring approval.

**CLCO**

**Lanoha Nurseries**

**RESOLVED**, that the Agreement between MECA and Lanoha Nurseries to replace mulch at CenturyLink Center Omaha, as more fully described on the attached summary, is hereby approved, and Roger Dixon as President/CEO is authorized on behalf of MECA to execute the Agreement following its finalization in a form reasonably approved by counsel.

Chairwoman Duren invited public and Board comment and asked for a motion.

Moved by Mr. Noddle seconded by Mr. Kelley.

Motion carried: 4-0

**Next Board Meeting**

The next MECA Board of Directors Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 10, 2018, at 8:30 a.m. in the MECA Board Room.

**Executive Session**

Chairwoman Duren stated the time is 8:52 a.m. and invited a Motion to enter into closed Executive Session for purposes of discussing personnel, real estate and potential claims matters.

A Motion to go into Executive Session for these specified purposes was made by Ms. Buffett seconded by Mr. Noddle.

Motion carried: 4-0.

**Adjournment**

At 9:36 a.m. a motion was made to adjourn, made by Mr. Kelley, seconded by Ms. Buffett.

Motion carried: 4-0

Adjournment (9:37 a.m.)