

## **Status Notes of Exhibition Center Developments by Walt Rugland**

**January 6, 2011**

I have continued recruiting a slate of founding directors. I hope to add several more; invitations are being considered by the nominees.

The design of the FCEC as a corporation is to have a managing board of directors and an advisory advocacy group that can support certain functions. I am building a tentative initial list of advisory members with more to add. I am drafting some ideas as to the function of the advisory group

I have submitted FCEC, Inc. Articles to the State. Dave Willems, John Pfefferle and I are the incorporators. The filing has been reviewed and I had a request from Madison to fix an inconsistency, so I know this will be finished in a few days.

People at Boldt are working on some initial designs and costs for the Center. This will help define how much funding we may need. Tom Boldt is shepherding this internally, as well as with Zeidler architects as Boldt sees fit to do.

I have talked with several people connected in various ways with the CVB grant making function. It is clear to me that we should take steps to apply for a grant. Having the discussion at the CVB now will provide a good base for a better understanding of the community value of the project related to the eventual room tax discussion. I will work with Karen H on developing a grant proposal.

I had a lengthy discussion with Shaun Kennedy of the Holiday Inn Select. He had not read the report and after some discussion he admitted he had been working on a lot of misinformation. I outlined for him the necessary pieces that would need to come into place before a room tax proposal could go forward. On the other hand I indicated that nothing would happen without a room tax to support it.

I also talked with Rich Batley of Bridgewood in Neenah. He has enthusiastically agreed to be on the Board. In the process I have learned a lot about room tax thinking and the forces affecting the issue. I am still of the opinion that the entire hospitality business in the Fox Cities will have significant benefit from an Exhibition Center.

John P and I have discussed the approach we will take with the Radisson/Montclair decision-makers. The first item we need is the design/cost estimates so that we have a better idea of the financial feasibility of getting the job done. We have assembled a list of possible talking points to include in discussion with Montclair.

Karen H and I will meet with the Property and Airport Committee of the Outagamie County Bd on Jan 25. Peter Stueck is the coordinator; he is both my Alderperson and County Supervisor. My hope is that eventually we can form a partnership with the County to resolve the space and parking issues together. I will plan to touch base with various supervisors.

To review the strategy as stated by John Hogerty: The first step is to set a construction budget cost figure. Then we can define a concrete (albeit preliminary) amount we need from each source to fund the project: room tax, hotel role, county, city, CVB/private money) and explore with the first four whether that amount is feasible. If any of the four can't be counted on for their target, meaning the private money needed to get it done is more than what we think the business community will chip in, then the project is not a reality. If there is at least a more than average chance they will, then the FCEC should go forward full tilt, with a person or team assigned to each task.

WSR Jan 6