



MINUTES OF THE MARCH 26, 2012 MEETING

1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
City Hall, Room 416
San Francisco, CA 94102

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Commission President Bradley Tyson called the meeting to order at 2:00pm.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present:

Denise Bradley-Tyson
Jon Rubin
Villy Wang
Peter Bratt
Don Canady
Debbie Brubaker

Commissioners Absent:

William Adams
Robert Morales
Marlene Sharon Saritzky
Melanie Blum
Lorrae Rominger

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE FEBRUARY 27, 2012 MEETING (ACTION ITEM)

Commissioner Canady made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 27, 2012 meeting. Commissioner Brubaker seconded the motion. Commissioner comment and public comment was taken; the minutes were unanimously approved.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT (DISCUSSION ONLY)

Fox's Sci Fi mystery series Alcatraz returned to San Francisco for a three day shoot which will be part of its 2 hour season finale that airs tonight at 8pm. This involved a complicated chase scene which was homage to the film *Bullitt*. The Film Office, in cooperation with MUNI, SFPD and the neighbors of Russian Hill, orchestrated a successful shoot for the production. Upon completing filming, Director Jack Bender told Executive Director Robbins that he was very happy with the way the shoot went, and if they get picked up for a 2nd season, they will shoot more often in San Francisco. Bender was quoted in the San Jose Mercury News as saying:

"There's no question that we lose something by not being here," he said. "It would be fabulous to have our characters playing scenes with a decaying Alcatraz around them, and/or out in the streets. San Francisco is obviously one of the most visual cities in America."





Commission and public comment was taken.

Commissioner Brubaker said it was a lot of fun and this footage was the best they have seen all season long.

STAFF REPORT (DISCUSSION ONLY)

The Executive Director gave her report. The Executive Director noted the following filming statistics as follows:

March 2012: 66 days, 35 permits
Feb 2012: 74 days, 34 permits
March 2011: 77 days, 36 permits

Executive Director Robbins said she is currently working with Supervisor Farrell on the extension of the Scene in San Francisco Rebate Program. The rebate is set to expire at the end of June 2012. She is looking to find more incentives for the program. She and Supervisor Farrell are trying to identify the economic impact to the general fund.

Executive Director Robbins is trying to figure out how much money comes back to the City from the direct spend by productions. The current numbers of the amount going to the general fund isn't sufficient to support the new proposal. She will meet with the Controller, Ted Egan, this week to figure out what percentage of the company's direct spend actually ends up in the City's general fund. Otherwise, she is looking at other ways to make the incentive more enticing including increasing the number of police officers eligible for rebate.

FILM HOUSE RESIDENCY PROJECT - REALLOCATION OF FUNDS SF

Executive Director Robbins continued to give an update on the San Francisco Film Commission's Film House Residency Project previously operated in collaboration with the Film Society at Pier 27 of the Port of San Francisco. The Film Society has found a new home at 1426 Fillmore Street. The Film House Residency project was temporarily put on hold partially because they lost the space at Pier 27 because of the America's Cup and also because of the passing of the former Film Society Director, Graham Leggatt. Executive Director Robbins said there have been changes in the program that made it necessary to include this in the meeting.

- 1) The Film Society has been given an opportunity by the Kenneth Rainin Foundation to expand Film House by opening it up to narrative filmmakers who are from anywhere in the country. Originally, the purpose of the project was to house local filmmakers with a significant connection to San Francisco. With this change, only two of the ten spaces would be required to be allocated to San Francisco filmmakers. It could be more than two but this would not be a requirement.
- 2) The Film Society would no longer be leasing space from the Port of San Francisco or any other city facility. They would lease space from a private owner. The Film Commission cannot subsidize a non-





profit organization that pays rent to private owner without following proper city funding procedures. The Film Commission would be required to put out a request for application to qualified non-profits involved in filmmaking. If the Film Commission were to move forward, they would need to create a process that would allow other non-profits to apply for this funding as well. It would take two or three months to start the process, advertise the opportunity and review the options. The other option is for the City to lease the space for a similar purpose but this would require further research including consultation with Department of Real Estate and the City Attorney's Office.

Executive Director Robbins said in light of these changes, she is concerned that the program has changed to the point that it is no longer consistent with the original purpose of supporting local, San Francisco independent filmmaking. She supports the Film Society and wants to continue the relationship with them with regards to the International Film Festival and Cinema by the Bay. However, she thinks paying \$2,000 per month towards a program that only guarantees two filmmakers from San Francisco is not an effective use of money.

Executive Director Robbins proposes to discontinue Film House Residency project funding for the following: a) the unavailability of Pier 27 b) the need to open the process to more nonprofits due to the Film Society's plans to lease the space directly from a private party c) the Film Society's plans to expand its geographic scope and d) the Film Commission establishing an alternative space at the San Francisco Film Collective.

Vice President Bradley Tyson asks for public comment on the Executive Director's report. None was taken.

Vice President Bradley Tyson asks for a motion to discuss the project regarding the Film House Residency project. Commissioner Brubaker made a motion. Commissioner Rubin seconded it.

Vice President Bradley Tyson then reads a statement from Commission President Saritzky which follows: To my fellow Commissioners, I am sorry I cannot be with you today but I am on the East Coast this week. This is an important discussion which I wish I could be part of. The Film House Residency project is a terrific program – so terrific that it spawned our own Film Collective which has turned out to be a wonderful success thanks to the efforts of Executive Director Robbins and Filming Supervisor, Christine Munday especially. After a hiatus, the Film House program is ready to start up again and that's great news. It's a great partnership and one I believe we should continue. When we were debating the Film Collective, we had discussions about how this would not be about the exclusion of Film House once it was restarted and I am confident we will stay true to that. Here is just one example of how the Film Society supports local filmmakers and the community: they give close to \$1 million directly to support local filmmakers through services, grants, production assistance and education. We, as a Film Commission, could never get this close in terms of that kind of financial support. The Film Society is the premiere film organization in the Bay Area and discontinuing this program is, in my opinion, short sighted. The return on our investment in them is more than worth it. I know there is concern about the fact that the Film House program will include some filmmakers who are from outside the Bay Area. But actually, I think this is a good thing. Our main charge is to bring economic development to the City and we





do that mostly by bringing in production from elsewhere. What better way to show off our City than to do so to non-Bay Area filmmakers by having them spend a few months here - living here and seeing what we have to offer them. To me, this is a plus and certainly not a minus. I recognized that due to the fact that leasing arrangements have changed may create some obstacles but I also believe that to have an up or down vote today on this program is shortsighted. I am confident that if we (Susannah and a number of Commissioners) meet with the City Attorney and the Department of Real Estate, we could explore alternatives and hopefully agree to something that works on all levels. We have not yet explored all of the alternatives and we should. To discontinue our partnership in Film House does not seem wise. It would sever a several year relationship that we have established over time and would hamper the Film Society's own work supporting local filmmakers which is a common goal. We have supported this partner for years. We should not discontinue it until we have exhausted all alternatives. Thank you.

Commissioner Brubaker asked Executive Director Robbins to clarify relationship with the Film Society outside of Film House.

Executive Director Robbins said the Film Commission supports financially the International Film Festival as well as Cinema by the Bay and this would continue. She mentioned she loves the programs the Film Society creates.

Commissioner Brubaker said that even if the new proposal is not accepted, there still needs to be a process that opens the opportunity to other non-profits. She wants to know about the priority of the Executive Director to make trips to Los Angeles to promote San Francisco as a filming destination since she sees this as very important.

Executive Director Robbins said she checked with the Film Commission's accountant and it was determined that separate from Film House, there is enough money to make a minimum of six trips a year to Los Angeles.

Commissioner Rubin asked if anyone from the Film Society could give testimony on this issue. He wants to know what the new Film House would do in terms of fostering filmmakers as opposed to the Film Collective.

Michele Turnure-Salleo, Director of the Film Society's Filmmaker 360 program, introduced herself and said she is in charge of grants, residencies and project development. She explained that the Kenneth Rainin Foundation provides a majority of the funding to Film House. The Kenneth Rainin Foundation's mission is to uplift the Bay Area professionally and economically and through the narrative of feature films. As for the program, she explained that if one is in the screen writing part of the program, the tenant would need to have local screenwriters, script consultants and local actors as part of the project; if someone is in the production phase, one would need to spend 60% of the funds on Bay Area personnel, services and equipment; if it's post-production, 80% of the funds have to be spent on or in the Bay Area. Turnure-Salleo said this mandate has been applied to the new Film House thinking the Bay Area filmmaking community would benefit from having someone from another part of the world come here and share their experience. She thinks it would expose the





filmmaker to the City. Ms. Turnure-Salleo said people are starting to say that things are happening in San Francisco around filmmaking. She thinks Film House will fulfill this mandate by the Kenneth Rainin Foundation.

Commissioner Canady asked if this is the only grant Film House is receiving.

Ms. Turnure-Salleo said this is the only grant that Film House is receiving. The grant provides \$650,000 in narrative feature grants to filmmakers who uplift the Bay Area professionally and economically and explore social issues. They have supported 8 new programs that she designed for feature filmmakers that have the same criteria.

Executive Director Robbins asked Ms. Turnure-Salleo if Film House did not receive the funding from the Film Commission, would Film House be able to continue.

Ms. Turnure-Salleo said they would need to do a different version of the program without the funds. She thinks the program is better and stronger when the three organizations are in it together.

Ms. Turnure-Salleo said she and Executive Director Robbins have been looking at spaces since last year for the program. They have been working with a Real Estate agent in the Fillmore district and found a 10,000 square foot space that was too big. The realtor cut the space in half and offered it at a rate of \$1.50. He also completed all the renovations to improve it. Ms. Turnure-Salleo said it was a good location since the festival is in the neighborhood.

Vice President Bradley Tyson said she is hearing about how worthwhile it is to continue the partnership. However, she said the agenda item is about considering an action to discontinue funding to Film House because of the loss of Pier 27 and the new space would be leased from a private owner. She thought the issue was a geographical issue not how worthwhile the partnership has been.

Executive Director Robbins said it was Commissioner Saritzky's comment in her letter that made all consider this aspect.

Commissioner Bratt said he thinks what the Film Society is doing is revolutionary. He says there is an excitement about what is going on at the Film Society in the independent filmmaker world. He mentioned that when former Mayor Newsom appointed this board, there was a vision that included supporting the Film Society and aligning with this organization. The original charge was to nurture local filmmakers but also bring in new filmmakers from around the world. Commissioner Bratt thinks it's important to continue this mission. He thinks it's a great opportunity for all. He thinks it's a small amount of money to further this vision. He said he would be willing along with Commissioner Saritzky to try to come up with solutions around this issue.

Executive Director Robbins said as the Director of the Film Commission, it is her job to support San Francisco





filmmaking, not Marin, not Oakland or South Bay filmmaking. The San Francisco Film Commission is here to support San Francisco.

Commissioner Bratt asked wants to know where is the line drawn regarding supporting San Francisco filmmaking.

Executive Director Robbins says it's difficult since with regards to a wage rebate she is working on, she can only report wages for those folks who live in San Francisco so she has to look at economic impacts for San Francisco.

Commissioner Canady said the other film commissions in the area are focused on their city. He understands that Executive Director Robbins has the responsibility to San Francisco and no other areas.

Commissioner Wang said that she doesn't think it's about not supporting Film House, the Film Society or the partnership. She thinks Film House is a giant asset to the film community. Commissioner Wang said she thinks because of the moving of the location of Film House, it's causing a catalyst for the issues with the funding. The question to her was how to invest the money and wants to understand the options. She added that the budget to Film House of \$24,000 per year is not a lot but in the context of the Film Commission budget, it might be. She also asks what is the impact to the investment at Film House? Would there be a negative impact if funds discontinued? She feels she would need more information to make a decision although supports the partnership.

City Attorney Adine Varah said the \$2,000 was going from one city fund to another (Film Commission to the Port) to defray expenses of the lease for Film Society. Now that the Film Society has moved and rents from a private owner, there is \$2,000 a month that once was for the purpose of helping to defray costs of a lease for organizations that support filmmaking. She said an option might be to establish a grant program that offers \$24,000 a year for an organization that meets the minimum qualifications for the grant. The Film Society would presumably be an organization that would apply for the grant but there wouldn't be a guarantee that they would receive the grant. Another option would be to lease another space which would mean talking to the Department of Real Estate and the City Attorney's Office. She added that there are now more constraints on how to release that money to third parties and that the money given to the Port for this purpose can no longer be given to the Port. Ms. Varah said it's is now important to figure out how to best use the \$2,000 per month that was set aside for this purpose.

Commissioner Wang said she thinks there aren't concrete choices on how to invest that money.

Vice President Bradley Tyson said she would like to make a motion to authorize the Executive Director and members of the Film Commission (only less than a quorum) to meet with the City Attorney and Department of Real Estate to explore funding and support alternatives for the Film House Residency program or similar programs in light of available facilities and current city requirements.





Commissioner Rubin seconded the motion.

Commissioner Canady thinks he doesn't have enough information to make a decision about this. He would like to know what the Film Society is doing to increase visibility of the Film Commission via this program. He wants to know if he can make this a better partnership.

Commissioner Rubin asked if there was a time constraint regarding this decision.

Ms. Turnure-Salleo said there is a time constraint since there is a board meeting occurring on Monday, April 2. The proposal has gone to the finance committee and will be passed along to the full Board. Furthermore, the realtor is holding the space but has other interested parties.

Commissioner Rubin asked to clarify that if the Commission doesn't authorize the \$2,000, the space cannot be rented by the Film Society?

Ms. Turnure-Salleo said this wasn't the case. However, her ideal scenario is for all the parties to come together on the program. If a decision was not made today then they would still move on with the program in a more limited form. She mentioned if the funds were not granted, then Film House could not be staffed properly and there would be a reduction in staff time. They would also need to limit the number of programs. Most importantly, to her, was the loss of partnership.

Commissioner Rubin said he needs more information to make a vote.

Ms. Turnure-Salleo said she can move forward and adjust accordingly as things change.

City Attorney Adine Varah clarified that the Commission will not be voting to give a particular organization money. The vote would be on how to use this money for a particular purpose by establishing a grant program with which the Film Society could apply. She said the City Attorney's office would help advise the Commission on the options in conjunction with the Commission's policy goals.

Commissioner Bratt asked Ms. Turnure-Salleo if it was possible that all spaces could be filled by San Francisco filmmakers.

Ms. Turnure-Salleo said there are 10-12 spaces available. She added that the priority is to look at grant alumni who are Bay Area or San Francisco filmmakers. Some grant winners are from other parts of the country but are shooting here. However, she added that all 10-12 spaces could be filled by Bay Area or San Francisco





filmmakers. As for guarantees, the Film Commission's contribution would signify two guaranteed spots to San Francisco filmmakers. She added the Film House Residency program is in San Francisco and fulfills the San Francisco component for the Rainin Foundation. She thinks the San Francisco impact, professionally and financially, is sound.

Commissioner Wang asked what the total budget of the project is.

Ms. Turnure-Salleo said it's \$133,000 of which the Commission's contribution would be \$24,000. This amount includes everything such as IT, insurance, furniture and staff.

Commissioner Bratt said when he started on the Commission that there was a perception that San Francisco was a very unfriendly filming place. He thought the perception was that it was too expensive and permits were difficult to obtain. He thinks this program helps change the perception about filming in San Francisco.

Commissioner Canady said that the Commissioners need to be fiscally responsible for the money being spent.

Vice President Bradley Tyson said she is in favor of continuing to support the Film House Residency project if there is a way to determine it can work. She asked City Attorney Adine Varah if the Commission is in a position to vote.

City Attorney Adine Varah said the Commission does not have the authority to authorize \$2,000 a month on the Film House Residency project at this meeting.

Commissioner Rubin moved to vote. All were in favor; none were opposed.

Commissioner Wang left after the vote at 2:55pm. There is no longer a quorum.

City Attorney Adine Varah clarified that the next agenda item would not have a quorum so no action can be taken on it. However, a discussion can occur.

Vice President Bradley Tyson asked for public comment.

Michael Messmer said he does not live in San Francisco but shot his entire film in San Francisco and is curious whether if the next agenda item relies on the decision of this agenda item.

Commissioner Canady said they couldn't answer the question since they do not have a quorum for the next agenda item.





SF FILM COLLECTIVE AT 134A GOLDEN GATE AVENUE

Vice President Bradley Tyson reiterated this agenda item does not have a quorum. However, a discussion can take place about the item.

Executive Director Robbins said the Commission started the Collective last year to support local filmmakers while Film House was on hiatus. As of April 1, 10 of the 11 spaces have been rented. The only space remaining is a 2,000 square foot space. There are events going on at the Collective on a regular basis. The landlord is paid whatever the Commission takes in minus the expenses of janitorial and electricity. The landlord is hoping that the total rent will be \$5,000 per month. The landlord is interested in continuing the lease for another year provided the total rent would be \$5,000 per month. As of April 1, the rent will be short \$2,170 of the total he would like. One idea is to subdivide the space with 10 cubicles at \$100 per month. She thinks the Film Collective is more in line with the original intention of the Film House project. She said at the next meeting, she will present the Film Collective lease extension.

Commissioner Brubaker thinks that the Commission would be abandoning these people since there was so much work put into it. She would like to know if funds could go to both projects or have the grant be less than \$24,000.

Vice President Bradley Tyson said this would be evaluated per the motion that was approved.

Commissioner Canady said this has been a great success and Executive Director Robbins is doing a great job.

Executive Director Robbins gave credit to Filming Supervisor Christine Munday who has been instrumental in this project.

Jager McConnell, founder of Scary Cow (a film educational organization), said the Film Collective has become very critical to the existence of the organization. He said over 1,000 Bay Area filmmakers (70% from San Francisco) come through the program who are making films. Over 5,000 actors and actresses come to Scary Cow. They are doing pitch meetings, auditions and production meetings at the Collective and would like to see funding continue in the future.

Dina Hilliard, a tenant at the Film Collective, at a community based organization said this program has changed the neighborhood. Before the Film Collective, there wasn't any activity in the area. Now on a given day, 15-20 people are walking in and out of the space creating positive foot traffic. She thinks it's important to the film world as well as an improvement to the neighborhood. She supports the continuation of the program.

Chris Thomas of Potluck Productions, a tenant at the Film Collective, said he supports the program and that he is having a great time in the space. They use it for rehearsals, auditions and production meetings. He thinks the Film Collective is changing the neighborhood for the better and would like to thank Susannah and Christine for





their efforts.

Michael Messmer said subdividing the available open room would degrade the value of the space. He thinks it's nice to have an open space for screenings and meetings.

Executive Director Robbins clarified that the open space that opens to the outside would be left for screening and meetings. However, the second open space closer to the entrance would possibly be subdivided.

Ms. Turnure-Salleo said Film House provided free space for filmmakers. After Film House, filmmakers would form a community with their fellow residents and when they were kicked out to be replaced by a new set of filmmakers, they would come to her and ask her to find a low cost space for filmmakers. She thanked the Commission for providing a space for them because it is needed. She thinks it's possible to see these models complement each other.

Commissioner Rubin said that he doesn't want to discourage filmmakers. He wants to support the community and encourage the lines of supporting both.

Commissioner Canady is happy to hear feedback, concerns and what the Commission can do to help the community.

Shion Shankle said she is a homeowner and in line to get an office at the Film Collective. She is supportive of it and would like the Commission to support it.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT (DISCUSSION ONLY)

Vice President Bradley Tyson asked for more public comment.

ADJOURNMENT (ACTION ITEM)

Vice President Bradley Tyson asked for a motion. Commissioner Brubaker made a motion; Commissioner Rubin seconded. Public comment was taken. The Commission approved the motion unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 3:15pm.

