



MINUTES OF THE APRIL 22, 2013 MEETING

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

CALL TO ORDER

President Marlene Sharon Saritzky called the meeting to order at 2:00pm.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present:
Villy Wang
Marlene Sharon Saritzky
Jon Rubin
Don Canady
Robert Morales
Denise Bradley-Tyson
Melanie Blum
Peter Bratt

Commissioners Absent:
PJ Johnston
Lorrae Rominger

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE FEBRUARY 25, 2013 MEETING (ACTION ITEM)

Commissioner Canady made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 25, 2013 meeting. Commissioner Bradley-Tyson seconded the motion. Commissioner comment and public comment was taken. The minutes were unanimously approved.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT (DISCUSSION ONLY)

President Saritzky announced that the 56th San Francisco International Film Festival begins this Thursday and that the opening film is *What Maisie Knew*. The Film Commission will be co-hosting a screening of *Big Sur* on Sunday April 28th as well as the documentary *Inequality for All*. The Film Commission will be acknowledged on through posters, the website and on-stage. President Saritzky then thanked Commissioner Brubaker for her service to the Film Commission and the film community, and stated that a replacement Commissioner had not yet been announced but would be in the near future. She then asked for Commission comment. Commissioner Canady reiterated President Saritzky's admiration of Commissioner Brubaker's contributions. Public comment was taken.



STAFF REPORT (DISCUSSION ONLY)

Executive Director Robbins showed a clip from the film *Stable Life* made by Sarah McPherson, a former resident of the Film House and a current member of the Film Collective, that has been entered in several film festivals, awarded multiple prizes, and recognized by various film groups. President Saritzky then recalled meeting Sarah earlier. Commissioner Bradley-Tyson inquired about how the SF Film Commission was recognizing the film, to which Executive Director Robbins replied that there should be a logo from the film office at the end of the film.

Executive Director Robbins announced that the City had 51 permits with 133 shooting days. This shows a 30% increase in permits from 39 last month, as well as a 101% increase in shooting days from 66 days last month. It also shows a 92% increase in permits from 36 last year, as well as a 92% increase in shooting days from 69 days last year. The City's big filming projects were an HBO pilot, *Need for Speed*, eBay, BMW, NBC's *About a Boy*, and Pottery Barn's still photo shoot. HBO successfully completed 8 days of filming their new pilot, the Untitled Michael Lannon project and were very happy with their shoot in SF. Executive Producer Robbins reported that she spoke on set with Sarah Condon, their Executive Producer on the 2nd to last day of filming, and that she said they were all so happy filming here. Condon was reported to have said their crew was excellent, and the cast really benefited from being here in SF and that the City itself was a strong character in the film. The production will know by the end of May whether the series is picked up, and they have expressed interest in filming the entire series in San Francisco this Fall if it is picked up. In order to secure this, Executive Director Robbins is working on finding stage space with the Real Estate Department for the production to use. Additionally, there has been successful interaction between HBO and the First Source Hiring Program this time. In the past, producers have reported that the program presented more problems than it was worth, and because of that, Executive Director Robbins met with Lillie Ellison, the new person heading First Source. Executive Director Robbins got Lillie connected with BAYCAT, as the biggest issue seemed to be that the people being provided didn't have the work ethic required to work on a production. BAYCAT provided two First Source workers who did an excellent job. The report review stated that BAYCAT/First Source hires Latiece "was thorough, good with detail and a pleasure to be around," and Bryan "was a fine choice; he worked on-set and had quite the hustle that was needed for that environment." (Bryan was a set Production Assistant and Latiece was an office Production Assistant). Executive Director Robbins announced that a Discovery Channel program had recently applied for the rebate program and that she hoped to connect them with BAYCAT.

Executive Director Robbins continued stating that she and Filming Coordinator Lauren Machado traveled to Los Angeles last week to attend the California Film Commission's Producer's Brunch, as well as to have meetings. There were 190 producers at the brunch. There was a table with rebate information in the lobby to give to producers. They were seated at a table during brunch with producers from Fox, Epic and an independent film maker named Sonya Lunsford, who has a smaller independent film she wants to bring to SF within the upcoming year. She reported learning at the event that San Francisco is one of only two municipalities in California to offer a rebate program to productions. Executive Director Robbins met with a producer at Disney who's working on a film called *Ocean Beach* which she had found on the Studio System software more than 8 months ago. The film is still in development, and it looks like their shoot has been pushed to next summer in 2014. But it looks like it could be an exciting police drama which could either shoot for 5 – 7 days in San Francisco, or if they get the California State tax incentive in June 2014, would combine with the rebate and shoot the whole film here. Filming Coordinator Lauren Machado met with students and faculty at AFI and UCLA to tell them about our rebate program. She encouraged students to come to San Francisco and use the rebate program, and she explained the permitting process. Lauren reported that the students were excited to learn about this. In the future, she will be in charge of reaching out to universities with strong film programs in order to inform them about incentives for filming in San Francisco.

Executive Director Robbins reported that the San Francisco Film Commission has been asked by OEWD to participate in OpenCo during Innovation Month in October. OpenCo is a mix between a business conference and an open artists' studio. The Film Office has been invited to participate in OpenCo by creating a "playlist" of events that participants in OpenCo might want to partake in. Executive Director Robbins discussed many ideas

which include a panel to discuss film (raising money, distributing your film, etc). She mentioned that she had contacted Ted Hope with the San Francisco Film Festival about this idea and that he is interested in helping out. She announced that she is interested in the ideas of the Commission and the public for this event.

Executive Director Robbins reported that there have been issues recently between neighborhood and merchant associations and productions. Recently there have been two occurrences with these associations. One of these, with the Jackson Street Merchant's Association occurred when a producer did not distribute film notices before filming begun: Executive Director Robbins reported that this is rarely an issue but that this location manager had misunderstood this process. In order to allay the issue, she attended a recent association meeting, and apologized assured the group that this would not happen again. In the future, the film office will be sure to clarify with location managers that this notification is their responsibility. Commissioner Canady noted that Commissioners used to go to association meetings in order to demonstrate their commitment to these organizations, and asked if this practice should be resurrected in areas where there have been issues. Executive Director Robbins responded that this would be helpful and that most areas are not problematic, though the Potrero Hill area has been particularly resistant to filming in their neighborhood recently—which might be related to the fact that there are many other popular events that happen in their area. The association has been asking for very high donations to their association, and so Executive Director Robbins will be meeting with the head of the association soon to talk about these issues, and invited any other Commissioners to attend as well. Commissioner Canady reiterated that it can be comforting to these associations that Commissioners should attend. Executive Director Robbins agreed, noting that she had had a very pleasant experience with the Jackson Street Merchant's Association.

President Saritzky asked for Commission comment.

Commissioner Canady voiced concerns about a lack of involvement of the gay/lesbian community in the HBO project. He reported that they are excited about this production, but that they are concerned that the show does not accurately portray their community because it is not filmed in the Castro neighborhood. Executive Director Robbins commented that only one episode has been filmed and that she expects that if the show is picked up they will use a wider variety of locations. She also expressed concern that involving community leaders in the project might make HBO feel as though they are being presented with another hurdle to filming. Commissioner Canady replied that the goal would instead be to showcase the merchants and businesses in the series in a way that people can visit the places they see in the show and have them be the way they are portrayed in the series. He also reiterated that the gay and lesbian community is excited about this series but would feel excluded if they were not involved in the project. Commissioner Bratt interjected with the comment that often these decisions are economic and that it can be expensive to film in popular areas. Commissioner Canady replied that he understands these considerations. Executive Director Robbins stated that the two bars where HBO filmed were in the Mission District but were, in fact, gay bars.

Commissioner Bradley-Tyson asked about the OpenCo event as an opportunity to revisit discussions with the San Francisco Travel Association about organizing a tour for possible film makers in the City. Executive Director Robbins replied that she would look into that possibility. Commissioner Bradley-Tyson then asked if this event was scheduled around the same time as the artists' Open Studio. President Saritzky replied that she believed they were around the same time. Executive Director Robbins explained that OpenCo is intended to become an annual event, and would become a San Francisco version of Austin's South by Southwest. She continued that the project is still small and centered around the mid-Market street area, but that it couldn't hurt to mention Open Studio at this event for those who would want to attend.

Commissioner Wang proposed that OpenCo could be an intersection of technology, creativity and film on the theme of doing well and doing well. This could be centered on a push for independent filming as well as social enterprise. This could involve TechSF and its support for the creative community. She offered that she would be interested in participating in the development of this idea. She concluded by thanking the film office and Commission for the meet-up between First Source and BAYCAT because the interns at BAYCAT so greatly benefitted from their experience with the HBO project. Executive Director Robbins volunteered that she had

talked with the Film House and Film Collective about having a venue where participants would be able to screen their films to the public in order to show off film-makers that the City supports.

President Saritzky asked for a clarification of the fact that San Francisco is, in fact, one of only two municipalities in the state that offer economic incentives to productions. Executive Director Robbins confirmed this, stating that Santa Clarita was the only other municipality with a rebate program, and that the only other financial incentive was that FilmLA did not charge productions for the use of publicly-owned buildings for filming. She then emphasized that the rebate program is very helpful when contacting productions and encouraging them to film in San Francisco. President Saritzky inquired about whether any more thought had been put into exploring an amendment to the rebate legislation to allow the rebate to include rental of privately-owned locations for filming when City-owned ones are not available. Executive Director Robbins replied that she is waiting for the Controller's office to finish a report on this.

President Bradley-Tyson inquired about whether or not waiving use fees made an impact on where people choose to film. Executive Director Robbins replied that she didn't believe it made a meaningful difference because it was not a big enough draw.

President Saritzky asked for public comment.

SF FILM COLLECTIVE AT 134A GOLDEN GATE AVENUE

President Saritzky announced that action could be taken to authorize the Executive Director in consultation with the City Attorney's Office to include funding in the Fiscal Year 2013-2014 proposed budget for the San Francisco Film Collective to negotiate and finalize a lease agreement and guarantee up to \$5,000 for the rent of this space. Executive Director Robbins explained that \$5,000 is what is owed to the landlord each month, and so this would only be relevant if the Film Commission had to for some reason pay the rent of all the residents if they disappeared. She stated that there are many Film Collective members who are greatly benefitting from this space and that she believed this is an important program to continue. She explained that the oversight of this residence has been mostly without issue and that the film office does not have a great presence there. She clarified that while the landlord is willing to extend the offer of this lease for another year he would like written into the contract for the next year the ability to give two-months' notice to the residents. Commissioner Blum asked how long the lease on the Tenderloin Development is. Executive Director Robbins replied that their lease extends until June 30th of each Fiscal Year, and that they are looking to extend this another year. Blum followed up with a question about whether or not the Commission would be able to fill these spaces at the same rent level if the residents in fact decided to relocate, and Executive Director Robbins replied that there is a waiting list for this residency. In response to this, Commissioner Bradley-Tyson inquired about raising the rent at this location in order to decrease the current operating deficit of around \$1,400. Executive Director Robbins answered that this option could be explored but emphasized the importance of financially supporting the independent film community. President Saritzky agreed but stressed the importance of considering all the options. Commissioner Canady replied that it is important to balance being fiscally responsible with support for this community. Commissioner Morales voiced support for keeping rent as low as possible. President Saritzky clarified that there is no interest in making a profit on this operation, but that it is important to strive for a balanced budget.

President Saritzky asked for a motion to extend the lease for one more year. Commissioner Bratt made a motion for this and Commissioner Morales seconded the motion. Commissioner Bradley-Tyson encouraged the idea of exploring the possibility of changing the rent to a level that is higher but not prohibitive, especially to the ends of having more marketing funds. Commissioner Rubin expressed his agreement with Commissioner Morales on this issue, and added that his experience as a filmmaker has made him appreciate the importance of saving money where possible. Commissioner Canady highlighted the importance of balance on this issue.

President Saritzky asked for public comment.

A member of the public, Michael Mezmer, who is also a member of Scary Cow (the Independent Film Collective), expressed the benefit that he gets as an independent filmmaker from the office space subsidized by the City.

President Saritzky called for a vote on the issue of including \$5,000 for the support of the Film Collective in the FY2013-2014 budget. Motion passed unanimously. President Saritzky thanked Executive Director Robbins for the effort she has put into this project.

President Saritzky asked for Commission comment.

Commissioner Canady thanked the Film Office for their work to support to the film community.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT (DISCUSSION ONLY)

President Saritzky asked for public comment.

A member of the public, Peter Kwong, also a location scout, voiced concerns about the McKinley Square Foundation and the Vermont Square SAFE Group. He spoke about two encounters during which the associations were not only hostile to filming in their area but also expected donations of several thousand dollars from productions that work in the area. Peter expressed that he works with many associations and finds them to be helpful and welcoming. He encourages his productions to donate to associations. However, the aforementioned associations are prohibitive. He stated that the McKinley Square Foundation and the Vermont Square SAFE Group also feel that they have veto power over the allowing filming and parking in the area even under circumstances where a production is working under all the rules of the San Francisco Film Commission and the City. He added that this is worrisome for producers that want to work in the area, and that he would warn them in the future that this is a problematic association to work with. He concluded by thanking the City for their help with the filming process, and explained that he and his associates try to be respectful and appreciative of these employees as well as the members of neighborhood and merchant associations. President Saritzky and Commissioner Morales expressed concern over this issue, and Executive Director Robbins reiterated that she had already set up a future meeting with the association to talk about these issues. Commissioner Canady thanked Peter for raising this issue and apologized for the inconvenience.

ADJOURNMENT (ACTION ITEM)

President Saritzky asked for a motion. Commissioner Bratt made a motion; all Commissioners seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 3:15pm.