



MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 25, 2014 MEETING - DRAFT

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

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present:

Melanie Blum
Denise Bradley-Tyson
PJ Johnston
Matt Stiker
Jon Rubin
Peter Bratt
Marlene Sharon Saritzky

Commissioners Excused:

Don Canady
Mark Fishkin
Villy Wang

Absent:

Robert Morales

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE MAY 27, 2014 MEETING (ACTION ITEM)

President Bradley-Tyson asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the May 27th, 2014 meeting. Commissioner Stiker made the motion and Commissioner Johnston seconded the motion. Commissioner comment and public comment was taken. The minutes were approved.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT (DISCUSSION ONLY)

President Bradley-Tyson begins by expressing deep sadness within the San Francisco Film Commission over the passing of Robin Williams. She read a press release from the Film Commission office released August 14th, 2014. President Bradley-Tyson thanked Commissioner Saritzky for drafting the note and Lauren Machado for distributing the note.

President Bradley-Tyson continues by reporting on her recent trip to Wuhan, China on behalf of the City and



County of San Francisco. Tyson mentions how the trip was a good opportunity to see how beloved Mayor Ed Lee and his wife Anita Lee are in China. Anita Lee attended the trip. Executive Director Susannah Greason Robbins was unable to make the trip, so President Denise Bradley-Tyson went on her behalf. The trip was a follow-up to a Mayor's Conference Mayor Lee had attended with the Mayor of Wuhan in November 2013. Film production was identified as a good opportunity to form partnerships between the two cities.

Tyson explains how Wuhan is similar to Chicago in that it is a central location with Beijing on one side and Shanghai on the other. There are about 11 or 12 million people in Wuhan and the city may absorb some suburban areas which could push their population above 20 million people. She says that the amount of development going on in Wuhan is exponential and cranes can be seen all over the city.

The delegation, comprising Miriam Chen, Benjamin Sun, Anita Lee, and President Bradley-Tyson was received by Wuhan Radio and Television, one of the largest television stations in China. The station hosted a roundtable discussion which appeared on the news that night and in a newspaper the next day. The trip coincided with Wuhan hosting 11 Bay Area mayors from cities including Vallejo, East Palo Alto and Menlo Park to explore partnerships between the Bay Area cities and Wuhan's Optics Valley, a region similar to Silicon Valley. Additionally, as part of the trip, the delegation met with the president and senior faculty members of one of China's largest universities, Wuhan University.

The purpose of the trip was to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the City and County of San Francisco and the city of Wuhan regarding cultural partnerships, cooperation, and exchange. The MOU outlines support for establishing a film academy in Wuhan and a practical training center in San Francisco. The MOU was written by the Mayor's Office of San Francisco and hand delivered by President Bradley-Tyson. The MOU was signed by President Bradley-Tyson and the Chief of Staff of the Mayor of Wuhan, and lasts for 5 years from the date of which it was signed, unless extended by the parties. President Bradley-Tyson read the MOU and stated that the biggest challenges ahead will be financing and finding an appropriate space with which to build. She said that there will be an opportunity for the commissioners to become involved in the process.

President Bradley-Tyson asked Executive Director Susannah Robbins to weigh in. Executive Director Robbins explained that San Francisco is waiting to see what Wuhan's next steps are. She explained that there are time and staffing considerations that factor into the understanding between the two cities and acknowledged that San Francisco has had a tough time creating its own production space.

Commissioner Stiker asked President Bradley-Tyson whether ChinaSF was involved in coordinating this trip. President Bradley-Tyson and Executive Director Robbins could not recall whether ChinaSF had been involved, but indicated that they have been introduced by ChinaSF. Executive Director Robbins said that the trip was initiated through Mrs. Lee and her connections in China. Commissioner Striker said they might have access to resources that the SF Film Office does not currently have.

President Bradley-Tyson continued by reaffirming that Mayor Lee feels strongly about the commitment and obligation of commissioners to attend their commission meetings. There is a copy of the memo in each commissioner's notebook.

President Bradley-Tyson transitions to the topic of the Friends of the San Francisco Film Commission. Commissioner Blum, Commissioner Wang, Executive Director Robbins, and President Bradley-Tyson attended a kickoff fundraiser for the Friends of the San Francisco Film Commission. Executive Director Robbins informs the commission that she conferred with the City Attorney's office and since this topic was left off the agenda, it cannot be discussed at the meeting.

President Bradley-Tyson moves on to speak about the successes of the rallies at the Fairmont and most recently in Sacramento. She commended Executive Director Robbins for her leadership in bringing together the film community across California in support of AB 1839.

Commissioner Rubin asked Executive Director Robbins whether the Friends of the San Francisco Film Commission meeting were a success. Executive Director Robbins said that it was a success and provides a good starting point.

President Bradley-Tyson concludes her report and asks for questions from the commissioners. Commissioner Blum asks for clarification on the intent of the memorandum of understanding between Wuhan and the City and County of San Francisco. Executive Director Robbins explained that the intent of the MOU was to establish film academies in Wuhan and the City and County of San Francisco as well as a 2 year training program at a facility in San Francisco. President Bradley-Tyson indicated that it may be more realistic to look at existing production facilities for the training program instead of building one from the ground up. Commissioner Blum asks for clarification on the origin of the MOU, to which Executive Director Robbins replied that it was the idea of Miriam, a local businesswoman in San Francisco, and Ben, from China. She elaborates that Miriam and Ben brought the idea to Mrs. Lee, who in turn brought it to Executive Director Robbins.

Commissioner Johnston shares that typically these MOUs are the base framework for a good idea, often getting the ball rolling on developing relationships. He stated that it sounds like most of the resources will be committed from Wuhan. Executive Director Robbins confirmed that no City and County of San Francisco resources will be committed at this point. Instead the MOU serves as an expression of support.

Commissioner Blum asked whether the commissioners on the San Francisco Film Commission need to be aware of the MOU prior to signing. Executive Director Robbins clarified that the signing of the MOU represents a commitment for the City and County of San Francisco, not specifically for the Film Commission. President Bradley-Tyson shares that she was presented with a much more detailed MOU on the morning of the signing; however, she indicated that she was not authorized to sign that document. She was only authorized to sign the document she brought to Wuhan.

President Bradley-Tyson asks for any other questions or public comment. There was none.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT (DISCUSSION ONLY)

Executive Director Susannah Robbins begins her report by mentioning how this is the first August meeting held by the commission since she started this job 4 years ago.

She continues by presenting recent statistics from the Film Office. Between the end of May and the end of August, we had 146 permits with 346 shooting days, totaling \$73,200 in permit fees. Last year during the same period, we had 141 permits, with 200 shooting days, totaling \$41,814 in permit fees. This constitutes a 3.5% increase in the number of permits, a 73% increase in shooting days, and a 75% increase in permit fees. She outlined the details of the major productions shooting in San Francisco since the last meeting. Netflix's *Sense8*, created by the Wachowski's (*The Matrix*, *Cloud Atlas*, and the upcoming *Jupiter Ascending*) shot 2 episodes during the Pride Parade and Dyke March. *San Andreas*, starring The Rock, shot for 14 days between first and second unit. There was a lot of press about *San Andreas*, and in the end, the Film Office and the press received very positive feedback from the Russian Hill neighborhood. *Terminator 5*, which finished filming today, had 4 second unit days and 20 visual effects days. Production for *Terminator 5* is great for the San Francisco, with the crew staying at the Fairmont, renting production offices there, dining out, and spending locally. Lastly, *Ant-Man*, a Marvel Comics film, will wrap up shooting tomorrow, totaling 9 days. The visual effects team will be in San Francisco for more days. Executive Director Robbins applauded the production for hiring extras from the Tenderloin neighborhood.

Upcoming productions include season 2 of HBO's *Looking*, which will shoot 9 episodes beginning in mid-September, and *Age of Adaline*, which is shooting primarily in Vancouver because of the tax credit, but will shoot 4 days in San Francisco during September.

Executive Director Robbins continues with an update on finding stage space for productions. She mentioned that Shed D at Pier 80 was identified as a possible location for *Looking*, but was determined to be incompatible due to level of structural disrepair and the level of seagull noise. Shed A became a possibility as the America's Cup scaled back their footprint; however the production was concerned with losing their pace of shooting if they had to share the space with America's Cup. Jeff Smith, the owner of 2000 Folsom, called Executive Director Robbins about how the new owners of the Old Jessica McClintock building at 16th Street and De Haro might be interested in allowing a production to utilize the space on an interim basis. Last week, the leases were signed and the production moved in. The biggest challenges at this location are low ceilings and coordinating parking with SFMTA.

Executive Director Susannah Robbins informs the commission about the rally to show support for AB 1839, the bill to expand the CA State Film Tax Credit. The rally was held on June 14th, 2014 at the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco. Over 500 people attended the rally and 800 total letters were signed, 400 to Senator Wolk and 400 to Governor Brown. There was a strong presence on social media with photos and videos being posted on Facebook and Twitter. Danny Glover was the keynote speaker, while other speakers included Assemblymembers Bocanegra and Gatto, Supervisors Chiu and Farrell. Executive Director Robbins described how exciting it was to see the energy from the people on board to making AB 1839 a reality. On June 25th, the bill went before the Senate Governance and Finance Committee passing 6-0 with one abstention by Senator Wolk. The abstention is significant because Senator Wolk usually votes no.

Mobilization Day was held during last week on the Capital Lawn in Sacramento. It was a two-hour event that attracted more than 300 attendees. The event drew vendors, film commissioners, and representatives from organizations like SAG-AFTRA, IATSE, the Directors Guild of America, the Teamsters, the IBEW, and the American Federation of Musicians. The crew of *Pretty Little Liars*, one of the shows receiving the tax credit allowing them to remain in California, demonstrated hair, makeup, and green screen technology. Speakers included Assemblymembers Bocanegra, Gatto, and Levine, Senate President Pro Tem-elect Kevin de Leon, actors Ron Perlman, Carl Weathers, and Daniel Stern. Executive Director Susannah Robbins, President Bradley-Tyson, and other representatives from film commissions within California, including Janice Arrington who leads the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI), each held a poster from a major motion picture that was filmed in California. Each poster had a statistic of how many jobs the movie created in the region it was filmed as well as the local economic impact to that region. Executive Director Robbins explained that the bill is expected to pass very soon and will quadruple the size of the annual allocation to \$400 million. After passed in the senate, the bill will go before Governor Brown. There will be another letter writing campaign and Executive Director Robbins urges each commissioner to write a letter in support of the bill. She elaborated that San Francisco will likely see an increase in production if the bill passes.

Commissioner Johnston asks for the expected time frame for passing the bill in the Senate. Executive Director Robbins says the bill is expected to pass in the next few days and then Governor Brown has 30 days to sign it into law.

Executive Director Robbins transitions into the topic of the Film Commission's new advertising campaign on SFMTA buses. Commissioner Stiker reached out to Teak Digital to help with the campaign, which consists of 1000 interior placards, 5 king, 5 queen, and 5 tail ads circulating around the city. Executive Director Robbins thanks Commissioners Wong and Stiker for spearheading the creation and content of the advertisements. The Film Office is working on an assessment of the ads with the help of a survey put together by Next Steps Marketing, which came to the Film Office with a pro bono offer. The purpose of the survey is to gauge the perception of filming in San Francisco and to measure how many people observed the advertisements. The Film Office is in the process of finalizing the contents of the survey. The survey will be distributed to the neighborhood associations and then disseminated to their constituents.

Commissioner Stiker asked Executive Director Robbins if SF Travel would be willing to send the survey to its members. Executive Director Robbins said that is a great idea.

Executive Director Robbins concludes her report and fielded questions and comments from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Rubin mentions that he received numerous phone calls from constituents living in the area where *San Andreas* was being filmed. The constituents were unimpressed by the filming and cynical about all the things that were going to be done to alleviate their distress. Commissioner Rubin continues by asking about a situation created by a notice that was distributed by the production. Executive Director Robbins responds by explaining the standard process for developing and approving outreach leaflets for a neighborhood. The usual process is the leaflet gets approved by the Film Office and then distributed to the neighborhoods. In this case, the location assistant for the production issued the leaflet too early and did not get approval from the Film Office. Executive Director Robbins said that the notice was confusing and not well-written. After the strong reaction to the notice, things were straightened out and the production understood that nothing goes out to the public without approval from the Film Office.

Commissioner Rubin notes that it was unfortunate who complained because that person is an effective advocate. He sums up his comment by saying that once the constituents understood what was actually happening, and once the production took place, the constituents were not upset. Commissioner Rubin advises Executive Director Robbins that the lesson to be learned here is to alert the productions well beforehand that all notices must get approval from the Film Office. Executive Director Robbins responds by illustrating that Film Office approval of notices is already a part of the permit process. Commissioner Saritzky agreed that this has never been an issue in the past.

Commissioner Rubin suggests that there be language included in the permit application regarding the approval and distribution of leaflets and notices. Executive Director Robbins and Commissioner Saritzky respond that it already is already included in the permit application.

Commissioner Johnston offers his perspective as a former member of the Film Office. He explains that similar situations occurred during the filming of *Nash Bridges* on Treasure Island. He continues that the procedures for approving leaflets and notices are spelled out in the permit application and nothing needs to be amended to make the process more clear. Instead, Commissioner Johnson suggests that eager productions sometimes engage in behavior that is not aligned with the terms in the signed permit application. At that point, the Film Office can either mop up the mess or shut down the production in San Francisco, and we almost always prefer to mop up the mess. This often reflects negatively on the Film Office and upsets some people.

Executive Director Robbins expressed that this situation is unfortunate because complaints usually come directly to the Film Office. Instead, Executive Director Robbins received calls from the Mayor's Office and from the San Francisco Chronicle. She did not have an opportunity to explain that the notice was not approved prior to distribution and that residents are always allowed into their homes during filming.

Commissioner Rubin jokes that maybe we can make that part of the permit larger. Commissioner Blum suggests that we cannot make people pay attention. Executive Director Robbins agreed and said that this production company is experienced with filming in San Francisco and the mistake is out of character.

President Bradley-Tyson asks for other commissioner comment.

Commissioner Stiker commends Executive Director Robbins for the growth in permits, shooting days, and fees collected. He asks whether the goal is to increase all statistics, or is one more of a priority over the others. He follows up by asking what kind of impact the passing of AB 1839 will have on the Film Office and its staff.

Executive Director Robbins explains that her request for an additional full-time staff member was denied. She introduced Mason Feldman, who was hired part-time to assist with the increase in permits, but explains that Mr. Feldman will be leaving the office soon for a full-time position at the Department of Emergency Management.

The office will be finding a replacement for Mason. Executive Director Robbins expresses her concern over the increase in production in the office and especially Maggie and Lauren who are already working at capacity to keep up with the current flow of permits. She elaborated that the bigger feature films require more time, planning and logistics, and the office will need more staff. Despite being turned down for a full-time position, Executive Director Robbins plans to continue showing the Controller's Office and the Mayor's Office the continual increase in permit statistics to demonstrate the need for additional staff.

Commissioner Stiker asks Executive Director Robbins whether the Film Commission can do something to help. Commissioner Johnston suggests that the Film Office staff and possibly the commissioners can engage Nicole Wheaton, Liaison to the Board of Supervisors, and get advice on how to address the increasing need for more staff. Commissioner Johnston also suggests that the Film Office could potentially utilize more resources from the Office of Economic and Workforce Development, especially if the work is geared towards jobs, rebates and coordination with other city agencies.

Executive Director Robbins says that the Film Office does rely on other Mayor's Offices, including the Office of Neighborhood Services, to help with coordination and problem solving.

Commissioner Johnston notes that it is impressive that the increase in permit statistics comes at a time when the streets are largely being torn up due to infrastructure projects and construction throughout the city. He says that the Film Commission should be helpful to the cause of getting additional staff, but the first step should be to talk to Nicole Wheaton.

Executive Director Robbins indicates that Supervisor Mark Farrell should be included in the conversations since he has been a champion on the Board of Supervisors regarding the production incentives and rebates, and since he is chair of the Budget Committee.

Executive Director Robbins transitions by acknowledging a recent pattern she has seen regarding the need to jump over hurdles in order to facilitate the coordination of production with city agencies. She is in contact with the heads of these departments and they will work to make things run more smoothly. The location manager for the film *Ant-Man* documented his experience with these departments and will share it with Executive Director Robbins. The location manager said that if the film tax credits get passed and the production wanted to shoot 45 days in San Francisco, he would be worried about the logistics of getting that done with the city agencies. Executive Director Robbins will talk with Steve Kawa about the issue and would like to get a stance on the issue from the Mayor's Office.

President Bradley-Tyson asks for other commissioner comment. President Bradley-Tyson thanks the Film Office for obtaining new business cards with the new logo.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT (DISCUSSION ONLY)

President Bradley-Tyson asked for general public comment. There was none.

ADJOURNMENT (ACTION ITEM)

President Bradley-Tyson asked for a motion. Commissioner Rubin made a motion and Commissioner Johnston seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 pm.