



MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 22, 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 2:25pm.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present:

Melanie Blum
Denise Bradley-Tyson
PJ Johnston
Jon Rubin
Marlene Sharon Saritzky
Mark Fishkin
Villy Wang

Commissioners Excused:

Don Canady
Matt Stiker
Peter Bratt

Absent:

Robert Morales

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 25, 2014 MEETING (ACTION ITEM)

President Bradley-Tyson asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the August 25th, 2014 meeting. Commissioner Saritzky made the motion and Commissioner Fishkin seconded the motion. Commissioner comment and public comment was taken. The minutes were approved.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT (DISCUSSION ONLY)

President Bradley-Tyson begins by giving thanks to the San Francisco Film Commission office along with Susannah's leadership to work with the local film community and the Commission to help get AB 1839 supported and signed by Governor Brown. President Bradley-Tyson shares that this is a huge win for the entire state when it comes to filmmaking. This is a leverage-able moment for us as a Film Commission in terms of Susannah's wish list and the items that we have previously discussed as being priorities.



President Bradley-Tyson discusses that she thinks that the Commission now more than ever, really needs to work in earnest. We had identified the need for permanent production space, and I know that we have informally met with other members of the Land Use Committee and members of the community to scope out what our ideal production space would look like in terms of being able to accommodate what we hope will be a huge increase in filmmaking. She thinks that that item is one that we really need to look at putting energy into so that we can take advantage of this moment to see if we can make it happen. We do have the Friends of the Film Commission that is aware that this is our number one priority. We previously talked in meetings that we had had when we were doing our transition with Commissioner Saritzky around the need for having a legislative committee. I think in conversations with Susannah we have talked about some of the frustrations or push back that the Film Office has received while trying to get film permits done. At one point, there had been a designated person in the Mayor's Office who was the go between that we had talked about. There's a need to reconvene a meeting with the various department heads or whomever the designated person is to ensure that we have a streamlined filmmaking process in place. We want to make sure our staff does not have to spend a lot of energy chasing down approvals that they need from other offices. We want to continue to provide first rate service to members of the production community who want to film here.

President Bradley-Tyson talks about how she and Commissioner Wang met with three of the members of the Friends of the Film Commission last Thursday while Susannah was away for Governor Brown's signing ceremony for AB 1839.

Commissioner Wang continues the conversation by speaking about sitting down with these members from the Friends of the Film Commission to hear what their goals were. They have the intention to raise funds to support our priorities at the Film Office. We shared with them the priorities that were put together by the Commission and the Film Office about production space and more. Commissioner Wang shares that she feels that, that kind of conversation was healthy and good. And that it is important to know what the Office's priorities are as they begin to strategize on how to raise money and what the money would be used for. At the event, they talked a lot about our space needs. One of the conversation's takeaways was the need to be able to articulate what it is they could help raise funds for as the Friends of the Film Commission. They are eager to continue conversations with us since they do see supporting the work and the priorities that the Film Commission has already set. I think being specific about those next set of details would be part of that conversation.

President Bradley-Tyson thanks Commissioner Wang and continues by talking about how Dennis Conaghan, the Executive Director of the San Francisco Center for Economic Development (SFCED), shared a report that was written in February of 2005 called "Increasing San Francisco's Competitiveness in the Film and TV Industry." It was presented by SFCED in partnership with McKinsey. It was presented to then Executive Director, Stefanie Coyote. So, one of the things we talked about is trying to either go back to McKinsey, or find another firm that might be interested in taking this on as a pro bono project to update this report, because it will be helpful as we move forward in trying to identify partners to build and establish a permanent filming facility here in the City.

The only other thing that I have to report is that Susannah and I had a follow up meeting on Friday with Anita Lee and Miriam Chen around the Wuhan MOU. They gave an updated presentation of what the project's potential could be, but they are still working on their side to get a commitment on the designated land that they want to use, and an agreement signed for that. And they are still working on financing on their side in Wuhan, but are still exploring who they can have conversations with here to partner with them and try to move the project forward.

President Bradley-Tyson asks for any Commissioner comments. There was none.

President Bradley-Tyson asks for any other questions or public comment.

A member of the public, Nick Pasquariello comes to the podium to speak. He says that he apologizes if he is largely uninformed regarding the status of these bodies, but the only thought he had was that maybe Supervisor Cohen would accept a compromise which entailed the 24 hour notice only permissible if every single household

received a paper. I know that DPW construction companies occasionally, and they are probably not obliged to, will put a leaflet at every resident's address in a neighborhood where they are doing construction. I don't know if that's feasible, but that's the only thought I had that under the 24 hour rule, which would be the exception, otherwise the rule would be 72 hours. That's my only largely uninformed comment.

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 sharing that the Film Commission has had an incredibly busy month since the last time we met. I think you all might have seen the photo I sent you of the stack of permits that Lauren and Maggie had worked on in a two week time period. But the numbers support that, because we are up 35% in the number of permits issued since last month, 109% in the number of shooting days, and 167% in permit fees. This month, we've had 66 permits, 212 shooting days, and \$46,050 in permit fees – last month we had 49 permits, 101 shooting days, and \$19,300 in permit fees, so they have been kept very busy! And, we've had an increase in the number of Feature films, the number of still photo shoots, and the number of web productions that have been shooting in the City during this past month.

Director Robbins shares that notable productions have been Marvel Comics' *Antman* starring Michael Douglas and Paul Rudd; Lakeshore Entertainment's *Age of Adaline* starring Harrison Ford & Blake Lively; and *Michael*, starring James Franco about a gay activist and magazine founder and is saved from his homosexuality after turning to God. It's based on a true story. They did a very down and dirty, very quick shoot here in San Francisco. It was amazing how Lauren was able to pull their permit together so quickly. Very small unit, really I think most people wouldn't have even known that it was James Franco and a film production shooting here because they were so bare bones, but very exciting.

The next item is about AB 1839. It was really exciting to find that that was going to be passed. It more than triples our California state tax credit to \$330 million per year for the next five years. And again, for San Francisco and the Bay Area, the big boost for us is that there's a 5% increase in the tax credit for productions that shoot outside the LA zone. So that can make it more affordable for productions to shoot here, being able to not only hopefully use the tax credit, but combine it with our rebate, provided they shoot the required percentage of days here.

Director Robbins continues by saying that we were thinking that they were going to have a signing for AB 1839 here at City Hall. We had been told by the Governor's Office that they were planning on doing LA in the morning and San Francisco in the afternoon. Unfortunately, the day before, we found out that it had been canceled. We weren't really sure why, but in my call with Denise and Villy on Wednesday, we decided that it was important for me to go and represent San Francisco and Northern California. And, I was really glad I was there because other than me, the only representative from Northern California was Film Commissioner Beverly Lewis from Tahoe. So, it was good to be representing us there, and everyone I spoke to was so glad we were represented there. I got to reconnect with a number of studios and their physical production heads. It's nice that over the years, I've been able to develop a relationship with them, and to see them there on Thursday was really good.

Director Robbins shares that what this now leads us to is trying to figure out how we'll be able to meet the increased demand that we anticipate we are going to get. Part of it is staffing. I am interviewing right now for a replacement for Mason for a part-time paid temporary position. I've interviewed probably ten people so far, and I have two more interviews this afternoon, and then we will do call-backs for Maggie and Lauren to meet with the top three people to make sure that there's a good fit in our office and they feel like they would be supported by that person. But, ideally, for the next budget cycle, I would really like to have that person or another person as a full-time employee to help meet the need of all this extra production that I anticipate. Plus, that we are already getting now even without the tax credit. So, I will definitely welcome your help when I'm formulating my argument for

that when we start getting to budget season. And, I've already talked to Merrick who is the CFO for OEWD, and he is aware that that's a need for us, and he's also indicated that he's willing to work on that presentation with me.

Director Robbins also tells the Commission that the other thing that has come up is that with all the production we've had this summer, it has pointed out flaws in our system; where permits are getting held up, and where we need to work on relationships with other agencies to ensure that these things aren't held up. I had a meeting with Steve Kawa last week about some of the issues that have been coming up. He has agreed to be present at a meeting with the agencies to signal the Mayor's Office's support for filming, how important it is, and that we all need to be on board to make this something that we can all work with. And try to figure out where the resistance is, and get passed that and work together more efficiently. I did have a letter from the location manager from *Ant-Man* which was very helpful in illuminating some of these issues, and also from the director of *Age of Adaline*. He and I had a phone conversation and I asked him if he would write what he said to me in a letter so that I could share that with the Mayor's Office, which he did. No one wants to hear bad feedback, but it's also very good that we have gotten it and we can look at these things and figure out how to improve them. So, that's our challenge between now and July when this goes into effect.

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

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF A POSSIBLE COLLABORATION WITH SF FILM SOCIETY FOR THE "ESSENTIAL SF 2014" LOCAL FILM EVENT (ACTION ITEM)

Susannah begins the presentation by discussing the possible collaboration with the SF Film Society for the "Essential SF 2014" local film event. Essential SF is the Film Society's ongoing event which highlights a collection of the Bay Area film community's most vital figures and institutions. This is the fifth year of Essential SF. It is usually housed within the Cinema by the Bay film festival, and this year they are not doing Cinema by the Bay. So when I met with Sarah Taft and Jennifer Schmidt at the Film Society who do development there, we talked about the possibility of us working with them on Essential SF.

In the past, we've supported Cinema by the Bay which highlights local filmmakers around the Bay Area. This would basically continue this support and partnership, but just under a different banner, as Essential SF. In the past, it has highlighted filmmakers like Les Blank, Richard Beggs, Susan Gerhard, Joshua Grannell, Anita Monga, Rick Prelinger, Marlon Riggs, Gail Silva, Judy Stone, Terry Zwigoff, Rick Perlinger, Lynn Hershman Leeson, Allie Light and Irving Saraf. So, it's very notable Bay Area filmmakers.

And what this would be is an evening which is free and open to the public, where they would have a special reception and present awards to new filmmakers that they choose for this event. So our support for this would give the Film Commission an opportunity to not only signal its support for local film makers, but give us a marketing opportunity to expose our Film Commission logo and give our Scene in San Francisco rebate program exposure during the upcoming Fall Season of festivals run by the Film Society – French Cinema Now; Hong Kong Cinema; New Italian Cinema. It is just a way to continue our ongoing support and partnership with the Film Society as well as to expose what we do for filmmakers around the Bay Area and hopefully encourage them to continue shooting locally.

Normally, I don't bring marketing decisions about our budget before the Commission, but because I felt that this is a change in something that we have been doing for many years, supporting Cinema by the Bay, I wanted to ask you all if you think we should continue in this direction but switch our support over to this event, Essential SF. I thought I'd bring it before you all to get your input and vote.

President Bradley-Tyson asks what the cost is, and Susannah replies that it is \$5,000.

President Bradley-Tyson asks for other commissioner comments or questions.

Commissioner Wang asks if the commitment is the same as Cinema by the Bay as far as the financials, and would be replacing Cinema by the Bay? Susannah replies that yes, it is the same amount, and would replace Cinema by the Bay.

Commissioner Johnston says that he thinks this is the kind of thing that we should be involved with to celebrate our local filmmakers.

Commissioner Fishkin jokingly comments that he would be hypocritical if he didn't support this. Festivals give great value to marketing in general, and specifically to let filmmakers know what we are doing in the Bay Area, and remind them that they can shoot here is always a good thing.

President Bradley-Tyson asks if there are any other commissioner comments or questions before she calls for a vote.

President Bradley-Tyson asks for a motion to support this.

Commissioner Rubin made a motion to support the collaboration with Essential SF and Commissioner Johnston seconded the motion. President Bradley-Tyson asks for all those in favor, and the motion passes unopposed.

President Bradley-Tyson asks Susannah to send out a new version of the Film Commission wish list in light of the passing of AB 1839, so that the Commission can re-focus its goals.

President Bradley-Tyson asks if there are any other Commissioner comments.

Commissioner Wang has a follow-up thought on the Commissioners each participating in one of the Film Office's priorities like real estate or marketing and communications given the latest legislative change with the recent passing of AB 1839. Any Commissioners working on those topics should re-think these priorities given the passing of AB 1839.

President Bradley-Tyson asks that Commissioners take a look and decide on one or two informal groups that they might want to participate in.

Commissioner Fishkin says he looks forward to receiving the wish list and participating in one of the informal working groups.

President Bradley-Tyson asks if there are any other Commissioner comments and there was none.

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 Blum made a motion and Commissioner Fishkin seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 pm.