



MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 23, 2012 MEETING

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

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present:

William Adams
Denise Bradley-Tyson
Jon Rubin
Robert Morales
Marlene Sharon Saritzky
Villy Wang
Peter Bratt

Commissioners Absent:

Melanie Blum
Debbie Brubaker
Don Canady
Lorrae Rominger

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE OCTOBER 24, 2012 MEETING (ACTION ITEM)

Commissioner Bradley Tyson made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 24, 2011 meeting. Commissioner Adams seconded the motion. Commissioner comment and public comment was taken; the minutes were unanimously approved.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT (DISCUSSION ONLY)

President Saritzky acknowledged the news that Bingham Ray, the newly hired Executive Director of the San Francisco Film Society, passed away while attending the Sundance Film Festival. She said he began the job in November and had just moved to San Francisco with his family. Commissioner Adams then asked for a moment of silence.

President Saritzky added that Commissioner Canady was mugged recently and that they were all thinking of him at this time and wished him a quick recovery.

President Saritzky discussed her attendance at the Film Collective party in early December. More than 90





people attended including the Mayor. The Mayor had only briefly met the filmmakers when he arrived and yet was able to impressively name all of them when he gave his welcome address. President Saritzky said the Mayor's remarks were enthusiastic and supportive. At the event, President Saritzky saw people she knew, met new people and was sorry more Commissioners were unable to attend. She encouraged all the Commissioners to visit the Collective to see the space and meet the filmmakers. She added they are excited to be there and said a creative spark and energy was present. President Saritzky mentioned how excited she is about the space and thinks it can really grow.

President Saritzky thanked Filming Supervisor Christine Munday for her work and perseverance in making it happen. She reiterated that it was a great evening and wonderful to have the Mayor present.

President Saritzky discussed Film House, another office incubator which is a part of the Film Society and a partner to the Film Commission. The Film Commission has agreed to help with the rent for Film House. There is not an office space yet but Michelle from the Film Society will take the lead on looking then will bring options to Executive Director Robbins and the rest of the Film Commission. President Saritzky added there might be a delay due to the recent passing of Bingham Ray.

President Saritzky asked for Commissioner and Public comment. No comments were heard.

President Saritzky asked to keep Bingham Ray's family in mind today.

STAFF REPORT (DISCUSSION ONLY)

Executive Director Robbins reported that there are six filmmaking groups in the Collective. She has accepted a new applicant, Ron Merk's group called the Metro Theater Center Foundation. They haven't signed the lease as they are waiting for confirmation regarding a grant to help them pay for rent. Ron's group supports local filmmakers, and has regular evening events focusing on legal questions, funding questions, and connecting them with other filmmaking resources. Executive Director Robbins thinks this group will be a good addition to the Collective, since Ron is well connected to the San Francisco and Los Angeles film world. His evening gatherings will give more exposure to the Collective and possibly get more members.

Current members at the Collective are occasionally hosting small events such as From Script to Screen. At these events, they choose a film, read the script, watch the film and discuss how the film changed from script to screen.

Executive Director Robbins added that other indie filmmakers are interested in screening their films at the Collective. The next screening is scheduled for Thursday, March 15. The documentary is a feature length called *Into the Current: Burma's Political Prisoners*, edited in collaboration with well-known SF filmmakers, Ellen Bruno and Ken Schneider. The film is about Burma's non-violent movement led by Nobel peace laureate, Aung San Suu Kyi. The main character of the film, Bo Kyi, is coming to SF as part of an international speaking





tour and will be there that evening. The film is sponsored by Amnesty International. Executive Director Robbins mentioned more information will be sent out about it.

Executive Director Robbins added that if the Collective is successful enough to continue past July 2012, the San Francisco Film Museum (which is currently a museum without a home) has expressed a strong interest in having an installation in the upstairs lobby of the Film Collective. They have prepared a mock up of what the installation might look like. The landlord, Craig Larsen, would have to approve of this first though. Executive Director Robbins thinks this would add to the whole program. This will depend on if this goes forward.

President Saritzky asked what stage the fundraising for the San Francisco Film Museum was in at this point.

Executive Director Robbins said she doesn't know where they are at with regards to fundraising. If it didn't work in our space, they would find another space.

Executive Director Robbins said in late September, the Board of Supervisors passed legislation to expand the rebate program to include documentaries and unscripted television programming. They also agreed to lower the permit fees for films with budgets less than \$500,000 from 300 per day to \$100 per day. This legislation was spearheaded by Supervisor Mark Farrell who is supportive of film and wants to work with her on the next generation of the rebate. The rebate program sunsets in June 2012. Executive Director Robbins is meeting with Supervisor Farrell to discuss next steps in order to add more money to it.

President Saritzky asked if Executive Director Robbins would like one or two Commissioners to be at the meeting with her.

Executive Director Robbins said she would like one or two to join in the meeting. She will send an email out regarding this issue.

Executive Director Robbins mentioned that she included in the Commissioner Agenda packet a recent report she did with the Controller's office. The report was a requirement in expanding the rebate program. It included an analysis of the program. The report stated that since its inception in 2006, eight productions have received rebates from the City totaling \$1.5 million. Together, these productions are estimated to have spent \$40 million locally. This amount is direct spend and has no relationship to the multiplier. This amount includes wages to crew, location expenses, gasoline, rentals, etc. She thinks it will help in expanding the rebate program. In the report, she included quotes from Producers who have received the rebate. Executive Director Robbins then read two examples of quotes from Producers supporting the program:

"The NBC Television Pilot and Series *Trauma* would not have happened in San Francisco without the Rebate Program offered by the City. *Trauma* employed over 125 people every week for a year, at quality union wages, plus thousands of dollars spent every day with local vendors. Each episode of *Trauma* qualified for a \$30,000 to \$50,000 rebate from San Francisco. The series would have gone to another city without this type of support





offered through the rebate program.” Dean Jones, Co-Producer, Trauma

The San Francisco City rebate of \$600,000.00 was a key factor in our decision to bring the movie *Hemingway & Gellhorn* to the Bay area. Shooting in San Francisco wasn't necessarily an obvious choice for us, as the film is not set here. But the Scene in San Francisco rebate, coupled with the wonderful resources the city had to offer, (i.e. talented actor pool, experienced crew, and gorgeous "period-looking" locations) made it an easy sell to the studio. The rebate, combined with the California State Tax Incentive, makes San Francisco a real draw for filming. It's particularly helpful for mid-size budgets where every dollar counts. When choosing between shooting locations, the extra \$600k really helps San Francisco to edge out the competition.” Trish Hofmann, Executive Producer, Hemingway & Gellhorn

Executive Director Robbins said *Hemingway and Gellhorn* may screen at Cannes then it will run on HBO. She thinks these quotes and feedback will help market San Francisco.

President Saritzky said she thinks the report and quotes will help with expanding the rebate program. President Saritzky suggesting getting the quotes in letter form to make it easy to give to the Board of Supervisors and use as support.

Commissioner Morales said he thought getting the quotes in letter format was important because some of the Board members are not convinced that this expenditure should be made.

Executive Director Robbins said she will work on this.

Commissioner Morales asked how much money is left in the program?

Executive Director Robbins said there is \$280,000 left until June. She added that if any production started now, they might not even complete until after June so it should be ok.

Commissioner Morales asked if commercial productions are receiving the rebate. Executive Director Robbins said that commercials do not qualify for the rebate but has been thinking about this. Commissioner Morales added that Commercial productions are what the City has the most of.

Executive Director Robbins said she has been meeting with location managers and will meet with contacts in Los Angeles about it. She said she doesn't want to upset the Agencies if the Production Company receives a rebate or vice versa. She is gathering more information.

Commissioner Bratt asked what the average budget of a commercial is.

Executive Director Robbins doesn't have this information since there is a huge range.





Commissioner Morales said the national spots are \$1 million to \$2 million and provide a lot of jobs.

Executive Director Robbins is going to Los Angeles to promote the rebate program on February 15, 16, & 17. She has meetings scheduled with Screen Gems, possibly Sony TV & Features, Universal (TV), possibly Universal features, Plan B (which is owned by Brad Pitt), Disney (both TV & Features), and is still trying to line something up at CBSTV & Fox. She also just received approval from the City to bring Dean Jones, Co-Producer of Trauma, to talk about the cost effectiveness of shooting in San Francisco.

President Saritzky said this was great.

Commissioner Morales asked what happens if there is a big production and the \$280,000 runs out?

Executive Director Robbins said Supervisor Farrell said she would need to go to the Board of Supervisors and give them details about the commitment of a production and ask them to extend the rebate to them.

President Saritzky asked about filming statistics.

Executive Director Robbins said she was sorry that she didn't run that report but added filming days are up 11.5% from January 2011 compared to January 2010. And from 2009, filming days are up 42%. She added commercials and still photo shoots make up the bulk of those days.

President Saritzky added this month, San Francisco was featured on the series The Bachelor as well as the J.J. Abrams series, Alcatraz. President Saritzky said San Francisco looked beautiful on The Bachelor.

Executive Director Robbins added that she thought San Francisco on The Bachelor was beautiful and the show featured fireworks off a Pier, a date in City Hall, Alamo Square and the Fairmont Hotel. She added that the Tonga Room is now very tough to get into because it screened on the show. Alcatraz had 9.8 million viewers and The Bachelor had 7.2 million viewers.

Commissioner Bradley Tyson asked if she was still in discussion with SF Travel.

Executive Director Robbins is working with Matt Stiker at SF Travel to find a way to measure how films attract tourists which is difficult. They are looking at visitors to Alcatraz since January is a slower month and if visitor numbers have increased this may be due to viewers seeing Alcatraz on television

Commissioner Morales said many years ago the Convention Bureau gave money to the Film Commission because of the tourism link. He suggested she have a meeting with Joe Alexander, head of SF Travel, and encourage him to check the records. Commissioner Morales said the Bureau would give the Film Commission money to entertain, etc since because of the tourism link to filming.

Commissioner Morales said FX Crowley is a member of the Convention Bureau and the Executive Director Robbins should contact him about this.





President Saritzky asked for Commission comment.

Commissioner Wang said 2011 was a big year and Executive Director Robbins has brought so much structure and detail into the Collective and appreciates hearing her plant seeds for the future. Commissioner Wang added that Executive Director Robbins is creating infrastructure and thinks she is doing a tremendous job and greatly appreciates all her efforts.

Executive Director Robbins said she appreciated this comment.

Commissioner Bradley Tyson asked about outreach efforts for the Collective? She would like to see a calendar of events to that has an update of listings for a wider group of filmmakers.

President Saritzky asked if the Collective had the listing of 90 people that attended the event and it would be good to know when they are doing the script to screen events.

Executive Director Robbins said the Film Commission had the list of 90 people who attended the event. She has asked to Filming Supervisor Christine Munday to notify all Commissioners of upcoming events. She added that the office will be better about posting these events on the website. She mentioned the office has a lot of projects going on right now including restructuring of the website. She announced that the contract with Reel Scout which housed the Film Commission location gallery had been discontinued. It was \$10,000 a year, very clunky and she was not happy with the product. Filming Supervisor Christine Munday and the office intern Lauren are working on tagging photos. There is a second intern taking new photographs to add to the 15,000 photo library. Research is being done on which program will take its place.

President Saritzky asked if it would be another service like Reel Scout?

Executive Director Robbins is looking at Flickr which is only \$50 a year.

Executive Director Robbins said the office is also working on a Film Collective website. However, due to other projects and permits and a limited staff, it will take time. .

Commissioner Rubin asked if the new service will have an indexing function?

Executive Director Robbins said there is currently a search engine that allows you to look up government building or courthouses amidst many different categories. With 15,000 photos, she added that a good system is needed. She added that a better system to send photographs to clients is a requirement since the current system does not easily allow this.

Commissioner Bradley Tyson asked about the Mayor's proposal regarding the technology brain trust. She added that this might be a good resource to check how this problem or to see if the City is going to make its internal web presence more robust. Bringing this issue to the group may help. Ron Conway is the head of it but she was not sure what the acronym of the organization is.





President Saritzky asked if it was Code for America?

Commissioner Rubin said that was the name and that it was a local organization.

Commissioner Bradley Tyson said the Mayor just launched this and Ron Conway is heading it. All the technology leaders are part of this group and that Executive Director Robbins might want to look at this in order to assist with this issue since it might help generate more revenue generated for the City.

President Saritzky added that she thought it was a good idea.

President Saritzky asked for Public Comment.

NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF COMMISSION PRESIDENT

President Saritzky asked for nominations for President.

Commissioner Wang nominated President Saritzky for a second term. Commissioner Wang said she appreciates President Saritzky's work on behalf of the Commission. She appreciates the leadership President Saritzky exemplified in finding a new Executive Director and developing the SF Film Collective. She gladly nominated her.

President Saritzky asked for a second. Commissioner Adams seconded.

President Saritzky asked for Public Comment. President Saritzky asked for any other nominations.

Filming Coordinator Janet Austin called a roll call vote. All Commissioners unanimously voted President Saritzky in for another term.

NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF COMMISSION VICE PRESIDENT

President Saritzky asked for a nomination of Vice President. Commissioner Wang nominated current Vice President Bradley Tyson to another term. Commissioner Wang added Vice President Bradley Tyson that she has also been a supporter of the Commission, helpful in the search for the new Executive Director as well as the Film Collective. Commissioner Wang always appreciates her ideas and would like to see her continue.

Commissioner Bratt seconded the motion.

President Saritzky added it has been great to work with Commissioner Bradley Tyson.

President Saritzky asked for Commissioner Comment and Public Comment. President Saritzky asked for any other nominations.





Filming Coordinator Janet Austin calls a role call vote. All Commissioners unanimously voted Vice President Bradley Tyson in for another term.

Commissioner Bradley Tyson said she is looking forward to another term.

Executive Director Robbins said she enjoys working with both the President and Vice President and thinks things are taking off and she is looking forward to year ahead. year.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT (DISCUSSION ONLY)

President Saritzky asked for any general public comment from the Commissioners.

President Saritzky asked for Public Comment.

Cameron Washington came to the podium to say he is Bay Area born and raised but lived in New York from 2003 until 2010. He came back to San Francisco in 2012. In early 2000's, he said the work died due to 911 and thought there was a new Executive Director with some ideas to get things going again. He said it was hard to see that the friends here in San Francisco were really struggling working in the industry once he came back to San Francisco. Mr. Washington said the film industry was pretty anemic although he was glad to hear about the rebate program and the studios were being contacted. Mr. Washington is an independent filmmaker and thought that in New York/Brooklyn, there was a lot more freedom to film there. He mentioned that there is a lot of web content and smaller budgeted projects for \$5,000 and \$10,000 out there. These projects have a crew of 3 or 4 when content is asked for on Friday and the clients wants it done by Monday. His view and from others is that the process to get a Film permit with the Film Office isn't very fast so the filmmakers go to the East Bay or Sonoma. Mr. Washington thinks there could more help to low budget, guerilla filmmakers to make it easier for people to shoot quickly as in New York. His steady work is high volume, low projects that need fewer restrictions. He added in New York, the permits are free and you don't need two officers.

Executive Director Robbins said you don't need two officers for a small shoot.

Mr. Washington saw friends leave for Los Angeles and New York and said it was hard to see creative people have to leave because there isn't enough work here in film and television. He thinks more things could be done to help filmmakers. He mentioned receiving a blanket permit to film a night shoot after 10pm in New York with no problems. However, he added although there are loud people all night on Valencia, he couldn't get a permit to film after 10pm on the street. Mr. Washington thinks there are things that can be done to make it easier for projects under 500k. He added his generation is doing small, fast paced projects with quick turnaround time.

President Saritzky thanked him for his comments and added if he had specific ideas to help filmmakers of all





budgets, she suggested contacting Executive Director Robbins.

Executive Director Robbins said she would be happy to meet with him.

Commissioner Morales added there are big differences between San Francisco and New York. In New York City, the police are paid by the City not the filmmakers. Other cities like New York have more flexibility since they have more money. In San Francisco, the City does not pay for police or other items. Commissioner Morales said in San Francisco, the Film Commission relies heavily on the rebate program.

Mr. Washington added there are more creative ways that the Film Commission can assist low budget and independent filmmakers. He knows there are politically active neighborhoods that can make it difficult to film but there are innovative ways to have more projects filmed here.

President Saritzky asked for any other public comment.

Commissioner Rubin mentioned during the Moscone administration, there was a woman Ms. Dixon and if a production would come to town, she would assist them with various things. He added that there have been times in the past in that the relationship with the Chamber of Commerce was really good. There was a synergy and more of a relationship than there is now. He asked if Executive Director Robbins could reach out to the commercial sector of the City. He said he would be happy to help.

President Saritzky added the Film Commission has a great relationship with SF Travel but thought arranging for a phone call with Commissioner Rubin and Executive Director Robbins to discuss the items would be a good idea.

It was suggested that Executive Director Robbins should talk with the Chamber about items like the Transamerica Building trademark issue.

Commissioner Rubin there are other ways to reach out even to places that are not North America such as in Asia or India. He added that the Mayor mentioned to him he wanted Asian productions to come here.

Executive Director Robbins had a meeting with a man from China and Economic Development who had enormous ideas about film production.

Vice President Bradley Tyson asked about surplus funding that the Film Commission doesn't anticipate using. She asked if excess funds could be used for marketing the City to get more productions and perhaps getting the Chamber involved.

Commissioner Rubin suggesting getting the Chamber to realize it's an advantage for them to help the Film Commission.





President Saritzky asked for more comments.

Commissioner Wang suggested building on the rebate program with regards to the quotes from Producers who have received the rebate. Commissioner Wang said she would be happy to talk with Executive Director Robbins offline on building on the momentum and getting the word out in Los Angeles.

Executive Director Robbins said Commissioner Rominger suggested putting quotes on cards. Executive Director Robbins is working on a new ad for the trades as well as something for her trip to Los Angeles.

Bradley Tyson suggested offering a CD-Rom.

President Saritzky suggested asking the studio contacts which of the marketing materials they would prefer.

Executive Director Robbins shared the Sundance catalog that includes the Rebate advertisement. She wants to do something similar for her Los Angeles visit with the Producer's quotes. She would like the postcard to be simple and straightforward. Executive Director Robbins is working with the graphic designer to make it simple.

President Saritzky asked if there were additional comments.

ADJOURNMENT (ACTION ITEM)

President Saritzky asked for a motion. Commissioner Morales made a motion; Commissioner Bratt seconded. Public comment was taken. The Commission approved the motion unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 2:54pm.

