



MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 27, 2014 MEETING - DRAFT

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

CALL TO ORDER

Vice President Denise Bradley Tyson called the meeting to order at 2:02pm.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present:

Denise Bradley-Tyson
Don Canady
Matt Stiker
Mark Fishkin
Jon Rubin
PJ Johnston
Villy Wang
Peter Bratt

Commissioners Excused:

Marlene Sharon Saritzky
Melanie Blum

Commissioners Absent:

Robert Morales

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE SEPTEMBER 23, 2013 MEETING (ACTION ITEM)

Commissioner Bradley-Tyson made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 27th, 2014 meeting. Commissioner Fishkin seconded the motion. Commissioner comment and public comment was taken. The minutes were approved.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT (DISCUSSION ONLY)

In President Marlene Saritzky's absence, Vice President Bradley-Tyson made the report.

Vice President Bradley-Tyson talked about HBO's show "Looking" which wrapped production in November here in San Francisco. It aired on HBO January 19th, 2014 and comes on each Sunday at 10:30 P.M. She is very excited to have the initial eight episodes of the show filmed in San Francisco. It has been getting great press and helps the city look more inviting to future productions. It had an especially great turn out at its premiere at Castro Theatre on January 14th, 2014.



Vice President Bradley-Tyson welcomes Commissioner Bratt to the meeting.

She mentions how the head of programming at HBO, Michael Lombardo, said wonderful things about the crew. “Looking” writer/producer Michael Lannan said the crew was one of the best he has worked with. He also acknowledged the Film Commission and the city agencies that helped make the production go smoothly. Susannah Robbins, Executive Director of the SF Film Office, asked Lombardo if he would give a quote for the website, and he said:

“HBO found the perfect home for LOOKING in San Francisco, a city that opened its doors and hearts to us and was accommodating beyond all expectations. Our production mined the wealth of resources in the entire city – the shops, the restaurants, the clubs, the streets, BART, MUNI, and, above all, the local crews and extras who were superb.”

Vice President Bradley-Tyson shared a clip of the trailer for “Looking” and asked for Commission comment.

Commissioner Canady said that, as a gay man, he and his community found a lot of passion in this T.V. series. Everyone is talking about the show, and he thinks it is wonderful that the City is being showcased in this manner as well as the gay and lesbian community. He thanks Susannah Robbins and the Film Office for making it happen.

Commissioner Stiker was really impressed by the show and was blown away by the comments the cast and crew had made about working here in the city. He doesn’t believe it is a gay show, but rather a life show that anyone can relate to no matter their sexual orientation. He thinks it is a brilliant show and the fact that it was set in San Francisco reinforces everything that is great about this city.

Commissioner Johnston remarked about how two episodes had already been aired on HBO and that it has gotten great press.

Commissioner Canady reinforced that it showcases the LGBT community and the Castro. He said that when he saw the pilot, it felt amazing to see San Francisco and the acceptance of the LGBT community.

Commissioner Wang congratulated the Film Office for its foresights and work to make the show a reality. It was also a great production because of its partnership with BAYCAT. We had half a dozen of our graduates from the TechSF program placed as PAs which is fantastic. She believes it will be a real catalyst for things to come.

Vice President Bradley-Tyson asked for public comment.

A woman came up to the microphone. As a SAG actor, she felt that it was great to have worked here in the City, even if it was just as background. She felt that there should be more than just background work available, but that this was a good start. She hopes that “Looking” will help open the doors for more productions here in San Francisco.

Vice President Bradley-Tyson asked if there was any more public comment. There was none.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT (DISCUSSION ONLY)

Director Susannah Robbins began her report by updating the Commission on permits in the Film Office. Between November 1st, 2013 and January 4th, 2014, we have had 104 permits with 224 shooting-days and permit fees of \$42,200. During this time, MTV’s Real World and HBO’s “Looking” wrapped production in early November. We also had House Hunters International, Extreme Weight Loss, and commercials for Porsche, Nissan, Honda, and Jeep filmed here in San Francisco. We have had a busy late winter and beginning of this year.

Regarding “Looking,” we will know some time in either late February or early March if they plan to continue with season 2. HBO said that they want to get feedback after the first four episodes. We are crossing our fingers, but from the press that we’ve seen, we are feeling really hopeful that season two will happen.

She also pointed out that Lauren Machado, Film Office Production & Marketing Manager, has done a great job with social media. She has been connecting our Facebook and Twitter fans with what is going on with “Looking.” She asked Lauren to talk about what she has been doing with social media.

Lauren said that she approached the “Looking” HBO social media team after the pilot and talked with them about how the Film Office could get involved with their plan. HBO has a huge team behind the show to put things on the internet. They have live tweeting and posting that occurs while the episode is running. Lauren inserted the Film Commission into this discussion by providing the locations of where each episode was shot. After each episode airs, we give three highlights of locations where the production was shot for that episode. Lauren provided an example for the meeting.

One location is “billy-goat” hill that is fairly popular. People responded well to it, and this got over 607,000 views from our shares and likes. This is something tangible that people can use. They can visit this location where the lead of “Looking” was. Lauren has also been live-tweeting during the show and answering people’s questions. These are platforms where you can search everything that’s being discussed about “Looking” while an episode is airing. It is a great chance to respond to people when they are asking, “Where is that bar in that scene?” I am there answering that question.

Lauren believes it is a cool, new way to connect with fans and answer questions about the area.

Commissioner Rubin asked if we can access this by going to the Film Commission website.

Lauren responded that on the FilmSF.org website there are links to both our Facebook and Twitter profiles. On each platform, it is titled Film_SF.

Commissioner Canady stated that the gay and lesbian community loves this show. It is great for the City and all communities here and is amazing how it showcases the City.

Lauren agreed that it is great that other places are featured other than the popular landmarks. People have been really excited to see these other places in San Francisco. These are areas that aren’t showcased all the time, so let’s celebrate them.

Commissioner Stiker asked if there was a specific hash tag that Lauren is using. She responded that she is using #filmsf and #looking. HBO has a lot of hashtags and Lauren is using what they want in order to keep everything organized.

SF Travel came to the Film Commission to get some of the information and feedback. They are sharing restaurant and bar menus so people can visit. They might create tours so people can visit the many locations featured in the show. Even Muni is having spots featured.

Susannah continues her report by stating that we finished our annual report as well as our joint report with the Controller’s Office about the rebate program for the Board of Supervisors. A couple of highlights from those reports:

- 1) Since the film rebate program was created in 2006, the 17 productions that have received rebates from the city are estimated to have collectively spent \$44.2 million locally, including \$14.1 million in wages

paid to San Francisco residents. During this time the City has rebated approximately \$2.5 million to those same 17 productions. So that's a pretty good rate of return.

- 2) Since July of 2013 6 productions have received over \$700,000 in rebates and generating approximately 3.6 million in local spending. This is the greatest use of our rebate program since its inception. The past 6 months have been the greatest part.
- 3) In FY12/13, the number of permits issued by the Film Office increased by 22% with 549 permits issued, compared to 450 permits in FY11/12.
- 4) Total permit fees collected for FY12/13 were \$172,442. This is a 10.9% or \$16,942 increase in permit fees since FY11/12.

We expect the increase in production to continue. We have a lot of things on the horizon, and currently we have *Diary of a Teenage Girl* shooting. It is an independent film starring Kristen Wiig and Alexander Skarsgard and directed by Marielle Heller. They began filming January 20th, and will have 25 shooting days total, through late February. It is being line produced by one of our previous Commissioners, Debbie Brubaker. This production has hired a mostly local crew, and has applied for the Scene in San Francisco Rebate Program. We expect them to meet all the requirements for the rebate since they are filming entirely in San Francisco.

We are also currently prepping for three blockbusters scheduled to shoot in SF – one for a week in August, one for five weeks beginning in October, and one which we don't know the date yet. This is going to require considerable coordination with SFPD, SFMTA and the PORT of SF, so we are already working with the productions and having meetings with these various agencies so we can make the shoots go smoothly both for the productions and San Franciscans. These projects are filming the bulk of their film in other states and countries due to their tax rebates.

In addition, we have had queries about other smaller features and one web series which could be filming this spring and early summer. This is in addition to all the commercial shoots we get year round.

In regard to stage space, we have created an informal group to focus on the need for a stage space here in San Francisco. It consists of myself, Commissioner Stiker, Commissioner Johnston, Commissioner Saritzky, Ted Hope (the former Executive Director of the SF Film Society, and now CEO of Fan Door, a curated online service for independent and international films based in SF); Edgar Lopez, Deputy Director for Buildings and City Architect for San Francisco and the Department of Public Works, and Corrine Mehigan, facilities manager at Moscone. We hope to have an initial meeting by phone before the next Commission Meeting, to determine the next step in identifying potential space for a stage. We need to take the next steps to identify a stage space.

I am meeting with Todd Rufo; the Head of the Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development and Tiffany Bohee, Executive Director of the Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure tomorrow afternoon to discuss what opportunities there might be at Hunter's Point.

In addition, it looks like it is possible that we could get part the space at 2000 Folsom which "Looking" used, as a stage space, with the library potentially taking the other portion for book storage and repair. In order to do this, though, we need to come up with the rent which would be around \$71,225 per month (37% of space - about 31,000 square feet). This includes base rent, cost of janitorial, engineering and utilities. This could be done, potentially, in two ways: either raised by the Friends of the Film Commission; or possibly added to our budget. I will be writing a proposal to do this before budget review, but I'm not at all sure about the outcome.

Commissioner Canady asked whether or not we currently have room in our budget to do this, which we do not. Susannah met with Todd about how to go about this. Commissioner Canady also asked if she had spoken to the

President of the Film Commission, Marlene Saritzky, about this idea, which she had. They are now working on getting community support.

Moving on, I recently attended a neighborhood meeting in Potrero Hill, along with Kriztina Palone from the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services, to address their desire for more notification about filming. Even though we require productions to leaflet neighborhoods when they are filming, and do signature surveys when they want to film before 7am or after 10pm, there were a number of residents who felt like they weren't getting the information they needed. The outcome of this meeting was that we will be posting notices to Next Door Potrero Hill when there is a shoot in their neighborhood, in addition to the required production leafleting. The positive outcome of this situation is that Next Door is giving the Film Commission access to their site, so that we can post notices in neighborhoods which are concerned, like Potrero Hill. We feel that it is important for these additional notices to come directly from our office; and we were able to do this just last week with the filming of *Diary of a Teenage Girl* in Potrero Hill.

Knowing that Potrero Hill is a sensitive area, Commissioner Johnson asked if there had been a specific shoot that prompted the complaints. Susannah said that there hadn't been, but the neighborhood feels impacted, not only by film, but by other events as well.

In addition, we are currently working with the Department of Technology, which is trying to create an agency-wide notification system that residents will be able to opt-into. This may take a while to create, so in the meantime, we will have access to Next Door. Canady asked what the response has been by using this proactive approach. Susannah reported that when we posted onto Next Door, we received no negative responses. The production did a really good job reaching out to the community before shooting.

Commissioner Stiker has been very active helping our office with the creation of advertisements which would help put a good face on filming in SF for our local residents to see, as well as another campaign to help us bring more production here. We want local residents to see these ads because with increased production, more people will be impacted. We will be going to two ad agencies on Friday to discuss the strategy; Hub Strategy & Teak Digital. Hub will focus on the campaign to bring more production here and Teak will focus on creating a positive image for filming in SF. These will be pro bono campaigns. I was also able to secure ad space with SFMTA (pro bono to City Agencies) for the month of August – where these ads will appear. We will have 5 king, 5 queen, 5 tails plus 1000 in-card ads on buses in SF for the month of August.

Commissioner Canady suggested we make a committee to regulate the ads. Susannah said she preferred an informal group and would love to have other Commissioners participate. We hope to talk to the ad agencies Friday to talk about the overall concept. Would anyone like to volunteer?

Commissioner Canady said that he would like to participate. Commissioner Fishkin requested that the Commission receive a brief of the work once it is completed. He also asked that there be more focus on the local advertising which Susannah agreed with.

Vice President Bradley Tyson suggested that there might be an opportunity, given the pro bono or free advertising space, that there may be other publications that benefit directly from people staying here and spending money. Some of our friends at SF Travel could possibly assist with this. She knows that people at 7x7, a San Francisco

magazine, are really open to partnering. Susannah believes that this could be a really good idea, and Commissioner Fishkin says that local TV and radio stations could benefit as well.

Commissioner Wang believes that such a local campaign can help alleviate neighborhood frustrations with filming and advertise successes such as “Looking.”

Commissioner Johnston likes both campaign goals for different reasons. Due to the different targeted audiences, he believes both are important, but more funding should go to reaching out to new businesses outside of San Francisco. He likes that the local campaign personalizes the filming process with the community. He is concerned, however, about the budget for such ads. Due to a limited budget, he inquired about potential media partners who may be interested in spreading the ads. Sending information to local papers, such as the Potrero View, may reach a small viewership, but it will reach the people who are having the most frustrations.

Susannah agreed that local outreach could be beneficial. Commissioner Johnston added that the local papers are not particularly expensive and like to help.

Susannah also said that the timing of the ad campaign is very beneficial. In August, a blockbuster is coming to film. We are hoping that “Looking” will return from September through November for Season 2. Another blockbuster is expected to film in October that will be huge. Commissioner Johnston worries that these productions, along with the ads, will be very impactful, especially in the communities already impacted. He then suggests that for the current advertisement we are using now for the rebate program that we change the rebate from a noun to a verb: rebating. That way it shows the city is active.

Vice President Bradley Tyson suggests we also look at BART for advertising considering they sometimes give community ad space.

Susannah then moves on to The State Film Tax Credit. She is currently working with a group of Northern and Southern Californian members (including: SAG-AFTRA, the DGA, PGA, the Teamsters, and IATSE), all of whom are working on a push for the expansion of the State Tax Credit this summer. The bill has not yet been introduced, but we are currently working on getting groups mobilized to talk to their legislators about the current Tax Credit and the need for expansion. We are also creating a list of local vendors who are interested in speaking about how runaway production affects them, and how a more robust State Film Tax Credit would benefit them. We have lumber yards, equipment rental houses, hotels, craft service businesses and more on a list who have agreed to be media contacts on how the bill affects locals once it is introduced. One of the things about the push for the expansion is, in addition to asking for more money to make it more comparable with New York’s program, to my understanding, they are going to be asking for a bump for the tax credit for people who use it outside the Los Angeles zone. Right now it’s a 20% tax credit if you film anywhere in California, and you’re lucky enough to get that tax credit. But the idea would be if you film outside the LA zone, you’d be eligible for a 25% tax credit, which would hugely benefit us in San Francisco. Productions want to come here, but when they’re getting 30% from Louisiana or Georgia, they go there. If they can get 25% from the state here and stay in California—from everything I’ve been hearing from producers—they’d rather do that. Hopefully, next spring/summer there will be a big push. There are going to be groups going and talking to their legislators about how this affects them personally.

Vice President Bradley Tyson asked if Susannah had a list of people within the State Assembly who support this bill. She believes it could be helpful to circulate among the Commission to see who is helping advocate.

Susannah then transitioned to talking about the Holiday Party the Film Office hosted in December 2013 to thank all the production people and City agencies that make production successful in San Francisco. It was held in December, courtesy of the Prescott Hotel in the Postrio Grand Salon. Around 100 guests attended, including location managers, producers, Commissioners, and City employees such as Cindy Shamban from SFMTA, Sergeant Radanovich from SFPD, and those we work with on a daily basis. We also had a very nice donation from Blue Angel Vodka for the party. Overall, it was a success, and we received many emails and phone calls afterward of people telling us how much they enjoyed the event.

Commissioner Canady stated that he has been on the Film Commission for sixteen years and thinks this office is doing a fantastic job. He thanks the Film Office.

Vice President Bradley Tyson introduced one of the Film Office's new interns, Sharifa, who is a USC graduate. Vice President Bradley Tyson then asks if there is any other Commission comment.

Commissioner Stiker asked Susannah if she knows on what basis HBO is going to decide to pick up "Looking" for season 2. She doesn't know specifically what their terms are for picking up the show, and Commissioner Stiker asks if there is anything the film community could do to help encourage HBO. Susannah believes the best thing we could do is give them a stage space, so we need to figure out how to acquire such a space.

Commissioner Canady suggested that it is more about the viewership numbers that will determine if the show gets picked up for season 2. Susannah agrees but says that is something the Commission does not have much influence over. Commissioner Stiker believes that with HBO's history of giving a series a long lead to catch on viewers and have good critical reaction, "Looking" has a good chance.

Commissioners Canady and Stiker thanked Susannah for emailing those posts and reviews of the show.

Commissioner Stiker asked if there had been a measure of the economic impact of the San Francisco Film Office versus other cities' offices. Susannah replied that she had not seen such a report to which Commissioner Stiker suggested, but it would be interesting to see the numbers. He believes that it can help elevate the status and importance of what the Film Commission is doing for the city. Susannah asked if one would hire an agency to accomplish that. Commissioner Stiker doesn't believe so, but suggests talking to Todd Rufo.

Vice President Bradley Tyson asks if there is any other Commissioner comment.

Commissioner Wang asked if there are top five neighborhoods or districts we should advertise more in for the local campaign. She also believes it could be a good idea to see the neighborhoods and districts whose representatives support the rebate program. When the advertising campaign unfolds, she also suggests we send the Supervisors the information so they are in the loop. Getting political advertising support together with residents, especially with a targeted list, will have a greater impact.

Vice President Bradley Tyson asked if there is any other Commissioner comment.

Commissioner Bratt believes in the importance of showing the social profit and enrolling nonprofits, like Commissioner Wang's BAYCAT, who are getting involved in productions like "Looking." He believes it will go a

long way with the Supervisors who focus on such details. New York has already done something like this, and in New Mexico, they enroll a certain percentage of Native Americans from reservations as part of their social profit payback. He thinks that if we develop a component like that, it will go a long way in the City, especially in light of the current animosity towards Google buses; people feeling disenfranchised and pushed out of neighborhoods.

Vice President Bradley Tyson agreed with this idea, and Commissioner Johnston believes those ideas should go under the brainstorming for the advertisers. Many people dismiss filming because they believe that Hollywood is moving in and taking up parking, but it's more complicated than that.

Commissioner Canady requested that at next month's meeting we can have at least a guideline of what our plans are for implementing these ideas. Commissioner Fishkin said that the Commission knows the value of what film brings to the city, and to identify San Francisco with film culture and all its positive values—both human capital as well as economic—is a really powerful concept. With some good nurturing in the advertising area, we can help the City embrace and feel pride about filming in their community.

Commissioner Stiker believes that creating the social capital and social impact is important. He thinks that not only should it be in the ad campaign, but in the annual report. He said that many people aspire to visit San Francisco. When he talks to people outside of the City, they say how they want to visit places from this movie or that movie. This is where tourism and the film community come together in one place because that's where the impact is. The notion that we are creating that and creating the economic impact for the City is just huge.

Susannah points out that during the Mayor's State of the City address at the shipyard, he mentioned "Looking." Commissioner Wang also mentioned how the Mayor had BAYCAT intern Eman Rodney there who was a PA on HBO's "Looking." He grew up in Bayview Hunter's Point and went through their program. Now he is a videographer and editor. So the social capital is there and we have to shine a light on BAYCAT and other agencies.

Susannah thinks it is wonderful to have the Mayor acknowledge that Eman had gone through the program and was a part of the First Source hiring program and Tech SF, and got the job on "Looking." Commissioner Wang shared that she and BAYCAT have a special quote from the Mayor due to a youth coming up with a short video about a perfect Mayor. It was all about creating job opportunities, being a better Mayor for the young people of San Francisco and connecting it to film and creativity. There's a really good connection we could make with that.

Commissioner Canady feels good about the coming year.

Vice President Bradley Tyson asked if there are any final Commissioner comments. There was none. She proceeded to ask if there was any public comment and there were two.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT (DISCUSSION ONLY)

Public commenter John came to share his personal struggles with college applications. After applying to medical school at UCSF, he was denied acceptance and continued to search for an answer as to why. He fears that his rejection was based on discrimination due to his being an immigrant from Kenya. He has even asked the Film Commission for some insight on the situation. Having no ties with the UCSF application process, the Film Commission was unable to satisfy his desire for answers.

The second public commenter spoke on behalf of SAG-AFTRA actors. She urged the Commission to think about the actors when making important decisions because they would like to stay based in San Francisco and not have to relocate.

In response, Commissioner Canady said the Film Commission should be used as a resource for actors.

Vice President Bradley Tyson asked if there was any more public comment and there was none.

ADJOURNMENT (ACTION ITEM)

Commissioner Bradley-Tyson asked for a motion. Commissioner Canady made a motion; Commissioner Rubin seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 3:11 pm.