



MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 28, 2013 MEETING - DRAFT

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

CALL TO ORDER

President Marlene Saritzky called the meeting to order at 2:02pm.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present:
Marlene Sharon Saritzky
Denise Bradley-Tyson
Mark Fishkin
Jon Rubin
Matt Stiker
Melanie Blum
Robert Morales

Commissioners Excused:

Villy Wang
PJ Johnston
Don Canady

Commissioners Absent:

Peter Bratt

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

Commissioner Bradley-Tyson made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 23, 2013 meeting. Commissioner Fishkin seconded the motion. Commissioner comment and public comment was taken. The minutes were unanimously approved.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT (DISCUSSION ONLY)

President Marlene Saritzky introduced Commissioner Stiker to his first Commission Meeting and thanked him for joining the Commission.

President Saritzky talked about her visit earlier in the week to the Ninth Street Independent Film Center event. They were the recipient of our grant this year. It was terrific to meet people from the Jewish Film Festival, Frameline, and the SF Green Film Festival. They had one filmmaker from each of the festivals there who gave a talk and then either showed a clip or a piece of past work. It was a lovely community of people and President



Saritzky is thrilled to participate with them and encourage the filmmakers. They have a screen room that they wanted other independent filmmakers to know about. She hopes that all the Commissioners will have a chance to get to know these filmmakers in the future.

President Saritzky then asked for Commission comment.

Susannah Robbins, Executive Director of the SF Film Office, commented that she thought it was an exciting presentation that the Ninth Street IFC made. The quality of the work coming out of the four filmmakers who are a part of the incubator program was really top notch and she cannot wait to see what they will produce. She also mentioned that one of the filmmakers was a recipient of the Rebate Program. She completed her film in the past two months and is now doing a final cut which she will be screening soon. Susannah also mentioned that there was another filmmaker in attendance who wanted to shoot her whole film in San Francisco and was not yet aware of our Rebate Program, but now wants to take advantage of it.

President Saritzky mentioned that the filmmakers are very interested in collaborating with any of the other film organizations in the City.

Commissioner Fishkin stated that they would be interested in film organizations outside of the City as well.

President Saritzky asked for public comment and there was none.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT (DISCUSSION ONLY)

Director Susannah Robbins began her report by updating the Commission on permits in the Film Office. Last month we had 50 permits with 102 shooting days and \$18,800 in permit fees. And this month we had 38 permits but with 125 shooting days and \$24,400 in permit fees. So there was a 22% increase in shooting days since last month and a 29% increase in permit fees. A lot of this is due to the filming with Real World and HBO. Real World's permits are seven days a week and HBO's permits are five days a week so it definitely boosts our numbers. Comparing it to filming a year ago at this time, we are up 13% in permit fees and 8.65% in shooting days.

Notable productions for September and October were MTV's Real World which just wrapped on Thursday and HBO's "Looking" which wraps on November 7th. The air date for "Looking" is January 19th. We also had American Idol in town and a Toyota commercial. And just to note, we are incredibly busy right now. From Friday last week to Sunday this week, we will have seven major car commercials shooting in San Francisco. Lauren and Maggie have been coordinating these perfectly so that none of these commercials run into each other!

Susannah stated that her next report is on the upcoming amendment to the Scene in San Francisco Rebate Program. Legislation was introduced to the Board of Supervisors by Supervisor Farrell a few weeks ago and this Wednesday it goes before the Budget and Finance Committee to look at the fiscal impact. On Wednesday, October 30th at 10:30am in the Board of Supervisors Chambers, the Budget and Finance Committee will be meeting to look at these ways in which we hope to amend the Rebate Program in the following ways. One is to reduce the permit fees for production whose budgets are less than \$100,000. Currently we charge \$300 a day for television series, movies, pilots, or documentaries, but if your budget is \$500,000 or less, we charge \$100 a day. That change came a year ago in September. But, what I found from going and talking to local independent filmmaking groups is that there are still a lot of people out there that are not taking out permits. So I think there is a chance, but no guarantee, that we will get more people taking out permits if we have another category where if your budget is under \$100,000, it would be a \$50 per day permit. We are hoping that will get approved.

Another part of the amendment is to expand the type of productions that are eligible to qualify for the Rebate to web series. Currently web series are not eligible, but the wave of the future seems to be these web series. Netflix has so many productions and Amazon is producing their own as well. They were actually in town over the last few months shooting portions of their series called "Betas," which is completely about San Francisco but being shot

mostly in Los Angeles. We would like to be able to entice productions like these to come and shoot their entire productions here in San Francisco. Very often their budgets are like those of a regular TV Series, so we are hoping that that will be allowed in this new amendment.

Lastly, we are asking to extend the expiration date from June 30, 2014 to June 20, 2015 and we are asking that an additional \$1 million be allocated to the current funding cap that we have. That might be a little bit hard, because the Controller's Office hasn't done their assessment of the current Rebate Program yet for this year which is due December 31, 2013 for this year. I am hoping we get this because right now we currently have \$1,412,080 available in the Rebate. However, we anticipate rebating an additional \$772,743 to three productions by February of 2014. Therefore, the projected fund balance as of February 2014 will be only \$639,337. If we had a feature film of the scale of Hemingway and Gellhorn come back between now and June 2014, it would eat up that whole fund. So we are trying to increase this now, so that we can show productions that San Francisco is a viable option for their film's location and can tap into our Rebate.

President Saritzky asked if Susannah had any expectation of whether or not this report will come out before the hearing or do they just have to do it before December 31st?

Susannah replied that the report on the Rebate will not be out in time for the hearing but rather by December 31st. However, they did have someone assigned to doing an analysis of this expansion and deemed this to be a policy decision.

President Saritzky asked if Susannah had copies of whatever analysis they did.

Susannah replied that it was available on the Board of Supervisors website, but she would share it.

Commissioner Fishkin asked if they also did any analysis of the economic impact of what the filming would be, rather than just the metrics for film days and fees. Do we know, for example, what the return is for every dollar we put forward in the Rebate program? Do we have these metrics?

Susannah replied that she has this information but cannot quote it right now, and will go back and formulate her argument to include these metrics.

Commissioner Fishkin said he assumed the results were positive.

Commissioner Bradley-Tyson asked if there was a reason why we wouldn't want to extend the Rebate beyond 2015.

Susannah replied that this fell in between the two year budget time table, so we are making it coincide with the current two year budget cycle that will end in 2015.

Susannah discussed that lastly, she gave a talk October 9th to the Northern California Production Council about the State Tax Credit as well as the Rebate Program and Vendor Discount Program. She met with them over lunch with about eighteen of their members and was talking to them about the State Tax Incentive. She has been working with a group of Northern and Southern Californians to work on the expansion of the State Tax Credit come this spring. We are trying to educate people in the industry about how they need to reach out to legislators to let them know the personal impact of these incentives on their businesses, and to have groups of them go and talk to the legislators

about the current program and why it needs to be expanded. Currently on a State level, California is still not competing enough with other states. I also reminded them about our local Rebate Program. While we were talking, we talked about a potential web and still photo campaign to promote the benefit of filming for locals in San Francisco to use as a tool to promote the expansion of the State Tax Rebate so that the legislators don't think of it as a gift to Hollywood but rather helping local production employees to stay and work where they live. We could also use this as a tool to promote local film jobs for when production is increasing in San Francisco. This group was very interested in helping to create this type of campaign and is willing to provide the production of it. So now we are thinking of how we can create the storyboards for this. You might be familiar with New York's campaign which is similar to this. They have examples of local production employees that are able to stay and work in New York and work there because of all of the great incentives that New York offers. We want to do something like this but with our own San Francisco flavor. We are hoping to reach out to agencies to work with us pro bono on this.

President Saritzky asked for Commissioner and public comment and there was none.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT (DISCUSSION ONLY)

President Saritzky asked for general Commission comment.

President Saritzky discussed that at our last meeting, we decided to get a small group together to talk about trying to find some undiscovered stage space for productions in the City. There will be a call with Commissioners Johnston and Stiker as well as Susannah later in the week. We are also going to reach out to local ad agencies about doing some pro bono ad work for us. Commissioner Stiker has already agreed to reach out to a couple.

Susannah also commented about our Film Commission Fall Mixer. She said it was really great to see all the connections that were happening there and how excited everyone was to be there and be a part of it. We want to keep up with our mixers as we believe they are a benefit to our community.

Commissioner Fishkin commented that it was an excellent event.

President Saritzky asked for any further Commission comment, and there was none.

President Saritzky asked for public comment. There was none.

ADJOURNMENT (ACTION ITEM)

President Saritzky asked for a motion. Commissioner Rubin made a motion; Commissioner Blum seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 2:25pm.