



MINUTES OF THE APRIL 21, 2014 MEETING - DRAFT

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

CALL TO ORDER

President Marlene Sharon Saritzky called the meeting to order at 2:03pm.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present:
Marlene Sharon Saritzky
Don Canady
Mark Fishkin
Villy Wang
Melanie Blum
Denise Bradley-Tyson
PJ Johnston

Commissioners Excused:

Matt Stiker
Jon Rubin
Peter Bratt
Robert Morales

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE FEBRUARY 24, 2014 MEETING (ACTION ITEM)

President Bradley-Tyson asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the February 24th, 2014 meeting. Commissioner Blum 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 thanking her fellow commissioners for their support in her candidacy as president of the San Francisco Film Commission. She reminds the commission that the ethics paperwork was due April 1st, 2014 and encourages anyone who has not completed the paperwork yet to do so soon.

She also notes that the Mayor's Office is taking notice of who is attending commissioner meetings and encourages commissioners to attend as often as possible. Although the film office is a small office, it is mighty and needs support from its commissioners. President Bradley-Tyson stresses how important it is to notify Maggie Weiland, the Filming Coordinator, in a timely manner whether or not they are able to make the meetings. This way it can be established if we have a quorum or not.



Prior to the cancelled March meeting, President Bradley-Tyson, Vice President Wang, and Commissioner Saritzky met with Executive Director Susannah Robbins in order to discuss their new roles and goals using Susannah's 2014 Work Plan as a guide. She wishes to use the plan in terms of supporting Susannah and the Film Office in order to accomplish several annual goals.

President Bradley-Tyson notes that there are three key areas where Susannah needs Commission support:

- 1) Legislation- starting with the Sacramento Letter Writing campaign. She thanks all the commissioners who participated.
- 2) Real estate- She notes that space remains to be a critical issue.
- 3) Marketing

President Bradley-Tyson states that they discussed with Vice President Wang how to best utilize people's skill sets in order to successfully market the Film Office and San Francisco. Vice President Wang thanks the commission for her new role. She states that, after reviewing the work plan, that there is a lot to navigate in terms of communications through the Film Office. To better organize the Commission's efforts, it was suggested that each commissioner become a point person in regards to one of the three goals mentioned above.

For example, Vice President Wang, Commissioner Stiker, and Susannah have been meeting with the Film Office to address the need for rebranding and advertising. There has been informal discussion among commissioners as to which goal each would be best suited for based on their strengths, contacts, and networks. For those who have not yet discussed which goal they would be most interested in supporting, Vice President Wang suggests they talk after the meeting. This way, commissioners will be able to have more input and further support the Film Office.

President Bradley-Tyson asked for commissioner comment. Commissioner Canady asks if this will be a subcommittee. Susannah states that it will not be an official subcommittee but rather working groups. As a three-person office, it would be great to have the commissioners' expertise and skills to assist in those areas. For a while the Film Office has talked about revamping our website, and we now want to put those words into actions. Any input is welcome.

President Bradley-Tyson asked for commissioner comment. There was none.

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

Before we move on to the Executive Director Report, President Bradley-Tyson acknowledges Commissioner Blum and the upcoming San Francisco International Film Festival. The new executive director of the San Francisco Film Society, Noah Cowan, came to the last meeting which was unfortunately canceled. Several commissioners were able to meet him, and she believes he makes a great addition to the filmmaking community. She congratulates Commissioner Blum and her colleagues and mentions how much great coverage the festival has gotten in the San Francisco Chronicle.

Commissioner Blum states that there will be a section of the festival that focuses on local Bay Area filmmakers, and there will be many pieces coming from all over the world. She hopes everyone can make it, and says that she will work on getting Noah Cowan to another meeting in the near future.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT (DISCUSSION ONLY)

Director Susannah Robbins began her report by updating the Commission on permits in the Film Office. We are up 37% in the number of shooting days for Feb/March since this same time last year, with 122 shooting days and \$18,350 in permit fees. That is almost a \$5000 increase in permit fees since this same period last year. Production is still booming.

Notable productions were: Food Network's Foodcourt Wars; Parks & Rec (which shot 1 day); Steven Bochco's Murder in the First (5 days); and Generation Brazil (6 days). Generation Brazil is a Brazilian Telenovela which

will air from May – October in Brazil, 6 nights per week. The first 25 episodes will feature the Bay Area & SF before the main character moves back to Brazil. Susannah mentions that she had gotten this show's permit on her desk before attending a department head meeting for OEWD. It was there that Todd Rufo, the head of Economic Development, said, "All you need is a Brazilian Telenovela," to which she responded, "We just got one." He was very excited about this news because the mayor's office is working to increase tourism from Brazil. A show like this is the right vehicle to entice tourism. We also had a BMW commercial shoot here for 5 days.

Susannah's second report is on stage space. HBO's *Looking* is coming back for season 2, and Susannah has been working with John Updike, the head of real estate, on acquiring a portion of this building at 2000 Folsom Street for over six months. The idea was that the library would take 2/3's of the building for book storage and binding, and we would have 30,000 square feet for productions. Unfortunately, 10 days before all the leases were going to be signed, the deal fell through and the building owners leased it to a manufacturing company.

It was terrible news which has left Susannah scrambling to find another location; because the plan was that Netflix, which is coming to do two episodes of a series in June, was going to use the space for offices and some build. They were supposed to move in a week after this all happened. Thankfully, the amazing Port of San Francisco offered a couple spaces to look at. The first place didn't really work, so they offered 501 Cesar Chavez which several productions have used in the past. They turned around a lease in a week for this production which is unheard of. It usually takes six weeks at least to get this done, and Jeff Bauer at the Port of San Francisco has been amazing. The production is getting their keys today.

That was a wonderful turn of events, but it has still left Susannah searching for a place for HBO's *Looking*. She had reached out to the Palace of Fine Arts, and there is a chance that they will be able to squeeze in the end of the Town School leaving and the Pan Pacific Centennial Celebration coming in. We are still trying to figure this out, but it is a possibility. The other possibility is through the Port of San Francisco again. Susannah has asked them about Shed D, which *Hemingway and Gellhorn* used, and the Head of the Port Monique Moyer said that we could contact Metro, the company that leases Shed D for cargo. We would be able to use half of it for *Looking*, and the other half would still be used for cargo which is delivered once a week. HBO thinks that they will be able to work around the shipping schedule.

Neither location is set in stone, but at least we have options. Susannah was fearful that we would end up losing production to L.A. or another city due to lack of stage space.

The third report is about the expansion of the State Film Tax Credit AB1839. Susannah has been working with a coalition of people to work on expanding the tax credit. In the past, productions whose budgets are over \$75 million were not able to apply for tax credit. That is why a lot of these blockbuster films have gone to Louisiana, Georgia, Europe and Australia. With this new bill, the first \$100 million of expenditures would be applicable towards the 20% tax credit. That could potentially allow more blockbusters to come back to California.

Another aspect of the bill is that it will open the program to 1 hour television shows and pilots. The good thing for us is that there will be a 5% bump in the tax credit for any productions that shoot outside the L.A. area. If a production in the past was eligible for 20%, if they shoot it up here for instance, they would get 25%. Independent features already get a 25% tax credit, so if they were here it would bump up to 30%. So that could really help our production here in the Bay Area.

The bill already went through the Arts and Entertainment Committee back in March. It passed 7-0. The next hearing is May 12th before the Revenue and Taxation Committee, and then it goes before the Assembly Appropriations Committee. In late May it will go out of the Assembly and over to the Senate, and this is a crucial thing because it is in the Senate that they think they will receive the most resistance. The First Committee in Senate is Governance and Finance headed by Lois Wolk who is known to very anti-tax credit for anything.

The idea is to get a really strong grassroots movement going in order to show all the legislators in Northern California how important this is to everyone in California, not just Hollywood. We did have a meeting here in City Hall on April 1st, 2014 about exploring the idea of a rally in San Francisco to show support in Northern California. At that meeting we had people representing the Teamsters from the Local 16 and other locals, SAG-AFTRA, the Chamber of Commerce, Hotel Council, DGA, PGA, and across the board support. At that meeting we had everyone go around the table and say how many people they thought they could get to commit to attending the rally. The number was kind of high at 1,000 people, and if we got even 400 people it would be impressive.

L.A. has already had two of these rallies, one was all union and one was all vendors. I don't think we have enough vendors to support separate rallies like that, but the idea is to combine the two. The idea is to invite key legislators and have people come up and speak about their own personal stories about how they are affected when having to go to other states for months at a time for filmmaking and want to work at home.

We have various committees set up to help with the organization of the rally. Susannah has been interviewing potential event producers to take it on. The various unions have all agreed to donate a certain amount of money towards the payment of a producer. My hope is that once she starts there will be a lot more progress.

Everything should be through the senate by the end of August, and Governor Brown has until the end of September to sign the bill. By then we will know whether it passes or not and whether or not our production will increase.

The next topic to address is updating the Film Office website. Susannah had a conversation with Marco Bruno from the IT department because apparently the city is getting ready to update all of their systems. What she wanted to find out from him is how much support the Film Office would be given to design a new site the way we would like it to be. We won't really know how much support we will receive until June when he is able to sit down and meet with us. The City is converting over from a VISION based system to a DRUPAL based system, but they are only able to support one DRUPAL template which may work to our disadvantage. It will be mobile and template responsive, and Marco will convert our current site to show us what it will look like.

If it doesn't work the way we need it to, we can look outside but will need outside support for upgrades and changes. We need to figure out what the costs would be to do that, and figure out if it is within our budget. Some of the sites that we liked, all of which went to outside sources, were SFO, Rec and Park, and SFMTA. Susannah spoke with Sean Stasio at San Francisco Recreation and Park and said that initially they spent \$50,000 in design content creation. It costs them about \$3,000 a year to host the site. She also spoke to the airport which spent about \$200,000 on their website and about \$50,000 a year to host it. We will have to find something a bit more modest than that.

For now we will leave the website as it is until June when we have the meeting with Marco. If we then decide it does not fit our needs and wants, we will look outside for someone to design the site.

Also on the agenda is the redesign of our logo. Susannah asks for Vice President Wang to speak about the ad campaign. Vice President Wang thanks Lauren Machado, Production and Marketing Manager, for running the presentation so that the commissioners may view the ads. She acknowledges Commissioner Stiker and TEAK Digital for their effort and work on creating these designs. At BAYCAT, they have been working with the different logo designs to see how it looks when featured in different projects. She has been able to see what works and what doesn't.

The current imagery definitely has the San Francisco logos, and we have gone through a process to simplify them, but what is confusing is that the mark itself says San Francisco Film Commission. Therefore, is it the Film Office? Is it just the Film Commission? What is it really representing? The colors are not necessarily of the city, and when using that mark, it is difficult to make it very small.

So we started with current logo and analyzed other film office marks. There is definitely a myriad of different marks out there. We found many similarities such as film strips, but very few really stood out. We selected a few very strategically as these logos aligned with their city's travel imagery. We took a look at the San Francisco Travel logo for inspiration and hope to simplify it to represent the mission and energy of the Film Office.

We tried to think of ways on how to integrate the image icons into the logo, but the more we looked at it, the more difficult it became. They become impossible to decipher when they are small, so we tried to think of something that would represent San Francisco. The word that we came up with was "action." In its multiple definitions, it's a word that means "making something happen," "going," "doing," a "force of energy." Quotes about the importance of action come from Winston Churchill, John F. Kennedy, Mahatma Gandhi, and Albert Einstein, and appear in many languages, across all countries, and about many industries.

There is perhaps no industry that is more closely associated with the word "action," however, than the film industry. Nothing happens on a film set until the word is shouted – with just 6 letters and two syllables, what had up until then been some varying degrees of mayhem and chaos comes instantly to order as purpose and intent step in and take over, and all of the boundless energy is now channeled and directed into accomplishing a clear mission.

Interestingly, the San Francisco Film Office works the same way, on a daily basis taking mayhem and chaos and turning it into focused and deliberate action.

For a mark to be most effective, it should reflect the intent of the organization. The new mark, therefore, must be all about...Action.

We decided simple is best, because we tried adding "Film Commission" in several ways and it just added more clutter. It takes the logo out of balance and takes the action out of it. It stands out on a sponsorship or poster. Other marks might be unrecognizable, but you will remember Film SF. Additional uses of the logo are still in progress, but it pops on a letter head and is noticeable on social media.

Vice President Wang says that it has been great working with Susannah and the Film Office to navigate through the waters of this design. She hopes that the commission is happy with this logo and opens the floor for questions. Commissioner Saritzky thinks it is a huge improvement. She likes the color and simplicity of it. Commissioner Fishkin acknowledges that a lot of logos are clichéd and it is difficult to create them in a contemporary way. He agrees that 'action' was a great thing to key on. He thinks this new logo works really nicely. Commissioner Johnston thinks it is a nice solution to the issue of Film Commission versus Film Office which is unnecessarily confusing. It makes things clearer that there is an office to help with productions filming in the city, and he likes the clean look. In addition to black and orange, he jokingly thinks we should include blue and gold. Commissioner Blum asks if the black and orange letters are interchangeable.

Vice President Wang says that we will provide a style guide soon to show how the colors are used on letterhead and in black and white. Commissioner Blum states that she thinks it makes more sense for SF to be in orange and Film in black. The room agrees.

Commissioner Canady asks about the website redesign. He asks what the Office wants to do differently with the website as far as updating it. Susannah says that currently it looks boring and outdated and is difficult to navigate. When we have people call into the office, 9 times out of 10 we say, "Well let's jump on the website with you, and we will show you how to get there." When Susannah first interviewed for the job, she found things difficult to find on the website. We want to make it simpler. We want to make it more contemporary and action oriented like the logo is, and be more reflective of the work that we do.

Commissioner Canady also asks if we have done focus groups in the community to get their reactions to the new design and see if they had a hand in the decision. Susannah informs him that it was a decision made by the Film Office and the Commission. President Bradley-Tyson says that it has been mentioned informally by members of

the film community, but the design was decided internally. Susannah says that initially this wasn't about updating the logo but rather to support the upcoming ad campaign in August. She initially wanted to keep the three icons in the logo, but TEAK Digital put the new, clean logo onto several images and it stood out as the best option.

President Bradley-Tyson commends Vice President Wang and Commissioner Stiker for a job well done on the logo. She notifies the commission that she had attended the meeting on April 1st, 2014 with the unions. She said it was great to see so much support from the various constituencies who were there.

Susannah informs the commission that the Friends of the Film Commission cannot receive funding for the rally because they are a 501c3, so they cannot raise money for a specific legislation. They were wanting to and voted yes to do it, but then they found out that they could not.

President Bradley-Tyson relates this back to supporting the Film Office in relation to legislation by going back to their various constituencies and communities and informing them about the bill. She asks Susannah what date the rally is intended for. Susannah says that they are looking at June 7th, 2014. It depends on if there is a venue available. Initially we were looking at doing it in an open setting outdoors, perhaps Justin Herman Plaza. The more we have been talking within the committees, however, the more we felt it would be better to do indoors because you can end up having a group look pretty small outdoors. Susannah has reached out to a hotel to see if they would be interested in doing this, and they are definitely considering it. She hopes that the event producer will come up with more options.

Commissioner Saritzky asked who the event producer is. Susannah said that her name is Vanessa Hammock, but she doesn't know that she has been selected yet. Susannah says that Vanessa is very passionate about working on this and asked great questions. She has really great ideas and has been doing this on her own since 2008. Prior to that, she was with an organization that did events.

President Bradley-Tyson commends Susannah for her effort on finding stage space for HBO's *Looking* as she knows Susannah lost many nights of sleep in her search.

President Bradley-Tyson brings up discussion about the continuation of the San Francisco Film Collective. It is an item that the commission will be asked to vote on. Susannah reports that the Film Collective has been going on for two and a half years. We currently have 9 filmmaking groups and 1 anchor tenant. The anchor tenant is at North of Market Tenderloin Community Benefit District, and they were in the building before we came. It has been very advantageous to have them there because they pay the bulk of the rent, and they are the go-to person if there are any questions because they have been there for so long.

They were very helpful with all the other tenants, but our lease on the space is up on June 30th, 2014. The owner has made a commitment to rent the whole building to a nonprofit organization, so Susannah has been looking for a new space for the Collective. She has found one space down at 1061 McAllister which is where McAllister and Van Ness intersect. It is a nice space, but the concern is the additional cost. The current costs are \$5,000 a month for 10,000 square feet. It is an amazing deal. Craig Larson has been an angel letting us have this space for this long at that price. We take in \$3,620 in rent each month, and then we have additional expenses such as janitorial, garbage, recycling, and some supplies. That plus our fees each year redo the subleases ends up being a cost of \$1770 a month, or \$21,240 a year out of the Film Office budget.

If we moved the Collective to the new space at 1061 McAllister, there are 8 offices available at \$6000 for 2,345 square feet. If we choose to go forward with the Collective and keep their rents similar to what they are now, we would be adding approximately \$12,000 a year to our costs for a total of \$33,240 per year.

We need to decide today if we will continue supporting the Film Collective. We do still currently have our FilmSpace Grant where we provide \$2000 a month towards the rent of office space for 4 independent filmmakers at 9th Street Independent Film Center. So we are still supporting independent filmmakers in San Francisco. The

question for all of you today is: Is the Film Collective something you want to continue with? Or do we use some of the money for the FilmSpace Grant or other independent filmmaker groups? Or do we use the money to potentially help upgrade our website?

Susannah acknowledges that the Film Collective has been really good. One of the filmmakers, Sarah McPherson, had a documentary on KQED and has won awards for *Stable Life*. There has been a lot of creativity there, a lot of interaction with the collective members. However, from our office point of view, it has been a very big commitment to be a landlord. With the size of our office and all the tasks we have ahead of us, Susannah is not certain it is the best use of our time and money and leaves it to the Commission to vote on.

President Bradley-Tyson asked if there is any commissioner comment or question.

Commissioner Blum said that with the increased filming in the city, the Office has become very busy. Helping attract a larger number of filmmakers to come here is a better use of our time. With the increased cost, perhaps the money would be better spent getting the website up and running so that it is more productive for filmmaking. Getting a stabilized location for *Looking* and for some of the other projects would also be a better use.

Commissioner Canady agrees that with the Film Office being so busy, worrying about rents and sending reminders is too much extra work.

Commissioner Saritzky said that many within the Commission struggled with idea of supporting the Film Collective to begin with. She is glad that we did it, and it has turned out to be a wonderful thing. It shows the city's commitment, and we have now created this FilmSpace Grant. We did the film house residencies for a while and now we are doing the 9th Street Independent Film Center. If we make the difficult decision to let go of the Film Collective, she doesn't feel like we are letting go of our commitment. She understands how much work it has been supporting the Film Collective, and although it was a wonderful experiment to allow the city to partner with creative in a new way, there is a better use for the funds and time.

Commissioner Fiskin thanks the commissioners for their comments. Since he is a newer commissioner, he asks about the history between the Film Collective and Film Commission. Commissioner Sartizky told him that it started about 2 years ago, July 2012. After hearing from the other commissioners, Fiskin agrees that the funds and time could be put to better use elsewhere. He hates to see any loss of funds going toward independent filmmakers and asks if the Film Collective has been given any notice.

Commissioner Saritzky informs him that the Film Collective is not a 501c3. The Film Office is the landlord and these film houses pay rent to us. The owner, Craig, gave us a very generous deal, and we in turn would make up the difference after the film houses paid. Susannah informs the commission that she has given the Collective a heads up in early January when she had heard from Craig that he was looking at leasing the building to this other organization. She told them that she was uncertain that they would be able to continue, and they should look for another space while she continues to look as well. Susannah thinks the space at 1061 McAllister is a great space, and she will connect the filmmakers to the landlord even if the commission decides to not use our very limited funds to continue making up the difference.

Vice President Wang thinks it is great that Susannah is trying to help them find another space, but the disparities between the space size and cost between the two buildings isn't helping solve a problem. The market has changed as well as the Film Collective's priorities. If it weren't for the fact that we already have business in the pipeline with a desperate need for real estate, we are all in the market for real estate. She hopes that even if the space is gone that the friendships and connections between the independent filmmakers will continue. There are other agencies such as the Film Society, BAYCAT, 9th St., and other places that these filmmakers can tap in. She agrees that we need to look at ways to offer spaces to productions on a larger scale because this will also benefit independent filmmakers. Given the current market and our priorities, it isn't the right fit to continue with the Film

Collective right now. She would like to offer perhaps finding a way to keep the Collective socially networked. She would like to host it at BAYCAT in order to do collaborations and visits.

Susannah mentions that the independent filmmakers are always invited to the Film Commission mixers and events in order to continue the connections. She believes there is potential to keeping the Collective socially networked.

Commissioner Johnston says that the Collective was established before he had become a commissioner and thinks that it was a great idea. He agrees, however, that given the priorities and have limited resources, a better use of fund and time might be to go hosting visiting spaces with allies and truly finding a stage space for future productions.

Susannah said that she had spoken to a producer last week who is interested in bringing a feature here this fall, and he wants to be able to build. She is already thinking, “Where am I going to put him?” It is not just *Looking* as it will already be shooting. Another space has to appear, because she doesn’t think the two proposed locations for *Looking* will be available at the same time for both productions. Long term space is definitely a priority.

President Bradley-Tyson thanks everyone for their comments and supports the idea of putting the Film Collective on hiatus and utilizing our time and funds in other ways.

Vice President Wang reported that BAYCAT youth media producers produced a documentary short called *Endangered*. It was done for one of our clients and donors, the Metafund, and is premiering at the Roxie. The Roxie has been doing a young future filmmaker series. It is this Saturday, April 26th. There will be a panel and the filmmakers will be there. It tells about the issue of health in the Bay View in a new way. One Day in San Francisco is going to partner with us and help tell our story. Be on the lookout.

MOTION TO DISCONTINUE THE SPACE (ACTION ITEM)

President Bradley-Tyson asked for a motion to discontinue the space. Commissioner Canady made a motion and Commissioner Fishkin seconded the motion. The Film Commission unanimously votes to discontinue the space.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT (DISCUSSION ONLY)

President Bradley-Tyson asked if there was any public comment. Aaron Paul informs the commission that there is an event called 48-Hour Film Project that occurs here in the city. It will occur on June 6-8th and the films will be screened at Clay Theatre from June 16-19th. It is the world’s largest timed film competition. Teams assemble in the city and have a 48-hour window to make a movie which is later screened. He asks the commissioners to spread the word of the competition because it accepts everybody is a great way to make contacts. All of the information is on 48hour.com

President Bradley-Tyson advises that they should make the media aware in order to spread the word about the competition.

Aaron informs the commission that this will be the 12th year of the competition in San Francisco. About 5 years ago they were up to around 80 teams. In the last few years the number has declined, and last year they had about 50. They hope to get it back up to around 70 this year, but teams can vary from 1 person to around 30. It becomes approximately 200-300 people making films.

Susannah asked if there is a set length for the films. Aaron said that all the films are between 3-7 minutes. Part of the festival is that it is an off-the-cuff thing. No team knows what their movie is going to be until 7 PM Friday night. They will pull out a genre out of a hat, one line of dialog, and one prop that they have to integrate into their film. It forces you to go outside your comfort zone and it gets groups together in the spirit of collaboration.

ADJOURNMENT (ACTION ITEM)

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