

MICHIGAN FILM ADVISORY COMMISSION

Minutes

September 15, 2003

The Meeting was called to order by the Chair, Richard McLellan, at 4:06 p.m.

Members present: Bob Brown, Harry Carlson, Alice Gilbert, Corey Jacobson, John Kelly, Sue Marx, and Tom Shields.

Janet Lockwood, Director of the Michigan Film Office, was also present.

1. Introduction of the Members: Each member introduced himself or herself. Members of the audience were also given the opportunity to introduce themselves.
2. Agenda: The Commission unanimously adopted the agenda, which is attached to these minutes.
3. Previous Minutes: The Commission unanimously adopted the minutes for the meeting of March 13, 2003.
4. Discussion and adoption of Bylaws: There was a general discussion of the Bylaws. The Chair explained that it created offices, provided for elections and terms of office, and fulfilled the Commission's statutory obligations.
 - Mr. Carlson made a motion to amend Article I, sec. 2, 2.1 to read: A quorum for any meeting shall be *not less than six* members of the Commission appointed and serving.
 - Mr. Kelly Seconded the amendment, and the commission unanimously adopted it.
 - Ms. Gilbert made a motion to amend Article I, sec. 2, 2.2 to read: An affirmative vote of the Commission shall be by a majority of the members of the Commission present, *in person or electronically*, and voting.
 - Mr. Kelly seconded the amendment, and the commission unanimously adopted it.
 - Mr. Kelly made a motion to approve the Bylaws. Mr. Shields seconded the motion.
 - The Commission unanimously adopted the Bylaws, as amended, effective immediately.

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5. Election of Officers: Nominations and elections were held for the positions of Vice-Chairperson and Secretary.
- Vice-Chairperson: Mr. Carlson nominated Mr. Kelly. He was the only nominee and was elected by a unanimous voice vote.
 - Secretary: Mr. Kelly nominated Ms. Gilbert. She was the only nominee and was elected by a unanimous voice vote.
6. Update from Film Office: Ms. Lockwood reported that there were few changes at the film office since the last meeting. She did note that the office had a budget reduction, including a salary reduction for the director. Also, the Michigan Film Production Book had been delayed, but she hoped to have it to the publisher by mid-October. She then took questions from the Commissioners and the public
- The Production Book was discussed at length.
 - The initial printing will be 1,000 copies with 500 listings. The expense will be about \$11,000, to be split by the Film Office and participants.
 - Availability of the information through the internet was discussed.
 - Ms. Lockwood said that The Department of Information Technology (“DIT”) was putting the information on to the internet, but the process was time consuming due to the program used for the State’s website and the workload of that department. The West Michigan Group had offered assistance in putting the material on the internet, but Ms. Lockwood did not know if the State would approve this.
 - The Commission discussed what it could do to assist in the situation.
 - Mr. Kelly made a motion to establish a three person ad hoc working committee to meet with HAL, Ms. Lockwood, DIT, and any interested members of the legislature to help get the information on the internet quickly.
 - The motion was seconded by Mr. Carlson, and was unanimously approved.
 - Ms. Lockwood talked about prospects for filming in Michigan
 - There was also a discussion on the status of the Detroit Film Office and MCACA.

7. Planning and Research Committees: The committees were formed from volunteers on the Commission, and the chairperson of each committee was elected.

- Research Committee:
 - Ms. Marks, Mr. Kelly, Ms. Hagan, Mr. Carlson, and Mr. Brown, who will serve as chairperson.
- Planning Committee:
 - Mr. Pero, Ms. Gilbert, Mr. Shield, and Mr. Jacobson, who will serve as chairperson.

The committees were to organize their meeting times.

8. Comments from Commissioners: The commissioners were given the opportunity to discuss the possible direction of the committees and the Commission in general.

- Mr. Brown suggested the commission raise funds to help the Film Office and to promote the industry. The chair suggested a letter to determine whether the appropriations bill for HAL allowed for such donations. Also, a memo to determine if donations could be structured to fund the Commission and the Film Office directly. Mr. Kelly suggested a 501(c)(3) or other organization to collect funds.
- The chair brought up four topics, suggested from the meeting that he believed would help fulfill the Commission’s statutory obligation to promote the film industry:
 - Tax incentive legislation – Research other state’s tax incentives and draft legislation. Ms. Lockwood said Louisiana had the best plan. Illinois had a plan that was good when enacted, but its effectiveness has been limited by cuts. Ms. Gilbert suggested other problems with the Illinois legislation.
 - Film Festivals – Mr. Brown suggested that the commission ought to do anything it could to help support and promote these festivals. Ms. Lockwood said that the Film Office gives \$1,000 to each festival, but would like to be able to do more. It was suggested that the festivals be linked to the MEDC’s tourism website.
 - Awards – Mr. Brown suggested an award to recognize a Michiganian working in Hollywood, and to tie a workshop into any award ceremony. Mr. Carlson suggested to have an event each year with many awards recognizing achievement.

- Legislator involvement/awareness – Ms. Marx requested a list of the members of the appropriate legislative committees to be targeted by the commission. Mr. Shields suggested compiling recommendations for the legislators to show what can be done. Mr. Kelly Suggested an annual report from the commission. Mr. Jacobson said that theater owners were also discussing an event for legislators, such as a screening at the new IMAX theater at Celebration Cinema in Lansing. Mr. Kelly suggested a co-sponsored event between the groups.
- Mr. Shields suggested the Commission encourage the State to adopt a policy to use in-state production houses for commercials. The planning committee was designated to look into this proposal.

9. Schedule of Meetings:

- October 21, 2003 at 4:00 p.m. This meeting is at the Michigan Library and can be attended via videoconferencing in Metro-Detroit. Also, Ms. Lockwood will try to secure a speaker from Louisiana or Illinois to talk about their legislation designed to help the film industry.
- November 19, 2003 at 3:00 p.m. This meeting is on the campus of Lansing Community College. After the meeting, there will be a tour of the facilities and a reception.
- The chair also suggested that meetings for 2004 should be scheduled at the November meeting with a rotating schedule to accommodate the commissioners.

10. Public Comment: The public was invited to make comments and suggestions.

- Mr. Mark Adler, President of MPA, said student films and film festivals should be a focus of the Commission. He also stated that any restrictions on commercials for out-of-state firms may lead to similar restrictions preventing Michigan firms from getting work. He presented a MPAA studied of tax incentives for the film industry in each state.
- Mr. Gaylen Chandler of the MPA said it would be beneficial to have a speaker on the Illinois statute, so Michigan could avoid the problems that Illinois is facing now. Also perhaps money for any awards may be better spent elsewhere. And some states have a minimum percentage of State commercials that must be done in state.
- Mr. Sean Quashnie suggested website options and the importance of promoting advertising in the film production guide.

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- Mr. Todd Rollenhagen suggested a database for local companies showing the revenue generated by the industry. He also offered to help get the information on the internet.
- Mr. Eldon Hancock discussed the gains made in North Carolina after an investment in promoting its film industry.

The commission thanked Mr. Kelly for the refreshments, and the meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Hon. Alice L. Gilbert

Secretary

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