

# MICHIGAN FILM OFFICE ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES

September 23, 2016  
Ladies Literary Club  
Grand Rapids, MI

## 1. Call to Order/Welcome from the Chairman

The meeting of the Michigan Film Office Advisory Council was called to order by Chairman Bill Ludwig at 2:08 p.m. A quorum was present with the following: Bill Ludwig, J.D. Loeks, Joe Voss, Sanford Nelson, Michael Mittelstaedt, Rick Hert, Brian Winn, Tim Pietryga and Terry Terry. Members excused: Jennifer Fischer, Marcia Fishman, Cal Hazelbaker, and Hopwood DePree.

Mr. Ludwig called for an introduction of Council members, and asked audience members to introduce themselves also. He also announced the appointment of two new Council members whose appointments begin on October 1, Mr. Dan Lemieux and Mr. Andriy Pereklita, as well as one new Council member, Ms. Niki Adams, who will fill the seat vacated by Ted Serbinski. He also recognized Joe Voss and Rick Hert, who have been reappointed to the Council.

## 2. Adoption of the Agenda

There was a motion by Mr. Terry to approve the Agenda; seconded by Mr. Sanford; motion passed unanimously.

## 3. Adoption of the Minutes from February 17, 2016 meeting

There was a motion by Mr. Voss to approve the minutes of the June 2016 MFOAC meeting; seconded by Mr. Winn; motion passed unanimously.

## 4. Director's Report – Jenell Leonard

Selam Ghirmai, Strategic Partnerships & Promotions Manager, reported in Jenell Leonard's absence.

For the audience, Ms. Ghirmai explained the history and the function of the Michigan Film & Digital Media Office. She offered a thank you to the ArtPrize team on their event, as well as the Ladies Literary Club for today's meeting venue. Congratulations were extended to Commissioner Jenell Leonard (in absentia) who delivered a healthy baby girl on September 14. She also thanked Lynn McNamara and Tony Garcia of MFDMO for their teamwork in preparation for this meeting.

### Projects Update

Since the June 3 MFOAC meeting, "Tuebor," a FY15 project, was announced, representing \$202,571 in incentives. Two final project announcements are pending, representing \$1.6M in total incentives approved with executed agreements.

### Legislative Update.

The FY16 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Legislative report is in the Council members' packets (also on the MFDMO website). FY16 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter ends on September 30 and that report will be due to the Legislature on October 31.

### Festivals

In the months since the June meeting, the office has sponsored and/or participated in several film festivals, including the Traverse City Film Festival in July; the MFDMO and several guest presenters presented a discussion panel on how to make films in Michigan. Also at the TCFE, the MFDMO was a sponsor of Michigan State University's "The Woz," interactive new media venue, a showcase of transmedia projects that go beyond traditional screens (special thanks to Council member Brian Winn.) MEDC and the Film Office co-sponsored Crain's Detroit Homecoming and ArtPrize 8 in September; the Film Office was a judge of the Pure Michigan Shorts film contest during ArtPrize. Coming up in October, the Film Office is a sponsor of the Digital Summit Detroit; the Film Office has included a contest for students in the creative arts (announced on the MFDMO FB page) as part of the promotion of this event.

#### 2015 MFDMO Strategic Plan Progress Update.

Highlights since June with regards to the Strategic Plan include additional benefits being announced and offered to schools enrolled in the CS First program, including a donation of 20 headphones to each re-enrolled and first-time enrolled schools, as well as digital badging opportunities (which is a supported initiative through the Michigan Dept. of Education.) The CS First program has been very successful, now into its second year, with an overall participation of over 80 schools and over 3,000 students. Michigan has its own unique landing page for Google as well.

The Film Office launched a "Batman v Superman" film tourism application in both IOS and Android.

Overall, more than 60% of all items in the Strategic Plan have been implemented or otherwise addressed.

Ms. Ghirmai introduced Ella Swift who was a location scout for *The Alchemist Cookbook*, a Michigan film by director/writer Joel Potrykus. Ms. Swift spoke about how the city of Allegan embraced the film and production crew with their willingness to help make things happen. The result was a win-win for the community as well as the film team.

Ms. Swift's presentation was a segue for Ms. Ghirmai to introduce a new initiative in development in the Film Office, which is the Creative Chamber/Creative Alliance Community Grant Program Proposal. She gave a brief overview of the status of the film incentive program in Michigan since the summer of 2015 (HB 4122, Public Act 117 of 2015) which ended the film incentive program and which thrust the MFDMO into the new direction of developing all of the creative industries in Michigan in addition to film.

Beginning in late 2015, MFOAC members were charged with developing recommendations on how best to strengthen the efforts of the Film Office and how to serve the greater creative community in the state. Five topical committees were formed and after almost a year-long series of meetings and discussions, the recommendations of the committees were gathered and reviewed by Film Office staff. Eventually it became evident that the recommendations could be implemented as well if not better at a local level, by communities, in much the same as MEDC's Pure Michigan model addresses the broader economic development strategies for Michigan (Job Growth and Investment) while working at the community level. A report published by Creative Many Michigan in 2016 identified twelve cluster areas associated with 'creative' industry: advertising, architecture, arts/artists/art agents, creative technology, culture and heritage, design, fashion, film/AV/broadcasting, literary publishing/print, music, performing arts, and visual arts and crafts. The proposed community grant program's purpose is to help establish local and regional 'creative chambers of commerce,' or 'creative alliances', similar to economic chambers of commerce in five pilot communities across the state. The explicit goal is to increase jobs, foster 'creative communities' to

enhance a region's attractiveness and productivity, and to integrate the creative industries into Michigan's broader economy. The grant program will be a three-year pilot and will focus on communities or regions of the state that have a demonstrated a continued desire to grow beyond their present level. While the five pilot communities will not be announced immediately, this is a proposal that has earned Governor Snyder's initial endorsement as a priority for the MEDC, and the MFDMO will administer the grant program beginning early in 2017.

### **Presentation – Christian Gaines, Executive Director, ArtPrize**

Mr. Gaines gave a brief overview of his career history, and said that although ArtPrize is in its eighth year, 2016 was only the second year for ArtPrize Onscreen. He mentioned the Pure Michigan Shorts film contest and MFDMO's sponsoring and judging of that contest. He spoke about the vitality of the Grand Rapids creative community, and the formation of a Grand Rapids Film Society.

### **Public Comments.**

Mr. Keith Mitchell of CineVee asked about the process for requesting event sponsorship from the MFDMO, and Mr. Dave Redding commended the film office for the work it does.

### **Old Business.**

There was no old business discussed, although Mr. Nelson asked how incentive money is handled or disbursed if a project is not completed. There were some general comments from Council members about their interpretation of how funds are handled in that scenario, and Ms. Ghirmai stated that those monies revert to the state's General Fund. [REFERENCE NOTE: Per Public Act 117 of 2015, incentive money that is unused will either be reallocated or returned to the General Fund of the state. Reference sections (14) and (15) of Public Act 117 of 2015, below:]

*(14) At the end of each fiscal year, the commissioner shall certify the total amount of unclaimed certificates of completion, agreements where work has not commenced as required in subsection (4), and agreements for qualified productions the commissioner reasonably believes will not be completed. Funding allocated for qualified productions described in the preceding sentence may be reallocated. (15) Notwithstanding any other provision in section 29d, after September 30, 2016 after all payments and obligations under this section have been satisfied, the money remaining in the Michigan film promotion fund shall revert back to the general fund of this state.*

### **New Business.**

The 2017 meeting dates of MFOAC have not yet been selected.

There were no other items discussed under New Business.

### **Adjournment.**

There being no further business, there was a motion by Mr. Pietryga to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Voss; motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.