

FLORIDA FILM AND ENTERTAINMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

1st Quarter Meeting

March 4, 2020

10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

107 East Madison St.

Tallahassee, FL 32399

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

Administrative (Chair Nicholas Popp)

Call to Order by Chair Popp at 10 a.m.

Roll Call:

Committee Members:

Ana Siegel

Cynthia Angelos

Kevin Ambler

Marc Meisel

Nicholas Popp

Pamela Tuscany

Peiter Bockweg

Sandy Lighterman

Ex-Officio Members

Kathleen Kennedy

Dani DeStafney

Members of the Public:

John Lux

Bonnie King

Gail Morgan

Chris Ranung

Office of Film and Entertainment (OFE) Staff:

Commissioner Niki Welge

Susan Simms

Donyelle Marshall

Allie Pratt

WELCOME

Chair Popp welcomed everyone.

Chair Popp congratulated Michael Williams and his wife on their new son.

Chair Popp said the next FFEAC meeting will be decided via Doodle poll.

OLD BUSINESS

2019 4th Quarter Meeting Minutes

Chair Popp called for a motion to approve the December meeting minutes. Minutes were approved unanimously.

December 11, 2019, Special Meeting Minutes Concerning Bill Discussion

Chair Popp called for a motion to approve the special meeting minutes. Minutes were approved unanimously.

December 17, 2019, Special Meeting Minutes Concerning the Council's Letter of Support

Chair Popp called for a motion to approve the special meeting minutes. Minutes were approved unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Legislative Update (Chair Nicholas Popp)

Chair Popp said Speaker Oliva is in his final year as speaker. Representative Sprowls will follow Oliva as speaker. President Galvano is finishing his final year in the Senate. Senator Simpson will succeed him as president.

Chair Popp said the fate of Visit Florida has been a point of debate. He said the House has been resistant to the Senate's bill to continue the agency for eight more years. and it appears that session will be extended.

Chair Popp extended an invite to Dani DeStafney to speak about Visit Florida. Dani said the Chair covered everything. Chair said he hopes there will be good news concerning Visit.

Chair Popp said that the FFEAC was listed in a bill in the House and Senate that eliminated various councils. The FFEAC was removed from the Senate bill via an amendment. He thanked everyone that wrote letters of support for the council, and he thanked Film Florida for their support. He said he hopes that the House will adopt the Senate version of the bill. He said the FFEAC plays an important role in advising the Office of Film and Entertainment, and the council was created before the incentive program came to be. He asked that the council keep an eye out for further communication on these bills in the case that more letters of support are needed.

Chair Popp said S.B. 530 and H.B. 497 are the bills that would create the film and television targeted rebate program. He reminded the council that a resolution in support of this bill was submitted to legislative leadership. Senator Gruters and Representative Buchanan are the sponsors of the respective bills. At least 12 other sponsors signed on in both houses. He said it is unlikely that the Senate bill will be added to the next agenda, and it looks like the House bill is dead for this session. He said that the council and the industry will continue to work to build the momentum for next session.

Chair Popp said H.B. 1193 and S.B. 494 are the deregulation bills that came up last year as well. He said both bills in their current state would deregulate talent agencies. The bills would remove the DBPR oversight and would keep some of the regulations in place. He said it is not clear who would enforce the regulations if DBPR is not involved. He said the House version has a floor amendment that has been introduced, which keeps talent agencies representing minors within DBPR's purview.

Chair Popp said the other bills, mentioned at previous council meetings, have not gone anywhere.

Chair Popp opened the floor to the council for questions.

Kevin Ambler said he thinks it seems like the rebate program bill is dead. Kevin thanked everyone for their hard work and suggested that the council get with their representatives after session. Kevin encouraged the council to focus on pushing future incentive bills and to educate their representatives on the importance of a film and entertainment incentive program. Chair agreed and encouraged the council to reach out to their representatives and to get involved with campaign events.

Office of Film and Entertainment Team Report

Chair Popp invited the Office of Film and Entertainment staff to give their respective updates.

Office Updates (Commissioner Niki Welge)

Commissioner Welge began her update by explaining that session will most likely be extended. She said the office would keep an eye on the FFEAC bills and keep the council informed. She thanked Film Florida for their help. She said if the council is repealed, this would go into effect on July 1, 2020, which would mean the June meeting would be the final meeting.

Commissioner Welge said S.B. 334, which proposes a tourism development tax, had a few more committee stops than in previous years but is likely dead.

Commissioner Welge said S.B. 922, which is the bill that extends the life of the QTI program, passed out of all of its committees in the Senate but the companion bill in the House was not heard in committee at all. She said this has implications for some film and entertainment brick-and-mortar companies once their current contracts are up.

Commissioner Welge said there is discussion that the coronavirus could potentially be a saving grace for Visit Florida because their crisis management services are very effective.

Commissioner Welge said that the office will keep a close eye on the coronavirus. She said the Governor called a public health emergency in that State and that there are three reported cases in the Florida to date. She said it is likely that production activity is at risk. She said the last time Florida had a health crisis was the Zika virus, and Susan Simms received many questions and concerned from industry professionals.

Commissioner Welge said the office has been working on a strategic plan for a long while. She thanked the council for their input in 2018 when the strategic planning process was just beginning. The statewide strategic plan is being updated under the new administration, and this will hopefully pave the way for the film office to solidify its plan after session.

Commissioner Welge said the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence is dominating the news cycles. She explained that the scandal is related to a state sole-source contract that the Department of Children and Families managed. As a result of this scandal, the Governor has put out an Executive Order that requests a list of all sole-source contracts that annually receive more than 50% of their budget from a state entity. She said the film office does not have any contracts that fit into this category but that the Strategic Business Division has multiple contracts that will be on the list and likely under review.

Commissioner Welge opened the floor for questions. Chair Popp asked everyone on the call if there has been any production activity affected by fears about the coronavirus. Commissioner said the state office has not heard of any production that has been affected. Sandy said her office had one inquiry but there have been no reductions in production thus far. Pamela Tuscany said she has had discussions with contracted productions concerning the possibility that the studio may shut down. Dani DeStafney said Visit reports that there have been no impacts on travel planning at this time; the cancellation rate is lower than last year.

Future Business Development (Susan Simms)

Susan Simms began her report by explaining that she attended the Sundance and Slamdance festivals since the last council meeting. She said this year was the most productive yet. It took her three weeks to follow-up with all the contacts made at those events. She also said that the Slamdance Miami lounge events were big hits and thanked the GMCVB for hosting those. Florida had at least five indies and two shorts at the festivals. Additionally, two features were written and directed by high-profile Floridians. Thirty filmmakers associated with FSU were present at the festivals.

Susan said she attended the Monarch Private Capital event during Sundance and Slamdance. She said there were 25 film commissions from around the world present. This event included the first official sighting of the new California film commissioner. She said she also attended the Film UK brunch event. She said this was the best event of the festival.

Susan said the Super Bowl in Miami followed Sundance and Slamdance and that it is a gift that keeps on giving because it will be in Tampa next year.

Susan said that the feature “Farwell” won best indie at the Indie Film Awards. This film has Florida ties because the director, Lulu Wang, is from Miami. She said this is a great example of something that the film office can use to leverage Florida in conversations with potential clients.

Susan said she attended the sold-out FSU Film Shorts event in Hollywood. An Orlando director’s short was shown twice because so many people showed up to see it. The director spent time talking up Orlando, and there was also talk that his short will be made into a feature.

Susan said commercial season is in full swing. She said she believes this is the first time in a decade that there is no TV pilot filming in the state. She is keeping an eye on the California incentive bill announcement pertaining to what will be offered to relocating TV series. Susan said that bill is based on Florida’s previous incentive language.

Susan thanked Bonnie King for all of her work throughout the years. Susan shared that there is a new film office/public relations contact in the Space Coast film office and that she has been in touch with her.

Susan said the National Geographic series based at the Tampa Zoo is doing very well. She said “Bad Boys for Life,” which filmed in Miami for a few weeks, has been a theatrical hit. She said the series “McMillions” is also doing very well, and Ben Affleck announced that he would like to make the story into a feature film. She said “All I Ever Wanted,” filmed in Miami, is now on Netflix. “Cheer,” a Netflix series partially filmed in Florida, has a cult following and is getting great publicity thanks to celebrities like Ellen, and Keisha Ray Witherspoon of Miami won a Golden Bear for her short, “T.”

Susan discussed upcoming events. SXSW is coming up and “Critical Thinking,” shot in Miami, will have its debut at this festival. Susan said she will soon attend AFCI week. At AFCI, there will be an EP and Cast & Crew dinner; Florida is one of ten film offices invited to this event. She said Realscreen will take place in early June and Produced By LA and New York will take place later this year.

Kevin Ambler spoke up and said that the Gasparilla Film Festival will occur March 17 through 23 in Tampa. He said he believes there will be a distribution opportunity for the festival submissions this year. Chair Popp added that the Sunscreen Film Festival will be taking place at the end of April and the Florida Film Festival will take place in mid-April. Sandy Lighterman said that the Miami Film Festival starts this Friday and many Florida films will be featured.

Chair Popp highlighted Susan’s announcement that there is no TV pilot shooting in the state for the first time in about a decade. He said we should note that this highlights the challenges the

industry is facing in Florida. Pamela Tuscanly thanked Susan for all of her hard work even in this tough time.

Spanish Language Production Report (Donyelle Marshall)

Donyelle Marshall said there are 27 projects featured in the Miami Film Festival that were filmed in South Florida.

Donyelle said the biggest news in LATAM business is that Searchlight Capital Partners and Forgelight, LLC purchased a majority of Univision Holdings, Inc. Wade Davis will become CEO of Univision later this year. Davis is the former CFO of Viacom.

Donyelle was in Miami in January and said she visited all 13 soundstages at Telelundo. She said “100 Days to Fall in Love” and “Latinx Now” are currently filming on those stages.

Donyelle said she is tracking the economic impact of tax incentives in South America. The Colombian program was a hot topic at the NATPE party that she attended in Miami in January.

Donyelle said PWC has been a key partner in bringing sports entertainment clients into the film office. She said she has meetings set up with the Marlins and Heat concerning the STE program. She will also meet with the Dolphins and the Miami Open.

Marketing and Advertising (Allie Pratt)

Allie started her report by explaining that she posts three or more times per week on the office social accounts. She said office tweets appeared in more than 7,500 people’s screens and Facebook posts appeared in more than 4,400 people’s screens. These numbers are down since there is no paid advertising authorized at this time. She said 271 people liked, shared or commented on office Facebook content. FilminFlorida.com was viewed more than 2,400 times. She said the website has seen about 1,000 more views on average each month compared to 2019. The Reel-Scout pages were viewed more than 27,000 times. The Film in Florida app was downloaded 15 times in February with 484 total downloads. She said the app download number is great since there was no specific push for the app in February.

Regarding promotional items, Allie said National Young Arts Foundation in Miami received promotional items from the office for an educational event. The film office received their order of new bottles. These will be sent to the Produced By conferences this year. The next promotional items order will be for reusable grocery bags to be distributed at Realscreen.

Allie explained that the office’s 1,600 downloads deadline has been extended an additional year.

Allie explained the digital media buy has evolved into an in-house project. This in-house ad plan was submitted to leadership for review.

Allie said the FFEAC will meet in June regardless of the outcome of the bills related to the elimination of the council. The meeting date will be decided via Doodle poll.

Chair Popp asked what the office is doing to plan for long-term app messaging. Allie said the app is included on all office collateral, and it is a point of conversation at every physical event. The office also reached out to the film schools in the state to offer the app as a resource and hope to continue those relationships. She said the office considers the 1,600 goal to be a long-term goal.

Chair Popp asked if there has been any feedback on the app. Allie said there has not been any feedback and said she would be happy to receive any feedback from the council. Kevin Ambler encouraged the council to push the app at upcoming film festivals in the state. Allie offered to send the STE fliers to anyone interested in them passing out.

Sales Tax Exemption (Donyelle Marshall)

Donyelle said last year's total was 1,024 STE applications. To date, there have been 703 this fiscal year. This means the office is at 68% of last year's total. The office is at 75% of the quarterly goal.

Donyelle said the total STE expenditures are \$1.1 billion to date. She said this is the highest expenditure total since fiscal year 2015/2016. The ROI is down and Donyelle is doing research on this. Chair Popp asked that Donyelle include the information she finds regarding the ROI drop in her June report.

Association Updates: (Film Florida, SAG, IATSE, etc.)

Chair Popp turned the discussion over to Chris Ranung with IATSE. Chris started his update by explaining that there was a strike in Tampa. IATSE pulled its crew from the "Lady of the Manor" production after 8 days of filming a 17-day project. The strike was over misclassification of employees. The production paid the crew as 1099 employees, which is illegal based on how crew are identified. The production company would not negotiate and the local IATSE members did not receive their jobs back. Chris said this strike is important because he does not want Florida to be known as a place where producers can mistreat their crew. Chris invited any councilmembers with questions to call him.

Chair Popp asked Bonnie King to discuss Film Florida. Bonnie said that John Lux recently attended events held by the Florida Chamber, Florida Tax Watch and the Associated Industries of Florida. Members of the Film Florida board were in Tallahassee recently as well. She said members attended Realscreen New Orleans and NATPE and will be attending SXSW, Realscreen and Produced By LA.

Bonnie said the Film Florida podcast continues to be a successful endeavor.

Bonnie said Film Florida will be cosponsoring an event related to Slamdance and MMFM and is also helping Florida House in DC to put together a film exhibit this summer. She said quarterly meetings happening this month, and the June quarterly meetings will be in Key West.

John Lux added that Paul Sirmons wrote an op-ed in response to an op-ed written by Americans for Prosperity. He said also Film Florida members will meet with legislators this summer. He said Film Florida is promoting the Miami Film Festival, Florida Film Festival, Sunscreen Film Festival, Ft. Myers Film Festivals and the Orlando International Film Festival.

Ex-Officio Updates: (Enterprise Florida, Inc., VISIT FLORIDA, and CareerSource Florida)

Chair Popp asked if there were any ex-officio updated. There were no ex-officio updates.

Public Comment

Chair Popp opened the floor for public comment. There was no public comment.

ADJOURN 12 P.M.