

FLORIDA FILM AND ENTERTAINMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

3rd Quarter Meeting

September 30, 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

Durand Adams

Kevin Ambler

Marc Meisel

Nicholas Popp

Sandy Lighterman

Pamela Tuscany

Ex-Officio Members

Brian Mimbs, Enterprise Florida, Inc.

Dani DeStafney, VISIT FLORIDA

Members of the Public:

Chris Ranung, IATSE 477

Gail Morgan, Film Florida

Earl Perque, Industry Technician

John Lux, Film Florida

Meagan Happel, Space Coast Film Commission

Todd Roobin, Jacksonville Film Commission

Lindsey Sandrin, Metro Orlando Film Commission

Sheena Fowler, Metro Orlando Film Commission

David VanDuke

Office of Film and Entertainment (OFE) Staff:

Commissioner Niki Welge

Susan Simms

Donyelle Marshall

WELCOME

Chair Popp welcomed everyone.

OLD BUSINESS

2020 2nd Quarter Meeting Minutes

Chair Popp asked if any members of the council had corrections to the minutes from the previous meeting.

Councilmember Adams suggested a minor correction to the minutes, updating his bio.

Chair Popp called for a motion to approve the minutes from the June 2020 meeting. The minutes were adopted unanimously including the correction from Councilmember Adams.

NEW BUSINESS

Legislative Update (Chair Nicholas Popp)

We are heading into a contentious election cycle with a lot of money coming into the state. Currently the Republican Party has a majority in the House and Senate, which is not likely to change. The new House Speaker will be Representative Chris Sprowls and the new Senate President will be Wilton Simpson. We will continue to work closely with both sides of the legislature to support and advocate for the industry in Florida.

Last year the council passed a resolution to support legislation that created a targeted grant program to attract productions to the state. The bill passed its first committee in the Senate but did not get a hearing in the House. A very similar bill is expected to be filed this upcoming session and Chair Popp will keep everyone posted on this and any other bills that affect our members.

Last session there was an attempt to eliminate certain statutorily created councils and committees, including the FFEAC. Thanks to our friends at Film Florida and other advocacy efforts, the FFEAC was removed from the bill, so we could continue meeting and doing good work on behalf of the state.

VISIT FLORIDA was on the chopping block as well, and thanks to advocacy efforts, they were reauthorized and will continue promoting Florida to bring in tourism dollars. We will continue to support them as their mission is very similar to ours, driving economic development to Florida, including film-induced tourism.

Chair Popp thanked OFE staff and everyone for their efforts.

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 recognized OFE's Marketing and Outreach Intern Kaitlynn Veno, who has been working with the office since July and is getting course credit for the internship towards her second master's degree from Full Sail University. Her time with OFE is coming to an end soon, so she wanted to take a few minutes to thank her and recognize her for her good work.

Ken Lawson recently resigned as DEO's Executive Director. She thanked him for his leadership over the last two years and wish him well. Dane Eagle, who was Deputy Chief of Staff under Governor Crist and was a member of the House of Representatives for the last eight years, including as the Majority Leader, took over as DEO's Executive Director on September 14th. Director Eagle's focus is to make positive changes to the Reemployment Assistance program and to Disaster Recovery efforts after Hurricane Sally. When we meet with Director Eagle, our message will be that the film and entertainment industry is high wage, high skill industry and can infuse large amounts of money into a local economy very quickly, which can be an important part of Florida's economic recovery.

Governor DeSantis issued an executive order on Friday moving the state into phase 3, eliminating any state-level restrictions on businesses, and suspending all fines and penalties associated with local ordinances. We continue to encourage production companies to follow the safety guidelines that have been adopted by the unions and studios, as this has led to successful and safe resumption of production activity all over the world.

OFE's marketing and travel budget has been significantly reduced due to budget restrictions because of the revenue shortfalls from COVID-19. All state agencies have implemented a budget reduction across the board of 8.5% this fiscal year, with a reduction of 10% next fiscal. Many industry events have gone virtual, which allows us to continue to participate.

Commissioner Welge provided data from the Sales Tax Exemption program to provide insight into lost business due to COVID-19, specifically that applications were down roughly 200 from the previous fiscal year.

OFE's performance measures for fiscal year 19/20 (ending June 30, 2020):

- Number of productions assisted by OFE during the year: 1,919
- Number of productions assisted by OFE resulting in business during the year: 1,479
- Percentage of productions assisted resulting in business during the year: 77%
- Number of Sales Tax Exemption applications approved by OFE during the year: 868

Since our last meeting, the FFEAC lost three members. Peiter Bockweg resigned for personal reasons, and both Adam Goodman and Michael William's terms expired on June 30, 2020 and neither sought reappointment by the House. Unfortunately, this 17-member board is down to 10 members, 2 of which are expired and waiting for reappointment (Sandy and Ana).

Commissioner Welge has spoken to both the House and Governor's appointments offices regarding the vacancies and they both encourage individuals to submit applications. She doesn't expect appointments to be made in the House until after the new Speaker officially takes over in November. The Governor's Office doesn't have a timeline for when they might make appointments, but the Governor has been slow to appoint individuals to all boards, not just ours. Fortunately, we don't have any other expirations until 2021. She encouraged members to reach out if they were unsure of their term dates.

Future Business Development (Susan Simms)

Los Angeles Liaison/Production Manager, Susan Simms elaborated on OFE's performance measures. The measures are not the only indicator of success. One commercial, one TV episode, one TV series count as one project, and we only count projects that we assist in some way. Many projects go directly to the local film offices or call crew directly and don't contact us, so we don't know about every project that's filming in the state. A project that we work on can be a single call or it could be a large project like *The Right Stuff* that we work on for 17 months before they even scouted. We don't issue permits and each local film office reports differently, so it's difficult to make a comparison. Many other states just have filming in one area, so it's easier to provide the numbers. The State of Florida has production activity all over the state, which is why there are so many local film offices in the state. The interest and opportunities are state-wide. We use the performance measures to follow up with our clients and to verify their activity in the state. It's a great excuse to touch base, see how their experience was, and see if they have other future projects for the state.

Commercials are still our bread and butter. Most of the other projects currently filming in Florida are reality shows, TV series and segments. Reality content doesn't have the connotation it once had with major studios like Netflix, Apple, and Amazon getting into the reality business and spending major dollars. We are lucky to live in Florida, which is a hotbed of opportunity for reality programming. We look everywhere for opportunities.

Susan has been participating in a lot of industry events via zoom and webinars. The same motto holds true for virtual events, you must be present to win. We are looking for leads everywhere. Susan participated on a Women in The Production Industry webinar with no apparent Florida connection, and one of the panelists got her start on *CSI Miami*, one got her start on *The Glades*, one got her start on *Graceland*, and the other was the current showrunner on *Claws*. They all knew each other because they all worked in Florida. Susan used the opportunity to connect with each of them via email after the webinar. She encouraged everyone to sign up for Entertainment Partner's upcoming All Eyes on Florida panel, which will be great opportunity for the state.

Susan mentioned that all festivals and sales missions have been taking place virtually. She participated in Film Independent, including a panel with Lulu Wang from Miami. She also attended the Toronto International Film Festival virtually where Lulu moderated a panel and

Barry Jenkins participated as well. They only selected 50 films this year, including the film *One Night in Miami*, Regina King's directorial debut, which is sure to be an award winner. We worked hard to get that film to shoot here in Florida, but unfortunately, they filmed elsewhere.

There were some Emmy wins and nominations for projects that shot in Florida this year, including for *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*, *The Last Dance*, *Apollo 11*, *Cheer*, *McMillions*, and of course, *The Tiger King*. *The One and Only Ivan* streamed on Disney+ and *The Right Stuff* will start streaming on Disney+ next Friday. The film *Critical Thinking* will also be streaming soon on Amazon. We are focused on getting our crew as many opportunities as possible. National Geographic is filming in three parts of the state, as well as *Secrets of the Zoo: Tampa* and all things Shark Week. These are companies that come back time after time.

OFE will be participating in the LaFemme Film Festival in October, AFM in November and then RealScreen in January. We understand everyone's jobs are on the line and we are working hard every day to keep our crew working. We love the opportunity to represent the state.

Chair Popp thanked Susan for her hard work and mentioned that the Sunscreen Film Festival was the first festival to have in-person events during the pandemic. The festival went well with safety measures implemented, including social distancing, theaters at 40 percent, mask requirements and sanitation stations. AMC disinfected theaters in between each showing and were a great partner. He is starting to see more live events being scheduled and hope it's a good sign for what's to come.

Sales Tax Exemption (Donyelle Marshall)

Production Coordinator, Donyelle Marshall provided the current Sales Tax Exemption numbers for the fiscal year, starting July 1, 2020.

- Total Applicants: 224
- Estimated Florida jobs: 6,241
- Estimated Florida Expenditures: \$623,282,331
- Estimated amount of tax exempted: \$9,008,930
- DOR's ROI: 69.2: 1

Donyelle did a comparison of the Sales Tax Exemption numbers for the first quarter of 2019 versus 2020 and found the total applications to be down by only 6 percent. Total jobs are down 57% though, which may be a result of new COVID-19 safety procedures on set. The numbers for the fiscal year are up 9%, in comparison to this time last fiscal year. She explained the DOR's procedure for prorating 12-month certificates to provide clarification for the difference.

LATAM Update (Donyelle Marshall)

Donyelle provided an overview of Telemundo's leadership changes since FFEAC's last meeting including our wonderful Vice Chair Ana Salas Siegel's new position as Senior Vice President and General Counsel of Telemundo Enterprises & Content.

Currently Telemundo is only allowing unscripted production-related personnel in the building and they are slowly beginning scripted productions. The Billboard Latin Music Awards will broadcast live on Telemundo on October 21 from the BB&T Center in Sunrise. Additionally, Telemundo received several International Emmy nominations last week.

Univision was nominated for an International Emmy for the 2019 Latin GRAMMY show. Their non-scripted shows continued to shoot and the highly rated *Let's Fall in Love* has started production on 59 episodes through December.

The 21st Annual Latin GRAMMY Awards® will air on Univision on November 19, 2020. Preceding the telecast, the Latin GRAMMY Premiere® ceremony will be held virtually from Miami. The nominations were announced yesterday.

We are still waiting on an update on the finalized sale of Univision to Searchlight Capital Partners and ForgeLight as well as the start date of Univision's new CEO, Wade Davis.

Donyelle received and read the following update from Adam Morra, Vice President of Tax Counsel at ViacomCBS:

“As you know, this has been a difficult year for everybody, including production. Our studio team must look for jurisdictions with cost efficiencies. They seek locales that have incentives for television production and currency efficiencies, many of which are in South America. Colombia is an example of a country that just passed a very attractive television incentive.

In Florida, we've historically produced “Unplugged” type shows and our tentpole, the NATPE event. Those could happen again at the end of 2021, early 2022.

As far as the studio in downtown Miami, we will no longer be filming from the current location of the Miami ViacomCBS International Studio due to our lease agreement ending and the expansion of the I-395 expressway, which has affected our usability. We will continue producing from Miami as the opportunities arise.”

Chair Popp asked for the Colombian incentive information and noted how we are not only competing with US states, but also internationally.

Donyelle said Columbia offers a cash rebate and that Puerto Rico, Columbia, Chile and Argentina are very attractive areas for production. A lot of production and post production are also happening in South America.

Chair Popp said it's a blow to the Miami area, and highlights the challenges we are facing. Even though we have the most professional and efficient crews, it's difficult to articulate the cost savings when productions are looking at the bottom line. This is what we need to be aware of when advocating for the industry.

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

Chair Popp turned the discussion over to Chris Ranung. Chris, President IATSE Local 477, said IATSE is focused on the release of the return to work agreement, in effect since the middle of the month between DGA, IATSE, SAG/AFTRA, and AMPTP regulating all production under contract throughout the US and Canada. Rigidly enforced, the word has come out from all levels that there is no nonsense on set. The agreement took a long time to get hammered out but will protect the industry and allow production to resume safely. If someone in Zone A has symptoms, they will shut down production immediately. If they don't play by tight rules they won't get the industry back. There are four zones in the agreement, but three are the most applicable. Zone A is all the performers and background actors on set while they are not wearing PPE. This is the most important zone, and they are rigidly tested. The actors are unprotected, and the requirements are most strict. Zone B are also on set, and Zone C never enters Zone A. There is a fact sheet with the most pertinent issues when someone is in quarantine, including how they are paid, and how they get back to work safely. If you haven't received a copy of the return to work agreement, please reach out to him. The agreement is in effect on *David Makes Man*, and on the feature *Three Months* filming in October. Everyone is abiding by the regulations.

Chair Popp asked Chris for a copy of the return to work agreement and thanked Chris for his good work getting people back to work safely.

Chair Popp invited Gail Morgan to give an update on Film Florida's activities.

Gail Morgan, President of Film Florida, said they continue to focus on the health and safety of the industry. They purchased 2,000 bottles of hand sanitizer and 1,000 face masks and are distributing them. They are hosting virtual townhall meetings regarding safety on set, including a hair and makeup artist meeting at end of October. She asked the council to keep an eye on their social media pages for additional information.

Film Florida is participating in the Association Industries of Florida RESET Task Force for reopening the state and they expect the industry to be a part of the final report when it's released. Tax Watch also included our industry in their list for the state's priorities.

Film Florida's quarterly meetings were recently held via Zoom. The next meetings will be December 3rd and 4th, also held via Zoom.

David Yates, formerly of the Clearwater Marine Aquarium, has been awarded the Tourism Ambassador Award for 2020. David is largely responsible for introducing the dolphins Winter and Hope to the world in the *Dolphin Tale* film series.

Film Florida held a webinar on legislative engagement with former Florida Representatives Holly Raschein and Mike Miller. The video is available on Filmflorida.org, on YouTube, and their social media pages. By the end of October, Executive Director John Lux will have met with 60 legislators, continuing the education process for how the industry can be part of Florida's economic recovery process. Also, season three of Film Florida's podcast will be available starting on Oct 12th.

Chris Ranung encouraged people to visit the Feature Florida Partnerships website, as they just launched the "Create it Here" program, a script development support program providing financial support to script writers who pass certain criteria and have some promise.

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

Chair Popp asked if there were any ex-officio updates.

Dani DeStafney provided a VISIT FLORIDA update. On August 31st they launched an in-state rebound ad campaign to help with Florida's economic recovery as the tourism industry is struggling. The campaign instills pride in where we live hoping for a boost in in-state travel. VISIT FLORIDA'S success is traditionally not measured by in-state travel, so this is a new shift. The campaign will run through November 22nd, highlighting Florida destinations that look otherworldly. Most Floridians have never visited these places but could drive to them. Entering into phase 3 will broaden this campaign to drivable markets outside the state, but it won't happen for a few weeks. They are monitoring the metrics to make sure the state is ready to receive visitors. In a few weeks they will broaden it to the rest of our market. Some examples are available on the link that she sent prior to the meeting.

Brian Mimbs from Enterprise Florida had no update but enjoyed hearing the good reports from everyone.

Public Comment

Chair Popp opened the floor for public comment.

David VanDuke, a member of the public, asked what office Susan Simms belonged to.

Chair Popp stated that Susan is OFE staff and provided a description of her job responsibilities.

ADJOURN 11:16 A.M.