

# FINAL MICHIGAN FILM OFFICE ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES

June 3, 2016

Detroit Film Theater – Detroit Institute of Arts  
Detroit, MI

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

The meeting of the Michigan Film Office Advisory Council was called to order by Chair Bill Ludwig at 3:05 p.m. A quorum was present with the following members: Hopwood DePree, Marcia Fishman, Cal Hazelbaker, Rick Hert (phone), Bill Ludwig, Michael Mittelstaedt (phone), Terry, Joe Voss and Brian Winn (phone). Members excused: Jennifer Fischer, J.D. Loeks, Sanford Nelson, Tim Pietryga, and Ted Serbinski.

Mr. Ludwig thanked Mr. Matt Mergener, Chair of the Detroit Film Theatre, and Mr. Larry Baranski, Director of Public Programs (DIA) for sponsoring this meeting of the MFOAC and facilitating the room setup. He also acknowledged this meeting's presenters - Russ Collins (AAFF), Mark Ducker (YPSI24) and Tim Flattery (CCS).

## 2. Adoption of the Agenda

There was a motion by Calvin Hazelbaker to approve the Agenda; seconded by Joe Voss; motion passed unanimously.

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

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

## 4. Director's Report – Jenell Leonard

### Project Update.

Paramount Pictures asked (and, upon recommendation from legal representatives, subsequently received approval) to negotiate a consolidation of their existing incentive agreements in order to produce instead "Transformers 5." "God Bless the Broken Road," a west Michigan production, has just wrapped. There is about \$1.8M left in incented projects, with some announcements about those to be released in the next few weeks.

### Legislative Update and 2015 MFODMO Strategic Plan Progress Update.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter report legislative report (April 2016) was sent to Council members and is included in members' packets for review. The MFODMO has accomplished over 60% of the strategic plan recommendations to date; some cannot be accomplished due to the end of the incentive program. We are working on writing a new action plan for FY2017, which will include recommendations from the Council's subcommittees.

Q: How does the MFODMO find the money to accomplish its goals if there is no incentive program?

A: We are using administrative money for funding for other projects, and previously encumbered money for film agreements executed prior to last summer's legislation going into effect; there is just no money available for new film projects.

Regarding the Google CS First partnership and promotion, we now have 80+ schools enrolled in the program partnership, reflecting 4,500 students. Google is pleased at how the program is being promoted here, and wants to use Michigan as a model to advance the program even farther on a national level.

VIACOM/Comedy Central approached the MFDMO about bringing its series “Detroit” to Michigan, and we are proud to say that it is a confirmed project secured without incentives, thanks to the willingness of the City of Detroit and private partners to come to the table in good faith and a can-do attitude to make the project happen. It’s in pre-production now, with production tentative scheduled for July and August.

Tourism initiative. Due in part to the popularity of the movie “Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice,” the MFDMO developed and launched a mobile tourism app(lication) that has gotten over 10,000 downloads. The Commissioner said that statistics show 1 in 5 tourists plan their travel around film-related interests, so this has been a project that builds on that phenomenon. The application will be entering a second phase in months to come, adding more locations to the existing list of locations already available.

Q: How did you go about getting private partners for the Comedy Central project?

A: Securing public and private buy-in is a communication and negotiation effort that we were glad to facilitate. It needs everyone’s cooperation, for sure, but it’s really a competitive process, with all participants willing to give a little to get a lot. In this case, all parties benefited having a seat at the table, and the result is a boom to the economy of Detroit.

Film festivals. The MFDMO attended the SXSW Film Festival in March, participating in a shared reception and discussion panel with the Montana Film Commission that discussed inventive ways to thrive without financial incentives. The MFDMO was a sponsor of the Ann Arbor FF in March as well, and the Commissioner gave opening remarks there. The MFDMO was also a sponsor of the Capital City Film Festival (Lansing) in April, and is a sponsor of Cinetopia International Film Festival, beginning this week in Detroit.

## **Subcommittee Updates.**

### Talent Development/Networking Subcommittee: Hopwood DePree

The subcommittee’s main recommendations are:

- 1) Create a digital media component of the Production Directory. The MFDMO is currently working to integrate digital media professional categories into Production Directory by this fall, aligning with the subcommittee’s recommendation.
- 2) Enhance the MFDMO website. The MFDMO is currently working to redesign and add value to its existing website, aligning with the subcommittee’s recommendation.
- 3) Oversee the creation of professional development workshops and networking opportunities. The subcommittee is recommending that MFDMO host an open call for proposals to be submitted by recognized nonprofit Michigan organizations, or state-certified educational institutions in good standing, to be selected and funded as soon as possible. The workshops must accomplish the overall vision of the Michigan strategic plan and be set in motion as soon as possible. The subcommittee will work with the MFDMO to select a list of proposed workshop topics and networking opportunities in the near future.

### Measures and Metrics Subcommittee: Joe Voss for Tim Pietryga

The subcommittee’s main recommendation is:

- 1) Commission a research study to gather information on best practices in public/private partnerships, measuring both quantitative and qualitative factors to create benchmarks for the MFDMO to measure

the progress of its efforts. The research should encompass and aggregate any existing studies that are available, and will identify existing organizations already involved in public/private partnerships.

Digital Media Subcommittee: Brian Winn

The subcommittee's main recommendations are:

- 1) National Digital Media Event Cost Sharing. MFDMO would offer cost-sharing for qualified Michigan businesses and educational institutions at national media conferences, to show support for those organizations, and in return, provide the MFDMO an indirect presence at those same conferences by showcasing or displaying MFDMO services, swag or collateral.
- 2) MFDMO Digital Media Internship Program. The MFDMO would offer costsharing to Michigan companies for digital media internships, via direct funding or establishing endowments.
- 3) Promote and Support In-State Digital Media Events. The MFDMO would sponsor any number of digital media events to help foster a vibrant digital media culture and community in the state, creating a sense that Michigan is a hot bed of digital media activity for those outside the state.
- 4) Create Digital Media Focused Promotional Flyers. The MFDMO would feature promotional brochures that would be featured on its website, including information on local digital media companies, entrepreneurship resources, local talent, academic institutions, Michigan's cost of living, business friendly client, work ethic, family friendly, resources, infrastructure, etc.

Finance Subcommittee: Joe Voss

The subcommittee's main recommendations are:

- 1) Commission a research study (see Measures and Metrics recommendation, above)
- 2) Explore, develop and/or work with existing web funding platforms for creative content makers. The MFDMO would develop an online platform specific to private funding of media content produced in Michigan; an example is Patronicity (municipal projects).
- 3) Grantmaking. Using the best practices uncovered through research, the MFDMO would create and fund a program to support local efforts to deliver non-cash support to film and digital media productions considering Michigan for their projects.
- 4) Media culture. The MFDMO would create and fund a program to support local efforts that strengthen the film and digital media culture in Michigan.

Promotion and Marketing Subcommittee: Bill Ludwig

The subcommittee's main recommendation is:

- 1) Develop a full marketing and media plan. The MFDMO will commission an advertising or PR agency to market the film and digital media industries to specifically grow those indigenous industries, help them become sustainable, and implement specific MFDMO and subcommittee goals in the process. As part of his recommendation, Mr. Ludwig presented a concept video.

The MFDMO team will be looking at the recommendations and deciding how to best spend the funding that remains.

**Presentation.**

Cinetopia Int'l. Film Festival Presentation – *Russ Collins, Exec.Dir. & CEO and Drew Waller, Director of Sponsorship & Talent Acquisition*

**Presentation.**

YPSI24-Hour Film Shootout Presentation – *Mark Ducker, Exec.Dir., YPSI24*

**Presentation.**

College for Creative Studies Presentation – *Tim Flattery, Chair, CCS Entertainment Arts Dept.*

**Public Comments.**

There were no public comments.

**Old Business.**

There was no old business discussed.

**New Business.**

Commissioner Leonard said that Ted Serbinski is offering his resignation from the Council.

The next meeting of MFOAC will be on Friday, September 23, 2016 in Grand Rapids in conjunction with the Waterfront Film Festival screening at ArtPrize.

Finally, the Commissioner said that she will be on maternity leave starting in mid-September.

There were no other items discussed under New Business.

**Adjournment.**

There being no further business, there was a motion by Mr. Hazelbaker to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Fishman; motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 4:48 pm.