

PROPOSED MICHIGAN FILM OFFICE ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES

July 31st, 2018

West Bay Beach Resort

Traverse City, MI

1. Call to Order/Welcome from the Chairman

The meeting of the Michigan Film Office Advisory Council (MFOAC) was called to order at 1:01 p.m. by Council chairman Bill Ludwig. A quorum was present with the following Council members in attendance: Bill Ludwig, Dori DePree, Terry Terry, Tim Pietryga, Dan Lemieux, Eric Kuiper, Andriy Pereklita, Joe Voss, Brian Winn, Michael Mittelstaedt, and Skot Welch. Members excused: Niki Adams, Rick Hert, Jennifer Fischer.

Mr. Ludwig welcomed everyone and said that it was a pleasure to be in Traverse City. He asked everyone to introduce themselves, including the public in attendance, beginning with members of the council.

2. Adopt Agenda

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

3. Approval of Minutes from April 13, 2018 meeting

There was a motion by Mr. Terry to approve the minutes of the April 13, 2018 MFOAC meeting; seconded by Mr. Pereklita; motion passed unanimously.

4. Director's Report – Selam Ghirmai

Ms. Ghirmai extended thanks to Mr. Ludwig and the West Bay Beach Resort for hosting the MFOAC meeting. She noted that the MFDMO's current strategy with the MFOAC meetings is to attach meeting locations to sponsorships to film festivals across the state. She stated that this provides a great vehicle to spread the word about what the office does to local communities and network with council members who can provide recommendations to better the MFDMO's work.

Incentives - \$1,625,799 in total incentives are approved with executed agreements, but pending announcement for two projects (deferring to the production companies). This is unchanged from the prior MFOAC meeting. Anticipating updates for the next MFOAC meeting in October.

Office Update – Ms. Ghirmai said the theme for the MFDMO is “New People, New Look, New Processes.”

New People – Ms. Ghirmai first introduced and welcomed the newest member of the MFDMO team, Ms. Murdey, who has taken on duties previously managed by Ms. McNamara including council liaison, office management, data and reports management. Ms. Ghirmai thanked Ms. McNamara for her years of service in that role, and for her continued service as project manager for sponsorships and the Creative Chamber program.

New Look – Ms. Ghirmai displayed the current MFDMO website and explained that the MEDC had recently updated its website, giving the Film Office a new look. MEDC is the Michigan Economic Development Corporation and is the business side of the state government, along with Pure Michigan. She explained how to navigate to the MFDMO website. She said the Film Office has further updates and changes planned for the future.

New Processes – Ms. Ghirmai said the office has been reorganizing under two central themes: “Seamless Operations and Shameless Promotion.” MFDMO is examining current tools and looking for ways to make services more efficient. The current customer intake form has two versions: an external tracking sheet and an internal tracking sheet. There are many redundancies between the internal and external forms, which was found to be inefficient. The MFDMO is consolidating this into one Smartsheet form. She demonstrated the new online form filmmakers can use to inform the MFDMO about their projects. The onus will be on the customer (filmmaker) to complete the new form/survey. This change will help alert customers to all services offered by the MFDMO, as it will allow customers to select from a menu of services to tell the MFDMO what their needs are. Testimonials will be sought after projects are completed.

Ms. Ghirmai also explained that the link to the form is currently hard to find, and she would work with MEDC to move the link to a more prominent place. These changes will allow the MFDMO to capture more data. She said the data collected by the Smartsheet form will be provided in the annual report to legislators. Her goal is to finalize the form and intake process by the next council meeting. She invited feedback from the council. She was asked by the council if it was mobile responsive. Tony Garcia, MFDMO Webmaster, responded on her behalf and said that it was.

Sponsorship applications are also being moved to an online form. The MFDMO will be closed to new sponsorship applications as of August 1, 2018, until the next fiscal year (October 1, 2018). This is due to internal MEDC deadlines, as MEDC requires signed contracts by August 15.

Creative Chamber Pilot Program – Ms. Ghirmai explained to those unfamiliar that the Creative Chamber Program was launched last May and is a \$1.5 million dollar program established in five partner communities, with the grant administrators being the local Chambers of Commerce and, in the case of Detroit, the Downtown Detroit Partnership. These communities are charged with engaging local creatives to create a better business climate and to continue to make the case that Michigan is a great place to “Live, Work, Play.” They are charged with forming an advisory council to seek input on how to accomplish these goals. Four out of five of the chambers have submitted their year-end report, and she looks forward to the final report from Traverse City.

She confirmed that the next MFOAC meeting to be held Friday, October 12, 2018, in at the Royal Starr Film Festival in Royal Oak.

5. Traverse City Film Festival Presentation – Susan Fisher, Festival Business Manager

Ms. Fisher said this is the 14th annual Traverse City Film Festival, and that it has grown substantially from the first festival. She provided information about where the festival started in terms of attendance, length, etc. She provided data from the 2017 Film Festival to talk about where the festival is now. She explained that the festival brings an economic boost to the region. The festival is run by volunteers, which brings additional, intangible value in terms of community engagement. They launched a shuttle system this year to cut down on traffic and make it easier for festival-goers to get around. They believe in creating a great, inclusive event for everyone. Question from public about routes of shuttle system; Ms. Fisher described a route that could be taken from that hotel. Question from Mr. Welch about ethnic diversity of attendance. Ms. Fisher stated the festival has a goal of increasing diversity in the festival and that, in general, there is a move towards increased diversity in Traverse City itself.

6. Traverse City Creative Chamber Presentation – Kent Wood, Program Manager

Mr. Wood described some of the work the Chamber is doing in Traverse City. He said one of the challenges is overcoming the perception that Traverse is just a great place to visit; he said it is also a great place to live, and that it has more to offer than summer/agricultural work. Within the Chamber focus group, they've been discussing what is missing that could help creatives work in the area. Focus was primarily on financial, legal, and planning services. Also, need for events and competitions for creatives. The primary challenges in the area are wages (lower than in other regions of the state), that businesses and individuals appreciate creatives/creative industries but don't want to pay for it, and the lack of organization in the creative industries in the area (excepting film). The region's strengths, Mr. Wood said, are the quality of life, the strong creative base, and strong creative values.

7. Public Comments

There were no Public Comments.

8. Old Business

There were no items discussed under Old Business.

9. New Business

There were no items discussed under New Business.

10. Adjournment

There being no further business, there was a motion by Mr. Terry to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Voss; motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 2:06 p.m.