

PROPOSED MICHIGAN FILM OFFICE ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES
September 29, 2017
Space Explorers Hall, Delta College Planetarium & Learning Center
Bay 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 1:10 p.m. by Council chairman Bill Ludwig. A quorum was present with the following Council members in attendance: Bill Ludwig, Michael Mittelstaedt, Rick Hert, Hopwood DePree (on phone), Terry Terry (on phone), Niki Adams, Tim Pietryga, and Dan Lemieux. Members excused: Jennifer Fischer, J.D. Loeks, Andriy Pereklita, Joe Voss, and Brian Winn.

Mr. Ludwig thanked outgoing Council members Hopwood DePree and J.D. Loeks for their tenure on the Council, as well as the reappointments of Terry Terry and Brian Winn. He also stated that effective October 1, 2017, Dori DePree of Saugatuck (co-founder of Waterfront Film Festival) and Eric Kuiper of Grand Rapids (Chief Creative Officer of Celebration! Cinema) begin their terms as new Council members. (*Note: Sanford Nelson resigned from the Council on August 16, 2017.*)

2. Adoption of the Agenda

There was a motion by Mr. Pietryga to approve the Agenda; seconded by Mr. Lemieux; motion passed unanimously.

3. Adoption of the Minutes from March 31, 2017 meeting

There was a motion by Mr. Hert to approve the minutes of the July 25, 2017 MFOAC meeting; seconded by Mr. Lemieux; motion passed unanimously.

4. Director's Report – Jenell Leonard

Incentives - There are still two incentive projects (\$1.6M) whose announcements are pending. Mr. Hert asked when the announcements would be forthcoming; Ms. Leonard reiterated that announcements are contingent upon the production companies' approval to announce, and the hope is that will be happen by end-of-year 2017. She added that the updated incentive/production dashboard will be posted to the MFDMO website in the next couple of weeks.

Google Partnership/CS First – In the 2016-2017 school year, the program had a 20% enrollment increase over the previous school year (approximately 6,200 students). Since the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year, there are already over 2,000 students enrolled in the program. We continue to promote it, including most recently by means of targeted *Facebook* ads.

Creative Chamber Pilot Program – Tomorrow (Sept. 30) ends the second quarter of the pilot's inaugural year, and the awardee communities will be submitting quarterly reports to MFDMO. Marquette is already in the process of creating a co-working space which is almost completely leased; they have also created a community master calendar that combines other fragmented community calendars. All communities are building out their advisory boards, making sure that there are representatives from each of the 12 sub-sectors that comprise the creative chamber. Creatives in all sub-sectors are encouraged to contact their community chamber representatives to get involved. In early December, the five community program leads

will travel to Lansing to meet with the MFDMO staff, to discuss best practices and focus on an evaluation of their efforts to-date. Mr. Hert asked what the timeframe is for the program; Ms. Leonard said that the grants are for three years, with the first year being dedicated to focus grouping, building the advisory boards, and formulating recommendations for years two and three. The pilot ends in December of 2019.

Subcommittee Recommendations

Ms. Leonard called attention to two digital media information sheets in the meeting packets. These were a recommendation of the digital media subcommittee made in 2015-2016. They highlight both the digital media industry as well as occupational statistics. Electronic copies will be forwarded to Council members, posted on the MFDMO website, and included in the MFDMO newsletter.

Festival/Event Update – Since the last Council meeting, and all in September, the MFDMO has sponsored the Digital Summit Detroit, ArtPrize on Screen, Mobile Technology Association of Michigan STEM Careers Showcase, and this weekend, Hell’s Half Mile Film & Music Festival.

MFOAC News – As Mr. Ludwig mentioned, Mr. Terry and Mr. Winn were both reappointed for another four years each. Mr. DePree was ineligible for an additional appointment, having already served for two terms (appointments), and Mr. Loeks asked not to be reappointed because of a demanding business schedule. New appointees DePree and Kuiper will continue to bring representation of the film and creative industry to the Council, with gender and geographic diversity. Meeting dates and locations for 2018 have not been selected at this time, but Council members will be notified with a ‘save-the-date’ bulletin as soon as the schedule has been solidified. Mr. Hopwood responded (via phone) that he has enjoyed serving on the Council, has enjoyed working with everyone, and will continue to participate with activities whenever possible.

5. Hell’s Half Mile Film & Festival Presentation – Alan LaFave, Festival Director

Mr. LaFave said that the HHM was inspired by the “Michigan Cool Cities Initiative” introduced during Gov. Jennifer Granholm’s administration; this is the 12th year of the festival. One unique feature of the festival is that this is the third year of the Seed & Spark Crowdfunding Rally (co-sponsored this year with the MFDMO – see details about the rally at <http://hhmfest.com/crowdfunding-rally-2017/>.) The festival was named for the Water Street area nicknamed “Hell’s Half Mile” during the heyday of the logging industry. The festival runs for four days, and in 2017 includes 32 film slots as well as music events; there are three film venues, two music venues and miscellaneous commercial venues that participate with free music events. Mr. LaFave thanked MFDMO for its ongoing sponsorship of the festival.

6. Delta College Presentation – Jeffrey Vande Zande, Professor of English, Digital Film Program Coordinator

Mr. Vande Zande explained that Delta College offers both a 30-credit advanced digital film production certificate and an associates of applied arts degree in electronic media production. He gave an overview of the genesis of the program at Delta College, and some information about how more equipment and courses have been consistently added in the eight years of the program. He read a statement provided by Dr. Jean Goodnow, president of Delta College, recognizing Mr. Vande Zande and the digital film program, introduced a Delta digital film student who was in the audience, and mentioned all the film festivals where he and other Delta College faculty have had films showcased.

7. Michigan Film & Digital Media Office Sponsorships Presentation – Selam Ghirmai, Strategic Partnerships & Promotions Manager

Ms. Ghirmai stated that one of the obvious reasons MFDMO offers sponsorships is to promote Michigan tourism locally and nationally. Another reason to sponsor festivals is to attract creatives to the state, not only those in film but those in digital media as well. Interested event organizers are encouraged to submit an application to the MFDMO sixty (60) days ahead of their event. Important considerations in awarding a sponsorship include an evaluation of the economic impact of the festival on Michigan communities, and leveraging the festival as a resource for professional development opportunities for film and digital media creatives, as well as distribution opportunities, scholarship or prize money awarded to filmmakers or digital media developers.

Public Comments

Filmmaker Don Downey asked how filmmakers can pitch a project to, and find, investors; are there any materials available through the MFDMO to help with that? Ms. Leonard responded that while we don't have all the answers and no longer have an incentive program, the MFDMO does as much as it can to bring film and digital professionals into that discussion to provide their perspective and advice (e.g., at MFDMO sponsored panel discussions.) Mr. Ludwig also mentioned the Detroit Film Initiative that has created relationships with public and private sector partners in Detroit, effectively lowering costs by offering discounts or expedited services to Detroit-based productions.

Old Business

There were no items discussed under Old Business.

New Business

There were no 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. Hert; motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.