

MICHIGAN FILM OFFICE ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES

December 9th, 2019

Michigan Economic Development Cooperation
Lansing, MI

1. Call to Order/Welcome from the Chairman

The meeting of the Michigan Film Office Advisory Council (MFOAC) was called to order at 1:32 p.m. by Council member Terry Terry, who volunteered to chair the meeting given the absence of Chairman Bill Ludwig. A quorum was present with the following Council members in attendance: Niki Adams, Rick Hert, Dori DePree, Terry Terry, Dan Lemieux (phone), Brian Winn, Andriy Pereklita, and Skot Welch. Members excused: Eric Kuiper, Bill Ludwig, Michael Mittelstaedt, Timothy Peitryga, and Joe Voss.

Mr. Terry welcomed everyone and thanked the council members for their attendance..

2. Adopt Agenda

There was a motion by Mr. Hert to approve the Agenda; seconded by Mr. Welch; motion passed unanimously.

3. Approval of Minutes from July 30, 2019 meeting

There was a motion by Mr. Winn to approve the minutes of the July 30, 2019 MFOAC meeting; seconded by Mr. Hert; motion passed unanimously.

4. Director's Report – Selam Ghirmai

Ms. Ghirmai thanked the council members for their attendance at today's meeting in Lansing, noting the November 12th council meeting which was cancelled due to poor weather conditions. Ms. Ghirmai also wanted to acknowledge the desire of the MFDMO to host its third and final meeting of the year in coordination with the Royal Starr Film Festivals Monthly Filmmaker Mixer. In lieu of the meeting being cancelled, Ms. Ghirmai attended an impromptu filmmaker forum to discuss the processes at the MFDMO. First, she summarized the festivals that the MFDMO is or has sponsored since the last Council meeting. They are as follows:

1. Sponsorships (since last reported at Council meeting in July):

Name of Event	Location	Event Start Date	Event End Date
Excellency Music Festival	Bay City	8/9/2019	8/9/2019
Trinity International Film Festival	Detroit	8/14/2019	8/18/2019
I See You Awards (3rd Annual)	Royal Oak	8/22/2019	8/25/2019
Idlewild International Film Festival	Idelwild	8/23/2019	8/25/2019
LivelyLands Music Festival	Empire	8/23/2019	3/24/2019
Project 1 (Artprize)	Grand Rapids	9/7/2019	10/27/2019
Detroit SheTown Film Festival 2019	Detroit	9/12/2019	9/15/2019
Royal Starr Film Festival	Royal Oak	9/13/2019	9/22/2019
Earthwork Harvest Gathering	Lake City	9/20/2019	9/22/2019
Digital Summit Detroit	Detroit	9/25/2019	9/26/2019
“Warpath” Screening, Q&A & Networking Event	Royal Oak	9/26/2019	9/26/2019

Hell's Half Mile Film & Music Festival	Bay City	9/26/2019	9/29/2019
Trans Stellar Film Festival 2019	Detroit	9/27/2019	9/28/2019
Thriller! Chiller! Film Festival	Grand Rapids	10/8/2019	10/12/2019
Mise en Scene Film Festival	Detroit	10/12/2019	10/13/2019
Fresh Coast Film Festival	Marquette	10/17/2019	10/20/2019
East Lansing Film Festival	East Lansing	10/30/2019	11/7/2019
Mosaic Video Experience	Grand Rapids	11/6/2019	11/7/2019
Revolve Creative Collaboration Conference	Marquette	11/9/2019	11/9/2019
Short Film Block Party	Detroit	11/13/2019	11/13/2019
UICA Open Projector Night (Series)	Grand Rapids	12/11/2019	12/11/2019
Central Michigan Int'l. Film Festival	Mt. Pleasant	2/5/2020	2/9/2020
MSU Latinx Film Festival	East Lansing	2/12/2020	2/16/2020
Greater Farmington Film Festival	Farmington Hills	3/19/2020	3/22/2020

PARTNERSHIPS (Google, Film Festivals)

2. Google Computer Science First partnership (free coding education for youth) year end results:

- a. Increased participation rate
 - i. Gains in participation in FY19:
 - 1. Schools/organizations – 176
 - 2. Students enrolled – 3,912
 - 3. Clubs started – 185
 - ii. Totals from 2015 – end of FY19:
 - 1. Total Schools/organizations – 450
 - 2. Total students enrolled – 16,002
 - 3. Total clubs started – 1,126

3. “Film Festival Forum” September 26-29, 2019 in conjunction w/ Hell’s Half Mile Film & Music Festival in Bay City, Michigan

- a. At Forum event at the end of September, MFDMO hosted workshops and networking opportunities for film festival organizers to learn about resources and best practices with peers.
 - i. Extended invitation to Council to attend and other possible engagement opportunities will likely be
 - 1. Co-moderate workshop/discussion with FFA moderator
 - 2. 5-10 minute presentation to offer information or resources specific to pre-determined topic of workshop
 - 3. Terry Terry joined and shared his experience in production and music festival
- b. Wrap up
 - i. There were 35 attendees representing 22 organizations
 - ii. Exceeded original plan to host at least 4 workshops by hosting 2 additional sessions (total of 6)
 - 1. One session about Film Tourism focused on film festival tourism to which c-hosted with Dave Lorenz (Travel Michigan) and MEDC Corporate Research. We invited special guest Larissa Draves of Travel Industry Coalition of Michigan (TICOM) and Michigan Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus (MACVB).

iii. Note of appreciation from Ann Arbor Film Festival:

1. *“We are excited about the direction MFDMO is taking.....Thank you for being such a great partner to us and all of the other Michigan festivals – we are lucky to have you!” – Leslie Raymond, Ann Arbor Film Festival*

c. Next steps:

- i. Distribute attendee experience survey
- ii. Host webinar with film festival organizers to follow up on research efforts to capture economic impact of film festivals
- iii. As a result of our ongoing conversation and development of “Film Festival Tourism” concept with Travel Michigan and TICOM, MFDMO has been invited to host a 45-minute breakout session at the conference on the afternoon of Wednesday, Feb. 19 in Grand Rapids (Amway Grand).

4. Creative Chambers – Grand Rapids Chamber Epic Awards

- a. First year of the Creative Business of the Year Award Recipient: [Green Giftz](#)
 - i. premiere branded merchandise dealer based in West Michigan, serving an international client base. We specialize in eco-friendly, sustainable, and custom products. Our Made in Michigan line reuses sourced or scrap materials to create one-of-a-kind gifts that fit your brand standards.
- b. The Creative Business of the Year Award is awarded to someone who represents a business from the following industries: Advertising, Architecture, Arts Schools, Artists & Agents, Creative Technology, Culture & Heritage, Design, Fashion, Garment & Textile, Film, AV & Broadcasting, Literary, Publishing & Print, Music, Performing Arts and Visual Arts & Crafts who is innovating, collaborating and helping to showcase our region as a hub of creative talent.

5. Research

- a. The MFDMO has engaged MEDC Corporate Research to conduct customer experience that it does for all other industries served by MEDC. The MEDC will be providing:
 - i. In-depth qualitative data about Film Industry customers. Series of semi-structured interviews will be conducted with Film Industry professionals in Michigan. Customers will be asked to share their experiences making films in this state, and any other states they have worked in. Documentation will be provided on customer types and needs which will guide strategy, and potentially new service design.
 - ii. All of these research efforts will culminate in a set of insights and suggestions to assist the MFDMO in developing its strategic plan. We plan to share that research with Council once complete and discuss next steps in Strategic Planning as well as engagement of Council in that process.
 - iii. We’re joined by Kate Ahlers, Senior Customer Experience Analyst to present on the process and progress to date.

-Comments and questions were offered from multiple council members concerning legislative updates and updates to the status of the MFDMO.

-Comments and questions were offered from multiple council members concerning the status and future of film incentives in Michigan. Mr. Perekhlita’s comments concerning were deferred to NEW BUSINESS later in the meeting.

6. Research on the Filmmaker Profile the MFDMO Serves

Kate Ahlers, Senior Customer Experience Analyst with the MEDC's Corporate Research Division, reported on research findings of an MFDMO commissioned study to better understand the profiles of filmmakers the MFDMO services. Ms. Ahlers spoke about the stages of her study, beginning with stage 1, research methodology. Of 27 potential points of contact, 10 were invited to participate in an interview and ultimately 5 agreed to participate. Utilizing the feedback from these interviews, MEDC Corporate Research created an AirTable, or public online database concerning the findings, as well as customer persona's, which are frequently utilized in the business sector to gain a thorough understanding of the customer it serves. Ms. Ahlers covered stage 2 in which she suggested an analysis of current MFDMO programming and services. This effort done in conjunction with stakeholders would allow the MFDMO to ideate new service solutions for our filmmaker clients. Ms. Ahlers went on to discuss stage 3, which would be a confirmation survey to ensure that the list of programming and services offered by the MFDMO was meeting the needs of the Michigan Filmmaking community.

7. Film Festival Tourism Initiative

Tony Garcia reported on a new initiative the MFDMO is working on, which is *Film Festival Tourism*. The MFDMO has long supported film festivals across the State of Michigan through mainly sponsorships, but also through promotion on the MFDMO's social media channels, website, and monthly newsletter. The MFDMO has also been doing quite a bit over the years in the space of *Film Tourism*. One thing the MFDMO would like to recognize is that film festivals present a unique opportunity to attract highly sought after tourism dollars to the communities where they are located. Film festivals already do this to a certain extent, as many of their patrons, filmmakers, and other visitors are attending festivals from a location 50 or more miles from their point of origin. The MFDMO has been involved in an active stakeholder engagement effort to build support for this initiative. Internally, we've been working closely with our colleagues at Pure Michigan to create an appeal for film festival tourism and have been soliciting their advice as experts in the area of building successful tourism campaigns. The MFDMO has also sought external stakeholders such as TICOM and the MACVB. The MFDMO plans to continue stakeholder engagement in early 2020 to buoy what has appeared to be strong early support. Also, the MFDMO is pleased to have been invited to present on film festival tourism at the 2020 Governor's Conference on Tourism in Grand Rapids on February 19.

5. Public Comments

There was no public audience present for this meeting, so no public comments were taken.

6. Old Business

There were no items discussed under Old Business.

7. New Business

Capture success stories that stemmed from the period when a film incentive existed in Michigan. Possibly push through newsletter and/or other platforms and channels. Explore formation of subcommittee on how best to leverage Council's support to present a media assets and messaging to support the retention and growth of filmmaking productions and community in the state. Mr. Perekhita talked a little more in depth

about the MiFIA (Michigan Film Industry Association) that is working on bringing a film credit package to Michigan.

8. Adjournment

There being no further business, there was a motion by Mr. Welch to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. DePree; motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 333 p.m.