

NJ MOTION PICTURE AND TELEVISION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, March 13, 2024

COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE: Vice Chairman David Smith; Commissioner Tom Bernard, Commissioner Carol Cuddy, Commissioner Janice Kovach; Commissioner Michael Vezza; and Ex-Officios: Secretary of State, Tahesha Way, Lt. Governor; and Commissioner Tim Sullivan.

COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE VIA CONFERENCE CALL: Chairman Michael Uslan, Commissioner Shelley Adler, Commissioner Thomas Haveron, Joseph Petrecca representing Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo, and Kevin O'Brien representing Commissioner Elizabeth Mattson.

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Karen Kessler.

COMMISSION STAFF IN ATTENDANCE: Steven Gorelick, Executive Director; David Schoner, Associate Director; Charles Ricciardi, Operations & Creative Director; Joseph Marra, Production Coordinator; Elizabeth Parchment, Chief Diversity Officer and Director of Marketing; Caitlin Berg, Senior Advisor, Marketing and Business Development, Rachel Hudec, Special Projects Manager; and Anthony Orlando, Film Ready Assistant.

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Christopher Kay, Deputy Attorney General; and NJEDA staff: Kathleen Coviello, Danielle Esser, Hector Serrano, Matthew Sestrich, Christopher Del Vecchio and Muneerah Sanders.

CALL TO ORDER:

Vice Chair Smith called the meeting to order at 10:30am and read the Open Public Meetings announcement. Ms. Sanders took the roll call.

PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:

The next item of business was the approval of the January 17, 2024 meeting minutes. A motion was made to approve the minutes by Commissioner Kovach, seconded by Commissioner Haveron, and approved by the eleven (11) members present.

FOR INFORMATION ONLY: The next item was the presentation of the Chairman's Report to the Commission.

Vice Chair Smith introduced the Commission's newest staff member, Caitlin Berg, Senior Advisor, Marketing and Business Development. Ms. Berg introduced herself, provided a brief bio and added that she was excited to work with the Commission.

RECOMMENDATION TO HIRE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

ITEM: Recommendation to Hire Executive Director – New Jersey Motion Picture & TV Commission
Request: To approve the hiring of Jon Crowley as Executive Director of the New Jersey Motion Picture and Television Commission, with a start date of March 18, 2024, or soon thereafter when Mr. Crowley is available.

MOTION TO APPROVE: Comm. Sullivan **SECOND:** Comm. Bernard **AYES:** 11

Mr. Crowley addressed the board and stated that he was honored and excited to start his new role as Executive Director.

FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

CREATION OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

Vice Chairman Smith announced the establishment of the following Committees and Co-Chairs:

- Marketing Committee:
Co-Chairs: Daniel Bryan and Karen Kessler
- Production Committee:
Co-Chairs: Tom Bernard and Carol Cuddy
- Talent & Diversity Committee:
Co-Chairs: Lt. Governor, Secretary of State, Tahesha L. Way, or designee, and Mayor Janice L. Kovach

UPDATE ON THE STATE OF THE FILM INDUSTRY:

Chairman Uslan provided an update regarding 1.) the potential for additional strikes; 2.) the massive amount of production that took place prior to the strikes 3.) the way in which production at different streaming companies and studios has been negatively impacted. There's some fear that there will be a lack of work coming up due to the over production done in anticipation of the WGA and SAG-AFTRA strikes..

He added that, another fear is that there continues to be massive consolidation in the industry. There's a lot of talk about potential mergers amongst various studios. NJ is in one of the best possible positions to navigate the waters ahead given our strong team and commitment.

PRESENTATION OF DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Mr. Steven Gorelick delivered the Director's Report, including the following:

- Studio Update
- Infrastructure Update
- 2023 Production Statistics
- Film Ready Workshop Status
- Marketing, Media & Publicity Update
- Website Updates
- Location Update
- Film Festivals
- Recent & Upcoming Releases

HADDAD’S INC.:

Mr. Charles Ricciardi shared a brief overview of his visit to Haddad’s, a film and television equipment rental company he’s doing a story on in the next few weeks. Haddad’s is a family business headquartered in Pittsburgh, and they have a large facility in Kearny, NJ.

Mr. Ricciardi pointed out that Haddad’s is a large company with a strong work ethic. They have over 50 trucks and 20 full time employees at the Kearny site, and the owner, David Haddad, is proud of the fact that he did not let go a single employee go during the strike or the Pandemic.

PRODUCTION STATISTICS:

Mr. Joseph Marra provided a summary of the production statistics for 2023 vs. 2022. Categories included the following:

- Features
- Telefilms/Miniseries
- Television Series and Specials
- Commercials/Stills
- Industrial
- Music Videos
- Webcasts

UPDATE ON FILM READY:

Ms. Elizabeth Parchment briefed the commission on the Film Ready Program and announced the upcoming Film Ready Workshops:

- April 23, 2024 – Morris Museum, Morristown, NJ (146 municipalities invited)
- May 31, 2024 – Bergen County Courthouse, Hackensack, NJ (70 municipalities will be invited)

Ms. Parchment also advised that registration for the workshops could be accomplished by scanning a QR code with your phone. She noted that a new feature of the workshop, the Local Economic Impact Traffic Form, would be supplied to all of the participating municipalities. They can use the form to track the economic impact in their communities.

She also provided the following updates:

- Sent Press Release announcing latest cohort of Film Ready Communities, in addition to the Commission’s first Film Ready e-newsletter
- New Certifications: 14 towns and 4 counties
- 2024 Goal: Certify 100 towns by year’s end

MARKETING UPDATE:

Mr. Ricciardi provided an update on the status of marketing materials. He advised that he and Ms. Parchment attend weekly meetings with EDA staff to share information on newsletters, press releases, etc., and they’re currently working together to create new materials including updated brochures, business cards, pull up signs and table cloths.

MARKETING PHOTOS:

Ms. Caitlin Berg provided an update on the status of marketing photos. She advised that they’ve reached out to all of the major studios and networks that have worked in New Jersey, and requested

some behind the scenes photos and video clips of their films that can be used on the Commission's social media and in our advertising. Ms. Parchment added that staff is working to compile a list of publicity and marketing contacts for studios, and staff have been reaching out for press kits.

COMMISSION WEBSITE UPDATE:

Mr. Ricciardi stated that the website has been transferred from the Department of State, rebuilt and it is now active in our own space and we have our own people working on it.

Ms. Parchment summarized two new features that have been added to the Commission's website, the Production Zone Map and the Interactive Map for Studio locations. She explained that the site now offers 30-mile zone, a 25-mile zone and an 8-mile zone maps. She gave a live demonstration of how to use the Production Zone Map to determine if a location falls within a studio zone.

An Interactive Map for locating studios was also added to the website. Ms. Parchment advised that a user can click on a studio and it would display its location on a map, and that you can see a map of New Jersey displaying all the studio locations. She gave a live demonstration on how to use that feature.

COMMISSION NEWSLETTER:

Mr. Ricciardi provided a brief update and shared some of the upcoming topics he's working on for newsletter articles.

THE GARDEN STATE FILM FESTIVAL:

Mr. Schoner shared that the Garden State Film Festival will run from March 21st thru 24th in Cranford and Asbury Park, where they'll be screening a variety of features and shorts. He stated that the festival will start off with a March 21st field trip for over 450 New Jersey high school students, who will be taught about careers in animation; Friday, March 22nd is the opening night gala; and Saturday, March 23rd, the NJEDA is co-sponsoring a panel discussion on filmmaking in New Jersey and the state's tax incentive program. He noted that Commissioner Kovach is an honorary Chair this year, and that the festival will celebrate Carla Raj, who produced "West Side Story."

MONTCLAIR FILM FESTIVAL:

Ms. Parchment announced that there will be four (4) panel discussions scheduled throughout the year in partnership with the Montclair Film Festival. The first discussion was held last night and featured Commissioner Kovach as one of the panelists.

UPCOMING RELEASES:

Mr. Gorelick shared information the recent and upcoming theatrical and television releases of New Jersey-made projects, including the "The Walking Dead: The Ones Who Live," "Musica" and "Dog Man."

PRODUCTION REPORT:

Mr. David Schoner provided a Production Report, including projects that are wrapped, in production and pre-production. He thanked the Governance team for helping to streamline the production report.

NEW BUSINESS/OPEN FLOOR:

Chairman Uslan recalled that he was appointed as a New Jersey Film Commissioner 40 years ago. He commented on how the Commission has evolved and grown from those early days to today, where, due to our economic incentives in particular, we are making the entire industry an offer they can't

refuse. He stated that he looks forward to the next 40 years of accomplishments by the Motion Picture and Television Commission and thanked all involved.

Vice Chair Smith gave kudos to the social media marketing team for a great job done on the Oppenheimer posts.

He noted that the Film Commission has always been instrumental to the success of the New Jersey Hall of Fame. He mentioned a video created by the commission that was wonderfully well received at last year's Hall of Fame induction ceremony.

Vice Chairman Smith added that he's in charge of getting Danny DeVito back, and that there is a tentative date in November that will be announced shortly. He advised that nominations for the New Jersey Hall of Fame could be made at NJHalloffame.org and that the list of nominees would be announced next week.

He also noted that the New Jersey Hall of Fame will open an entertainment and Learning Center in the spring. It's a \$15 million initiative that is fueled by some very exciting technology.

He thanked the Governor, the First Lady, the Secretary of State, and the legislative leadership for their support.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ms. Esser acknowledged Ms. Sanders for her work in communicating with the Commissioners, and gathering and assembling materials in preparation for the meeting.

Vice Chairman Smith called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

On a motion by Lt. Governor Way, and seconded by Commissioner Sullivan, the meeting was adjourned at 11:42am.