



Seattle Film Commission

Meeting Minutes

Monday, November 24, 2025, 10:00AM – 12:00PM

M5 Creative and Virtual

Commissioners Present: Lowell Deo, Champ Ensminger, Tom Florino, Mark Freid, KD Hall, Michael Huang, LexScope, Kat Ogden, Davis Powell, Anthony Tackett, Budi Mulyo

Staffed by Office of Economic Development: Chris Swenson, Leslie Daniels

AGENDA

1. Call to order
2. Roll Call
3. Land Acknowledgement
4. Public Comment
5. General Order of Business
 - a. Approval of meeting minutes
 - b. OED
 - i. Commercial Film Attraction & Retention Initiative update
 1. Final report under OED leadership review now, OED will share via email and present at the December meeting
 - ii. Federal impacts information request
 1. Mark – Federal lands were immediately open for business after government shut down ended, no staffing or procedural changes noted
 - c. Position 11 – Applicant review and vote
 - i. General:
 1. Question about definition of “immersive” and how it relates to “emerging” in the position’s definition
 2. Not looking for a technologist, but rather a business development executive who is aware about the impact to the industry of this technology
 3. Want to bring someone in who can lead and facilitate broader viewpoint for the sector and industry
 - ii. Applicant Comments
 1. Josh Goldsmith – Good producer, production focused, not an emerging tech leader
 2. Budi Mulyo – One of our most staunch representatives, engages in community, speaks up always; looking forward SFC needs more robust conversations about broad issues in this important issue in the film industry, and would like to push that part of the conversation at a deeper level, as they are impacting our community at scale; looking forward SFC needs more of a political landscape perspective and broader feedback
 3. Chris Hatchet – No knowledge or scope of AI capability or interest
 4. John Gaunt – Very knowledgeable, former M5 tenant and produced inaugural AI film festival; can speak specifically to AI
 5. Michael Gaston – Broad experience across emerging and immersive tech; currently in business supporting commercial big box companies; offers balance about how it impacts people in a practical and hands-on way



6. Tyren Williams – Production work but not emerging tech focused; can be a good resource for committee work
7. Drew Stone – Solid experience and connection to immersive production
8. Ronnie Kabuka – WF above the line and leadership council; prolific networker, part of the community in the producer director lane, have not seen any emerging work as part of his interaction with community; unsure about the depth of their experience in this sector
- iii. Priority candidates vote:
 1. Michael Gaston (7 votes)
 2. Budi Mulyo (2 votes)
 3. Drew Stone (1 votes)
 4. John Gaunt (0 votes)
- d. Committee and workgroup updates
 - i. Economic and Workforce Development (Tom Florino)
 1. No November committee meeting
 - ii. Policy (Mark Fried)
 1. SPD UPO statement (Mark)
 - a. Confirms draft, OED will share with Commissioners for review and final edits
 2. SB 5814 statement (Davis)
 - a. Michael – Prioritize impacts to underserved communities, request to review; OED will share with Commissioners for review and final edits
 - iii. Marketing, Branding and Initiatives (Champ Ensminger)
 1. No November committee meeting
- e. Commitments and events
 - i. Past
 1. November 10 – Governor's Office of Indian Affairs (GOIA) training
 - a. Debrief at December meeting
 2. November 12 – SeaDoc
 3. November 23 – 48 Creates
 - ii. Inside Scoop
 1. December 18 – Davis
 - iii. Upcoming
 1. November 25 – Scope Screenings
 2. November 29 – IATSE 488 Labor Market
 - a. Request for volunteers will be shared by OED
 3. December 3 – SFC + SMC annual meeting
 - a. Required by Ordinance; in-person meeting 12/3/25
 4. December 4 – Washington Filmworks Annual Update
 5. December 17 – Filmmakers of the African Diaspora – 2025 monthly series
 6. December TBD – City Council presentation
- f. Treasurer conversation and possible appointment
 - i. Tabled
- g. Committee restructure review
 - i. Tabled
- h. Outgoing and incoming elected officials discussion
 - i. Tabled



6. Presentations

- a. Harbor Island Studios (HIS) update – Kate Becker, King County Creative
 - i. New executive, making significant changes to County, not sure about how this will impact the Creative Economy program
 - ii. County Council proposed unfunding HIS starting Jan 1, with 24 hours notice
 - 1. 67 in person comments and 200+ letters of support came into council
 - 2. End of meeting had 9-0 vote to extend for six months
 - 3. Council Members Balducci and Mosqueda
 - 4. No metric for success; intent of the County is to sell the property
 - 5. Analysis report is due May 1, decision by Council is due by June 30
 - iii. Work is now to collectively with community to figure out how to move forward with a long term plan
 - iv. History of HIS development, including significant physical capitol improvements, and new website which serves as collateral for sales and marketing; capitol projects still needed including air conditioning and heat
 - v. HIS is part of an 8 acre lot which includes a large plat of land leased by trucking and with a rail spur
 - vi. Options:
 - 1. County continues to own property and a private/non profit org operate the studio in the long term
 - vii. Most important part is the feedback and input of the community
 - viii. Many bookings into 2026, proceeding with that as business as usual while we're figuring out the financial
 - ix. Education to County Council is most important part, that must be done by the public and the film community
 - x. Q: Is there an assessment of the impact, fiscally and community, of HIS?
 - 1. ROI has always been
 - xi. Q: Any interest in private studios?
 - 1. Not at this time, but expect inquiries soon. Important to include the community and training aspect of the HIS space
 - xii. Q: What is the best way to lobby, not just as Commissioners but also as community members; what is call to action?
 - 1. Don't quite know what activation is needed
 - 2. Kate will keep SFC abreast of how SFC can help
 - xiii. Private Investment
 - 1. Tom – Challenge is viability of the property; challenge to operators of the property is making money; ownership structure has to be a consideration; groups like Pinewood are working in places that have very robust production, expansion will likely be in other robust global production space; MDS is another group that does this, unsure if they'd be interested in emerging locations
 - 2. OED – Opportunity to propose HIS use charter to be adjusted to prioritize commercial production, allowing higher-scale rent and income, and aligning with City priorities

7. Adjourn