

# Altadena Filming Committee

## Consultative Meeting Minutes

15 June 2016  
Altadena Community Center

1. Call to order 2:05 pm

In attendance:

Jennifer Morelos and Arturo Piña from FilmLA,  
Sussy Nemer, Field Deputy of Supervisor Antonovich,  
Edel Vizcarra, also from Supervisor Antonovich's office,  
Barbara Childers and Greg Graham from the Department of Public Works (DPW), LA County,  
Officers Kristi Cardoza and Rich Vega, CHP liaison and assistant, respectively, to CA Film  
Commission,  
Officers Sgt. Ernie Amaya and Mike Ulloa from the Altadena CHP office,  
Sgt. Wayne Waterman of the Altadena Sheriff's Station,  
Daniel Harlow representing the Chamber of Commerce,  
Jennifer Lee, Patricia Sutherlen, Kenneth Meyer, and Anne Chomyn (Chair) of the Altadena  
Filming Committee,

2. Altadena Filming Committee Chair Chomyn presented Mission Statement of the AFC and reiterated that the purpose of the meeting was to understand the filming permitting process.

3. Jennifer Morelos and Arturo Pina presented filming permitting procedures.

4. Permit conditions enforcement was discussed.

5. Chair Chomyn mentioned possible topics of future meetings.

6. Action item: K Meyer to find out the procedure for how to get a finalized filming permit from FilmLA.

6. Adjournment: 3:20 pm.

Anne Chomyn

## Appendix A

### Detailed Report of June 15 2016 Consultative Meeting The Permitting Process; enforcement of filming permit conditions



**Altadena Filming Committee welcomes representatives from state, county, community, and FilmLA.** From Center Top, clockwise around the table: Daniel Harlow, Sussy Nemer, Barbara Childers, Edel Vizcarra, Jennifer Lee, Greg Graham, Officer Rich Vega, Anne Chomyn, Sgt. Earnie Amaya, Officer Michael Ulloa, Sgt. Waterman, Officer Kristi Cardoza, Jennifer Morelos, Arturo Piña, Patricia Sutherlen (Photo by Kenneth Meyer).

#### **Attendees**

The Altadena Filming Committee (AFC) met with representatives from FilmLA, Los Angeles County offices, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) and California Highway Patrol (CHP) on June 15, 2016 at the Altadena Community Center. Present were Jennifer Morelos and Arturo Piña from FilmLA, Sussy Nemer, Field Deputy of Supervisor Antonovich, Edel Vizcarra, also from Supervisor Antonovich's office, Barbara Childers and Greg Graham from the Department of Public Works (DPW), LA County, Officers Kristi Cardoza and Rich Vega, CHP liaison and assistant, respectively, to CA Film Commission, Officers Sgt. Ernie Amaya and Mike Ulloa from the Altadena CHP office, Sgt. Wayne Waterman of the Altadena Sheriff's Station, Daniel Harlow representing the Chamber of Commerce, and Jennifer Lee, Patricia Sutherlen, Kenneth Meyer, and Anne Chomyn of the Altadena Filming Committee.

## **Altadena Filming Committee Mission**

AFC Chair Chomyn welcomed all and on behalf of the filming committee expressed appreciation for their participation in the meeting. Chomyn then presented the Mission Statement of the AFC, indicating that the goals of the Committee were to gather and exchange information from the Community, from FilmLA and from other experts and authorities on filming in Altadena. The Committee would also work to resolve any filming-related issues presented by the community. AFC member Meyer added that members of the community wanted more fairness regarding who hosts a film shoot and how often.

## **The Permitting Process – FilmL.A.**

To provide a common understanding of the function of FilmLA to all present, and with the intention of sharing that information with the community of Altadena, Chomyn asked Jennifer Morelos to talk about FilmLA and the film permitting process. Morelos, with contributions from Arturo Piña, provided the following description of FilmLA and the permitting process.

FilmLA was founded in 1995 as a non-profit organization to provide film permitting services for LA County. FilmLA serves the City of Los Angeles as well as the County, plus other cities like Santa Monica, Vernon, Diamond Bar, Monrovia. In addition, they handle the permits for film shoots involving LAUSD. The permitting process is conducted by four departments at FilmLA: 1) Production Planning 2) Permit Administration 3) Permit Operations 4) Field Services (notifications).

The process begins with the film production company (typically Location Manager\* or Location Scout\*\*) calling FilmLA to make initial inquiries about the prospective film shoot location. A Production Coordinator\*\*\* is assigned to help. (The Office of Permit Operations has 14 Production Coordinators, two of whom are Student Film Production Coordinators.) Using search tools the Coordinator looks into the location history; e.g., the Production Coordinator will check the special conditions for the location and inform the film company of requirements like the need for a FilmLA Monitor^ or restrictions on production hours. The Production Coordinator checks to be sure the Film company is insured. The Production Coordinator also looks at the frequency of past film shoots at that location. There are no set limits on the frequency of film shoots at a location; however, the number of production days at a single location seldom exceeds 14 per year.

The film company then submits a filming permit application to FilmLA online, preferably at least three days in advance of the first day of substantial prep activity at the host location. The Production Coordinator helps the filmmaker correctly complete the permit application and facilitates the permit process. There is a lot of detail required. The Production Coordinator sends the permit to the Fire Department for review and approval, and to the DPW to obtain the conditions for approval of the filming permit. These conditions will include a determination of how many law or traffic officers need to be present during the shoot, and may also include approval of street closures, and a determination of which traffic control devices need to be implemented. For the more complex or challenging shoots, more experienced Production

Coordinators are assigned. But generally, Production Coordinators are not area-specific and any Production Coordinator can be assigned to any shoot. There are usually many permits in play at the same time, including student film permits. There were close to 1700 student film permits issued in 2015.

After this work, the permit is handed over to the FilmLA's Department of Field Services for notification of affected businesses and neighbors. The Field Services staff hang door hanger notifications in the neighborhood of the upcoming film shoot. They do this 48 hours in advance of the first prep day. The door hangers provide the following information to the residents: name of film production company, set up and strike dates, name of film, which sides of which streets film vehicles will be allowed to park on, telephone number at FilmLA to call 24/7 with questions or problems, and the Location Manager's telephone number. The door hangers are usually distributed out to a 500 ft radius from the shoot location. The radius is greater if it will be a high impact shoot, such as one involving gunfire or helicopters.

Occasionally a survey is conducted by the film production company before the shoot. The survey may be conducted if it will be a long-duration shoot, or a late night shoot, or there will be substantial activity (e.g. helicopters) or other conditions of the shoot that might cause hardship to some residents. The survey is not intended to ask permission for the shoot, but rather to understand any special circumstances of any resident that might need to be accommodated by the film company. The survey must be conducted at least three days before the first prep day.

### **Filming company – Community liaisons**

Once the shoot begins there may be the following personnel present who are there to serve as liaisons or mediators between the film company and the public: the Location Manager, a FilmLA Monitor, and representatives of law enforcement. The Location Manager is an employee of the film production company. A Location Manager is usually required on a big shoot. A Location Manager is not required for small shoots – in this case another member of the crew, like the Production Manager, will be on site. The Location Manager has a copy of the filming permit and should see to it that parking of film vehicles is done only where allowed. Generally, crew and cast are asked to park off-site and are shuttled in from the remote parking area. The Location Manager is the point person for neighbors to talk to if there is a problem.

A FilmLA Monitor is usually not required on a shoot; however, some locations with "Special Conditions" require a FilmLA Monitor. FilmLA employs 15 or 16 Monitors, who are assigned to such "Special Condition" locations. The fees for the Film Monitors are an added expense for the film companies. Typically the FilmLA Monitors must be on site one hour before the start of the shoot and are there to ensure compliance with permit conditions.

Residents will usually see also one or two law enforcement officers. In Altadena, they will be either CHP Officers or Los Angeles County Sheriff's Deputies. If they are CHP Officers, they will have been assigned by Officer Cardoza; Officer Cardoza mentioned that in one year she assigned CHP officers to 644 jobs in the LA area. If the law officers assigned are from the Los

Angeles County Sheriff's Department, they will have been assigned by Sgt. Waterman from the Altadena Station. It is the film company who decides which law enforcement agency they hire (except that for filming on Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation properties, they must hire LASD Deputies). The film company may hire also additional private security.

### **Permit conditions enforcement**

The discussion of the meeting participants then turned to permit enforcement. When problems arise, it is often because permit conditions are being violated. It was pointed out that residents should understand that *all* film shoots including still photography [that have a commercial purpose] require a filming permit. If something seems wrong (e.g., neighbor has not received a door hanger), the first thing to do is verify that the filming company has a permit. The Location Manager should be able to produce a permit upon request. If the Manager is reluctant, the resident may telephone FilmLA, 213-977-8600, and ask if a permit has been issued for the shoot in progress. If a permit has been issued, the Location Manager should be able to address the resident's concerns. Permits, incidentally, may be viewed online (at FilmLA.com to registered users) three days after the shoot ends. Some of the permit conditions appears on the door hanger, like where parking for film-related vehicles will be permitted.

Representatives of CHP and LASD have agreed that Officers and Deputies assigned to film shoots will enforce permit conditions. In fact, if required, they will go so far as to shut down a film shoot (per LASD Sgt. Waterman). Law officers, however, cannot enforce permit conditions on private property. Often parking enforcement is a problem. Law enforcement personnel may find it difficult to distinguish cast and crew vehicles from those of local residents. Parking of film vehicles on busy streets has also been a problem.

If complaints are not readily resolved, FilmLA should be notified (213-977-8600). There will be someone there to take the call 24/7. Film companies that do not comply with permit conditions will be red-flagged and future permits will be issued to those companies with closer scrutiny. FilmLA wants to know about the non-compliant companies and they rely on neighborhood feedback for that information.

### **Future Meetings**

AFC Chair Chomyn thanked all for attending and presented the plan of the Filming Committee to hold meetings like this one every two or three months, with a particular topic for each meeting. The next meeting's topic would be traffic management around film shoots on the busier streets in Altadena. It was agreed that future meetings may involve or require only a subset of the people that were present at this meeting.

### **Footnotes**

Location Manager\* - an employee of the Film production company

Location Scout\*\* - could be an employee of the film production company or a free agent

Production Coordinator\*\*\* - an employee of FilmLA, in the Office of Permit Operations

FilmLA Monitor^ - an employee of FilmLA