



October 24, 2025

401 E. Pratt Street, 17th Floor Conference Room, Baltimore Maryland 21202

1:30pm – 3:30pm

Minutes

Members in Attendance:

Meryam Bouadjemi, Chair
Harry Coker Jr., Secretary
Andy Forssell
David O'Ferrall
Sumi Parekh
Portia Wu (Ashley Sharp), Secretary

Office of the Governor
Department of Commerce
Business Executive
IASTE Local 487
Group Effort Initiative
Department of Labor

Commerce Staff in Attendance:

Catherine Batavick
Afiya Bey
Mark Corbin
Jerel Registre
Steven Skerritt-Davis
Judy L. Smith

Guests in Attendance:

Sarah Fales
Alissa Ferguson
Linzy Jackson
Marva Williams
Roger Wood

I. Meeting called to Order

Chair Meryam Bouadjemi called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m.

II. Chair's Report

Chair Bouadjemi highlighted recent significant progress, particularly in the physical production space, crediting the team's efforts. A Listening Session Roundtable for Physical Production was held last quarter, gaining positive feedback and actionable suggestions for future support by deepening understanding of perspectives and identifying areas for improvement. Overall, Physical Production initiatives are advancing satisfactorily.

Other key achievements since the last meeting include the successful posting of the Film Office Director position to support the statewide film industry and a substantial improvement to the Film Office website, featuring an entirely new layout and design, which will be previewed later in the agenda. Additionally, a new production in Maryland was confirmed this week.

Inspiring site visits were conducted at Station North where potential intersections of technology and entertainment were explored. A further highlight was the University of Maryland Discovery District, which adeptly illustrates the connection between the tech industry and the arts. A tour of the Discovery District is currently being arranged for the Council.

III. Secretary's Report

Secretary Coker updated the Council on the status of recommendations the Department of Commerce received from SAG-AFTRA and IATSE, Local 487 in July 2025.

1. Fill vacancies within the Maryland Film Office
 - **Update:** The Commerce Film Office Director position has been posted, and the link was shared with MEIC members.
2. Update and modernize the Maryland Film Office website and develop promotional materials to attract productions to Maryland.
 - **Update:** Great progress has been made with the website and Ms. Catherine Batavick will provide a comprehensive update on that project with a preview of the site later in the agenda.
3. Compile a List of State Owned Resources
 - **Update:** Identification of the state-owned properties available for filming will be included as a task within the FY26 Implementation plan. Updates will be provided as this initiative evolves.
4. Proactively Market Maryland at events and in industry and publications.
 - **Update:** Proactively marketing of Maryland at events and in industry publications is included in the position description for the film director position. Updates will be provided once the film director position is filled.

IV. Film Website Update

Ms. Catherine Batavick provided an update on the status of the Maryland Film Office website redesign. The new design and layout will be live in November and fully integrated into the industry page. The plan is to leverage Google Analytics to gain insights into usage and identify areas for improvement. The long-term vision involves ongoing enhancements, including curating collections on topics such as the waterfront and filming locations, and integrating tax credits. The hope is to also incorporate video content and establish a hotline for local productions to share information.

Council members provided positive feedback to Ms. Batavick and the marketing team for their excellent work on revamping the website. They commended the new site as intuitive, dynamic, impressive, and significantly more user-friendly.

Action: Commerce will share the link to the draft site with the Council.

V. Discussion - Integrating the Film Industry and Lighthouse Sectors

Ms. Judy L. Smith initiated a discussion on integrating the film and lighthouse sectors, presenting two concepts from Mr. Mark Corbin:

- **Establish Maryland Film-Tech Innovation Center:** A flagship facility in the Discovery District or Station North, merging film production, AI research, and quantum computing. This center would showcase the state's capabilities.
- **Launch Collaborative Pilot Programs:** Partner MEIC with Johns Hopkins MICA and/or Morgan State to develop AI-powered film production tools and virtual sets for educational and commercial use.

The council found both ideas promising, with the tech innovation center being particularly relevant to Prince George's County stakeholders. Ms. Ashley Sharp suggested a tour of Bowie State University to involve higher education institutions. The discussion also highlighted the potential to attract major tech companies. Chair Bouadjemi raised questions about ethical implications, their potential impact on legal specialties in the workforce, and higher education. It was noted that Morgan State has indicated an interest in developing a focus area on the ethics of AI and additionally that intellectual property in the age of AI will become a significant area for legal professionals.

Action: Chair Bouadjemi committed to investigating the University of Southern California's efforts in piloting use cases to understand how they are leveraging spaces for consumers and creators.

Action: Following the discussion, Ms. Smith stated she would compile feedback, develop a detailed plan to refine the ideas, and outline steps for assessing their feasibility. She will also

organize a meeting with Chair Bouadjemi, Ashley Sharp, and David O'Ferrall to discuss evolving legal specialties at the Entrepreneurship Innovation Center.

VI. Maryland Arts Council (MSAC) Update

Steven Skerritt-Davis, Executive Director of the Maryland Arts Council (MSAC), shared updates on MSAC's 2025 activities and presented the organization's annual report. The report underscored a significant demand for arts investment, with \$14.5 million in funding requests received from every county in Maryland, excluding Carroll County.

He also highlighted the provision of free professional development to creatives both within and outside the state. These virtual programs have attracted participants from as far as Singapore. MSAC is working to develop a toolkit and offer training for arts providers, along with care navigators to connect them with art offerings throughout Maryland.

These activities position Maryland well to expand its arts initiatives, improve accessibility for all Marylanders, and enhance its competitive standing.

VII. Meeting Minutes – March 7, 2025

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of March 7, 2025 and July 11, 2025 were approved.

VIII. Good of the Order

- Council member David O'Ferrall announced that the new production, "They Fight," began filming on Wednesday. The shoot is scheduled for 19 days.
- Chair Bouadjemi highlighted the significant success of the independent film "Baltimoreons."
- Council member O'Ferrall inquired about the state incentive funds. Commerce staff confirmed their availability.
- Secretary Coker requested that the Council discuss internships at entities that may require interns at a future meeting.
- Secretary Coker asked Ms. Batavick to follow up with him to:
 - **Action:** Share how the Nonprofit Navigator can support the local arts community and film industry with resources.
 - **Action:** Provide details about a potential independent film from Los Angeles that could be filmed at Towson University, to help facilitate the connection.

IX. Summary of Key Decisions and Actions

Ms. Judy L. Smith summarized a series of action items that resulted from the meeting.

Action items for follow-up:

- Commerce will send the draft Maryland Film Office website link and resend the Film Office Director role's application link to council members.
- Chair Bouadjemi will research the University of Southern California's experience in piloting use cases to understand how they are leveraging spaces for consumers and creators.
- Catherine Batavick will follow up to inform Secretary Coker about how the Nonprofit Navigator can assist the local arts community and film industry and provide details about a potential independent film from Los Angeles that could be filmed at Towson University, so he could help facilitate the connection.

Action Items for Judy L. Smith:

- Develop a follow-up plan to engage the Council with the two potential concepts presented by Mark Corbin regarding integrating the film industry and lighthouse sectors to determine their feasibility and if the Council should pursue them.
- Schedule a follow-up meeting with Chair Bouadjemi, the Department of Labor, and David O'Ferrall to discuss evolving legal specialties at the Entrepreneurship Innovation Center.

Action Items for Meeting Participants:

- Council members were asked by Secretary Coker to consider and prepare internship opportunities for discussion at future meetings, specifically identifying entities that may require interns.

X. Adjournment

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 2:31 p.m.