ACM SIGGRAPH Executive Committee
April 30-May 2, 2010
Vancouver

MEETING NOTES

Present
G. Scott Owen
Jim Foley (arrived mid-afternoon Friday)
Jeff Jortner (present Saturday and Sunday)
Rob Cook (arrived mid-afternoon Friday)
Paul Debevec
Scott Lang
Kathryn Saunders
Peter Schroder
Jackie White
Bob Niehaus
Thierry Frey
Daniel Schmidt
Ginger Ignatoff

Absent:
Marie-Paule Cani (attending Eurographics)

<u>**Agenda**</u>

Agenda Friday: SIGGRAPH 2010
SIGGRAPH Asia 2010
Agenda Saturday: Treasurer report
Program reviews
Agenda Sunday: Meeting with SIGGRAPH 2011 committee
Confirming Electronic Motions
• Revised minutes from last meeting
• Budget FY'11

<u>**Meeting Notes**</u>

Friday, April 30
Meeting came to order at 1:00 pm.
Committee and SIGGRAPH 2011 conference were welcomed to Vancouver by the head of the
Vancouver Convention Center and a representative from the Vancouver CVB.

Noted that Rob Cook also voted for the recommended AV contract for SIGGRAPH Asia 2010.

Marie-Paul Cani also voted for it.

Actions
Move to approve Pico as the official decorator/stand contractor for SIGGRAPH Asia 2010.
Moved by Kathryn Saunders, seconded by Peter Schroder. For: Paul Debevec, Jim Foley, Scott Lang, Scott Owen.
Abstain: 0
Absent: Marie-Paule Cani, Rob Cook, Jeff Jortner.

Report on Meeting with ACM EC
Scott Owen reported briefly on his meeting with the ACM EC. Scott outlined for them the SIGGRAPH history, and described the losses associated with SIGGRAPH 2009 and SIGGRAPH Asia 2009. He noted that SIGGRAPH 2009 lost money on all fronts, including exhibits and registration. He explained the change in exhibits, which used to contribute more than $5 million to the bottom line, and now under $2 million with expected continuation in decline.

He noted that the CAG is fully aware of this and looking at restructuring exhibits. In times with losses previously, the conference was moved back to Los Angeles, and made profits the following years. Doing essentially the same thing here, and expect to have replenished fund balance in four or five years.

There is some worry about 2011,which is to be in Vancouver, since this is a new city and that makes it a bit of a risk. SIGGRAPH 2010 is budgeted for a surplus, and the rest of the organization has been cut back. The entire surplus from SIGGRAPH 2010 will go to building up the reserve fund. (Note: hope to discontinue transfers until the reserve fund is back up.) The SIGGRAPH Asia 2010 budget has been dropped to $1.0 million, from last year's $2.4 million. For 2011 and beyond, the commitment is only to hold conferences with small, technical programs.

Discussion followed. A question was asked about SIGGRAPH 2010, and what would happen if it too has a loss; the response was that the CAG is discussing, and next would have to cut programs. The CAG was commended for the cuts made so far, and its willingness to cut more if needed.

It was noted that the presentation to the ACM EC was received very positively. Additional comments included the possibility of including some budget presentations as bar charts. It was noted that when efforts were made to break down the conference expenditures for detailed examination, that proved to be extremely difficult because the contractors work very hard to manage budgets to the advantage of the conference. Any report would need multiple asterisks to explain the details.

Another factor making year to year comparisons difficult are the variables, from venue contracts

to busing needed to hotel commissions, etc.

SIGGRAPH 2010 and 2011

SIGGRAPH 2010
Jackie White reported that the CAG is managing SIGGRAPH 2010 as prudently as possible. The budget sent out for approval was deeply cut, reflecting the fact that exhibits are going down. The CAG is looking at more potential cuts, and options moving forward.

One point where there is cutting back is on the number of volunteers attending meetings, and that will be evident in Vancouver. Some meetings are cut to only one day when they used to be two. With fewer people, the logistics go more quickly, and orientation can be held on the same Saturday. While we wish the whole team could be that meeting, that just cannot be funded any more. Jackie noted that she herself no longer goes to the logistics meeting. Contractors report they are getting the information that they need at the shortened meetings.

Jackie noted that this means something of a different culture, without the family feel that has long been normal. The information that used to be given out on Sunday is now given out on Saturday. Where 50/60 people had attended the meetings in 2008 and 2009, for 2010, the number is closer to 10. All attendees are glad not to meet on Sunday.

Re: Exhibits. Jackie White reported that the current level for exhibits in Los Angeles is appropriate for this far out, but some concern remains and there may need to be more cuts.

When there are budget cuts, the CAG is letting the committees know their budgets, but not telling them how to make it work. A suggestion was made that following the conference, the different program chairs should be asked how the budget constraints impacted the program. A brief report from each is envisioned.

There was additional discussion about cost details of SIGGRAPH 2010:
* Networking will have savings by having hotspots rather than everywhere – some rooms will have wireless. Idea is higher quality in fewer places.
* Eliminate server – significant number of presenters use flash drives anyway
* Can no longer absorb content creep, as has been done in the past
* Conversation with PAG; 30% more papers accepted, but will have 3 parallel sessions at some points, some sessions will be opposite keynote sessions
* CAF, length set at 1 hour 45 minutes.

SIGGRAPH 2011

Jackie White gave a brief report about SIGGRAPH 2011. She noted Vancouver is both a new city and in a new country for the conference, so there are a number of unknown factors. Booths at SIGGRAPH 2010 this summer will have information and people to answer questions,

including the need for passports to travel to Canada.

The Vancouver chapter is very excited about the conference in 2011, and is working with the committee to make the conference a success. They very much want this to be more than a one-shot deal. It was noted that the planning and budgeting process for SIGGRAPH 2011 are spartan, with goal to return funds to the reserve fund.

End of term, CAG Chair
Jackie White noted that her chair as CAG chair is up in January. The CAG has received applications and will be reviewing them and making a selection.

SIGGRAPH Asia 2010

Daniel Schmidt and Thierry Frey reported on SIGGRAPH Asia 2010.
The contract for stand contractor/decorating was approved for Pico, following discussion. Three companies had submitted bids. Pico has better experience (including having worked with SIGGRAPH Asia 2008), and the costs submitted are in line with the budget. Quick discussion followed on the appropriateness of voting without some members present. It was noted that this vote was mentioned in the email sent to the Executive Committee members that there would be discussion and vote at this meeting. Budget for SIGGRAPH Asia 2010: It was noted that the final version is still being worked out, with conversations continuing to reduce costs since the conference is reduced in scope. Once those conversations are complete, the final budget will be submitted.

Since the last Executive Committee meeting in January, there have been a few changes in the budget. A few expenses have increased. The grants from the Seoul Business Agency have been reduced by 5% -- the mayor cut support for all events in Seoul this year. (Conference leadership is being told that there are no further cuts anticipated, but there is still a risk there.) As much as possible has been cut out of the budget. The net change in the budget since the January meeting was $88k, with the budget going from an anticipated positive net of $50k to a loss of $38k. The conference basically has no room for new surprises, although it is happening in a new city and a new country. It was noted that ACM is splitting the cost for the Korean website for the conference. Pat Ryan had mentioned this possibility at the last meeting in Atlanta, as ACM is strongly pushing its presence in Asia. A group in Korea will be working on the website and marketing materials in Korean. Basically, the Japanese experience showed that there are different expectations for websites in different countries, in terms of navigation and graphic design. Negotiations are also underway with Q Ltd to reduce that contract. Another reduction in spending is in lowering international marketing expenditures for SIGGRAPH Asia 2010.

SIGGRAPH Asia 2011

Possible sites for SIGGRAPH Asia 2011 include Hong Kong and Japan (Chiba, Tokyo,

Yokohama) at this point. It was noted that the local chapter in Hong Kong is being very helpful in discussions.

Cost differences in having a conference in a hotel in Asia would not be significantly cheaper than having a conference in a convention center. Therefore, having the conference in a university setting in December 2011 is being explored. Whether a straight technical conference is "SIGGRAPH" was raised -- in the sense that the SIGGRAPH conference is a gathering of communities, rather than a small technical conference. It's the brand, with "all the tribes under one tent."

Thierry Frey will keep the EC updated on decisions related to SIGGRAPH Asia. He noted that the SA CAG is restructuring, and is looking for people for three positions. With downsizing in mind, it may be that the new structure would be overkill for a small technical conference. However, it was noted that people who respond to the call for volunteers and will understand the issues will be valuable in the future when it is hoped that the conference will grow again.

Proposal from Koelnmesse, for SIGGRAPH Asia 2011 and beyond
Thierry Frey introduced a proposal from Koelnmesse for the SIGGRAPH Asia conferences in 2011 and beyond, and Daniel Schmidt described the proposal for the Executive Committee. The proposal minimizes the financial risk for the SIGGRAPH Asia conference, by having Koelnmesse assume that risk, rather than downsizing the conference. Koelnmesse is convinced that in the long run, this will be a successful conference in Asia as more than a technical conference. This may not happen in 2011, but would happen within a few years following.

Of course a huge number of details will need to be worked out for this to happen. The basic proposal is that the content of the conference would work the same way that it does now. SIGGRAPH volunteers would oversee all content; Koelnmesse would have no jurisdiction over content, nor rights to the content. ACM and SIGGRAPH will continue to own the name, and to own the content. Koelnmesse would take all the risk, and would be in charge of all the contractors and all the operational issues.

Questions and reactions:
- A for-profit organization will always have a different bias from a not-forprofit, so there are alarms on that front. This has nothing to do with intentions; take for example Elsevier vs ACM as publisher, from the viewpoint of an academic. Cost goes up. How much will registration fees for conference go up under the pressures of making a profit?
- It was noted that the initial SIGGRAPH Asia conferences have been a burden for the SIGGRAPH volunteers who have been working on them. With the different situations in different countries in Asia, the volunteers feel they have in essence been making the best guess. This proposal takes away the operational detail, and will allow the volunteers to focus on content. Volunteers will have overall oversight, setting expectations, policies and programs. Koelnmesse will do the execution. That's simplistic, but comfortable.
- One point of tension will be budget – Koelnmesse will need enough control over the

budget for this proposal to make sense, while SIGGRAPH needs control because it's its budget, for quality concerns, etc. An in-person meeting of the paper committees would be a good example for a potential point of tension.

- Any agreement should include an agreement for breaking up the relationship if need be. This will need to be carefully thought through. It was noted that many organizations are run by volunteers who set overall direction and paid staff who execute. SA CAG would set direction and budget, then Koelnmesse would take over.
- One vision would be of SIGGRAPH controlling content, with Koelnmesse doing the trade show and SIGGRAPH getting a percentage of that.
- Will this change the character of the conference? Voluntarism has always been the core of SIGGRAPH. The problems to date in finding the level of voluntarism in Asia that is found in the US was noted – it is easy to find chairs for the juries, but hard to find a conference chair, with all the detail work involved in that position.
- Another way of looking at it: Koelnmesse employed by SIGGRAPH to do a large chunk of running SIGGRAPH Asia, and will have a win if the conference is profitable. This would be different from selling the brand.
- It was noted that it's important to have a clear division of responsibility here -- SIGGRAPH to have control over technical conference, papers, etc.
- SIGGRAPH could get the revenue from the FC attendees. The additional things, like the exhibits, the job fair, etc., could provide income for Koelnmesse. But in some areas, care will need to be taken.Daniel Schmidt repeated that the idea is for Koelnmesse to take most of the risk. The content of the conference would be agreed on ahead of time.
- Scott Owen noted that the goal in this discussion was not to come to any conclusion, but to determine if the Executive Committee is interested in moving forward with discussions. It was noted that the key issue is how much control, and control of what, is given up.
- There was some discussion of items where significant reductions in expenditure can be made. These included website as one example, that it could be smaller, and have consistency from year to year rather than building a new one every year. It was also noted that sometimes volunteers can be more expensive than hiring individuals to do a task, especially when the number of volunteers available is minimal. (The volunteer culture in Asia is very different from the volunteer culture in North America.)
- Concern was voiced that any agreement be structured to have positive outcomes for both SIGGRAPH and Koelnmesse. The goal is a happy, healthy relationship. Another concern is the that there's financial loss to SIGGRAPH in learning the lessons learned so far, so some reluctance to see another outfit reaping a profit. Any agreement needs to have escape clauses, and a procedure for taking ownership of the conference back.
- The sense of the meeting was that the Executive Committee, the SA CAG, and Koelnmesse would work together to develop a more complete proposal and report back to the EC. Floating ideas along the way was encouraged, as was providing feedback and comments. [No motion was necessary.]

Working with ACM History Committee

Scott Owen reported that several people had responded to his request for individuals to work with the ACM History Committee. Mary Whitton will serve as ad hoc chair of the efforts, and others have volunteered to participate, including Judson Rosebush, John Hart, and some others.

Looking ahead to Saturday's agenda, the financial reports will be followed by program reviews. A few minutes was spent discussing goals for that. It was noted that some committee chairs were present, while others were not. It was also noted that the context was the discussion at the January EC meeting about priorities of activities when there are budget constraints.

There was additional discussion of the role of the EC with respect to the standing committees. It was generally agreed that it was appropriate to discuss the work of the committees at a strategic level -- what direction the group is headed in, for example, and to develop questions that could be sent to the committee chairs and that would be discussed at the next meeting. It was recognized that the committee chairs have the insights into the committee work, while the EC brings to the discussion perspectives of the overall membership of ACM SIGGRAPH. There are also useful questions to be asked of whether activities are being pursued because that's been the focus in the past, and whether there are different ways of doing things than the traditional ways.

It was noted that having reports from the standing committees gives the Executive Committee a better understanding on a regular basis of what's happening in the committees. Ideally this is the first step in a process, beginning at this meeting, followed up at the July meeting, and then perhaps ending with a weekend strategy meeting in the fall, that would include the standing committees, CAG, etc. May not be affordable at this point, but could work toward it.

Report on SIGCHI
Scott Owen was invited to attend some events around SIGCHI, which was in Atlanta this year. He attended the chapters workshop and the Executive Committee meeting, and shared some of his impressions. At the chapters meeting, there was a very interesting (and unexplained) response that they did not want to be associate members.

SIGCHI seems to be working on an idea of community, but this is not well-defined at this point, It could be geographic, or could be content-based. It sounds as if the concept could develop along the lines of a SIG within a SIG.

Pioneer Reception
Pixar was acknowledged for stepping up and sponsoring the Pioneers Reception this year. There will be a speaker (Paul Debevec) and there are plans to upload that presentation to You Tube.