

IRE board vote on Arizona Project Documentary

May 10, 2022

The board voted via email on a request to extend exclusive rights for a documentary about The Arizona Project.

Background: Last year, the board voted to give a documentary group 12 months to look for a deal to make a documentary on the Arizona project, with exclusivity. As the deadline nears, they're requesting another 12 months.

Last year, Mark Horvit joined the board meeting virtually and gave background on the project. I see no reason not to do this (no one else is knocking down our door to do this project), and they explained the reasons for the need for additional time to Horvit who said it seemed reasonable to him.

It's a great group to be involved with, headed by the woman who produced Spotlight and won an Oscar, and a woman who's been working with IRE on trying to get a movie deal for many years.

As a reminder for the board, here's what they approved, and what we'd be extending: This agreement would create a partnership between IRE and a group that is interested in making a documentary about the Arizona Project. We'd be committing to give them exclusive right to work on this for a year, with an agreement to extend that if they are inactive in negotiations to get a film done when those 12 months expire.

This agreement is a film company run by Cori Stern, who has been working with IRE for many years on getting a film made about the Arizona Project and who has been Oscar-nominated for her own documentary work, and with Blye Faust, one of the producers of the Oscar-winning film Spotlight. They are a great team for us to be associated with.

Under the agreement, IRE agrees to cooperate with them and make historic resources kept at the University of Missouri available to them. Mark Horvit has done this in the past and can be our contact for this, working with Diana. IRE would not get rich on this project but would get \$25,000 if the project proceeds, plus some reimbursement for records used in the film. Two big benefits of this project are that it would preserve and publicize a key moment in IRE's history (and be a potentially great marketing tool), and the filmmakers would spend their own resources to digitize historic records and would give all of those to IRE at no cost. Also, there is hope that having a documentary made could lead to an interest in having a film or series made down the road, although that's speculative.

The contract has been revised to reflect requests from IRE (the ability to remove IRE's name from the final product if we don't like it) and has been approved by IRE's attorney after a couple of wording changes. We are asking for an email vote because we want to get this back to the producers quickly. They are eager to work on this, and we want to get the clock started before other projects might emerge.

Motion from Walker to give the documentary company a 12-month extension. **Second** from LaFleur.
Vote: Passed unanimously.