

## **Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission**

### **MINUTES**

**Meeting January 18, 2022**

#### **Zoom**

Present: Alicen Brown, Amanda Folsom, Michael Grinnell, Kimber Hawkey, Daman Irby, Dave Norris, Stella Mattioli, Elizabeth Smiley, Adrienne Ward, Vivien Wong

Absent: Nana Gharthey, Sylvia New Strawn

Non-members present: David Swanson (guest presenter), Lachen Parks, Maxicelia Robinson

Meeting opened at 4:31 pm      Daman Irby presiding      A quorum was present

#### I. Introduction of new Commission Members

Mr. Irby invited current members to introduce themselves and welcomed the three new members participating today (Alicen Brown, Kimber Hawkey, Vivien Wong). Mr. Irby invited City administrators to introduce themselves as well. Our guest speaker (David Swanson) also introduced himself and offered his volunteer support to the Commission.

#### II. Approval of November Minutes

No corrections were noted. Motion to approve: Ms. Smiley; Seconded by Mr. Irby; minutes were approved by a show of hands.

#### III. Secretary's Report

Ms. Smiley will upload the updated commission contacts list to the CSCC shared drive. She also invited all new Commission members to contact her directly with any questions once they have explored the folders found on the shared google drive.

#### IV. Guest Speaker: David Swanson on the "Sister Cities Portal" Project

Mr. Swanson is spearheading a proposal to create and install "Portals" in key public spaces in Charlottesville and each of its Sister Cities. The portals would be permanent sculptures featuring video screens that allow citizens in each Sister City to greet and observe one another in real time. There are already examples of such portals in various cities around the world. Mr. Swanson has already set up a Go Fund Me page (link here: [Sister Cities Portal Project - Go Fund Me](#)) and is seeking the Commission's endorsement.

Several commissioners asked questions, and it was suggested that Mr. Swanson meet with each of the City Reps to gather information about our Sister Cities and to discuss the feasibility of this kind of project in those communities. There was general interest with agreement that more discussion will be needed within the Commission as well as with the organizers of the proposed project. Mr. Swanson can be contacted for further information at [david@davidswanson.org](mailto:david@davidswanson.org).

## V. City Rep Updates

### Winneba (Mr. Norris reporting)

The Winneba Foundation concluded its 8th delegation trip to Winneba in December. Over the course of the 12 day visit, the six delegation members met with the new mayor, new city manager, and several traditional authorities. They also visited sites of several ongoing collaboration projects between Winneba and Charlottesville. Another delegation visit is being planned for May 2022.

The Foundation is still raising money to support the Fire Safety Partnership and to cover the shipping costs for the donated fire engine.....(Mr. Norris lost connectivity at this point and was not able to rejoin the meeting).

### Besancon (Ms. Smiley reporting)

Several projects are percolating for later in 2022, travel permitting. Ms. Smiley will provide more detailed updates at a future Commission meeting.

### Poggio a Caiano (Ms. Mattioli reporting)

Ms. Mattioli has made contact with the director of the primary/middle school in Poggio to explore establishing a possible exchange relationship with Charlottesville students. Ms. Smiley offered to connect Ms. Mattioli with two teachers at a local elementary/middle school who have developed an exchange with a primary school in Besancon; their program might serve as a model for a similar kind of C'ville/Poggio school exchange.

### Huehuetenango (Mr. Irby reporting)

Mr. Irby invited new Commission members to let him know if they have an interest in getting involved with our new Friendship City initiatives.

The Ixtatan Foundation has submitted a reimbursement request related to their wi-fi connectivity grant expenses.

## VI. Committee Updates

### Budget & Finance- (Mr. Grinnell reporting)

Mr. Grinnell shared the current budget spreadsheet. There are open grants going back to FY2020, totalling close to \$6000 in unpaid funds. These include unpaid funds related to the Fire Safety Partnership and a Poggio-related grant that has been postponed three times due to Covid. After brief discussion, it was decided that the Grants committee will draft a recommendation regarding the unpaid grant money and present it for a vote at the February CSCC meeting.

Other updates: Mr. Ghartey's 2021 city Rep travel disbursement has been paid; the approved disbursement towards fire engine shipping costs has been paid; our budget request will likely be considered by City Council in March; we will likely be notified in April whether or not we have been included in the City's budget for FY 22-23.

Grants- (Ms. Ward reporting)

The deadline for FY22 grants submission has been extended by one week to Friday Jan 21. Two applications did come in by the original deadline. Grant applications will be considered by the committee and then presented to the full Commission at the February meeting.

Outreach- (Mr. Irby and Ms. Ward reporting)

In response to her request Ms. Ward has received visuals (images) from three of the City Reps to add to our website and other social media platforms. All City Reps are asked to continue routinely providing the Outreach Committee with updated news and images of the goings on in their Sister Cities.

Education- (Mr. Irby and Ms. Smiley reporting)

Mr. Irby welcomed our two new Education Reps, Alicen Brown (K-12) and Vivien Wong (Student). He invited Ms. Wong to join the Education Committee. The K-12 Rep is automatically on this Committee.

Ms. Smiley plans to reach out to Ms. Brown directly to orient her to the ongoing Cville-Besancon school exchanges as well as the proposed new exchange for 2022-23.

#### VII. Other Business

Mr. Irby would like to prepare an email outlining the Committees (missions, goals, members) to send out to new Commissioners. Ms. Robinson clarified that this is permitted as long as it does not generate an email discussion among members that would amount to a “meeting” (which would have to be conducted at a scheduled time and be open to the public).

Vivien Wong asked if there is anything she can explore between meetings. Mr. Irby mentioned that both Stella and Elizabeth are looking for additional support and help with school exchanges. Ms. Smiley will reach out to Vivien directly to tell her about the YAAS project and find out if there’s a way she would like to get more involved as a liaison between the CSCC and our local schools.

Meeting adjourned at 5:57 pm

Next Meetings:

*Tuesday Feb 1 @ 4:30 Grants Committee Meeting*

*Tuesday February 15 @ 4:30 Full Commission Meeting*