

Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission

MINUTES

October 18, 2022

Zoom

Present: Nana Gharthey, Edward Herring, Daman Irby, Stella Mattioli, Elizabeth Smiley, Adrienne Ward, Vivien Wong

Absent: Alicen Brown, Clare Denton-Spalding, Michael Grinnell, Sylvia New Strawn

Non-Voting Members Present: Maxicelia Robinson, Deputy Clerk of Council

Meeting opened at 4:35 pm with Daman Irby presiding. A quorum was present

I. Approve minutes from September Annual Retreat

Edit needed: Add Allison Brown to list of members present

Adrienne Ward made a motion to postpone approval of Sept Retreat minutes until our November meeting

Seconded: Nana Gharthey **Motion passed**

Ms. Smiley asked all members to review the Action Items from those minutes and complete them by the Nov meeting

II. Secretary's Report (Elizabeth Smiley)

The By-Laws have not yet been revised to include the new Email Coordinator Position voted upon last month. Ms. Smiley will inform the entire Commission when this has been completed.

a. City SOPs for Boards and Commissions (Daman Irby)

We need to acknowledge that we have all received and read the City's new SOPs for Board and Commission meetings. We are only allowed to meet 3 times/calendar year in a virtual format. Mr. Herring offered to follow up with Max for clarity regarding the City's requirement that a City staffer attend every meeting, and the implications for meetings of our commission that exceed 1/month. He will email some questions to her for clarification of these parameters and will report back to Daman, who will share the information with the full Commission. (See an Addendum to this item at the end of these minutes.)

b. Future meeting location and dates (Daman Irby)

We are now required to meet in person. In 2023 we will be allowed to meet virtually up to 3 times. Meeting at City Hall is no longer allowed. The large room in City Space is currently available on the first Tuesday of every month at our usual time. The Building Goodness Foundation space, where we held our Retreat in September, is not available for us on the 3rd Tuesday of each month, so that space will not be an option. Ms. Ward mentioned that moving to the first Tuesday will pose a bit of a complication relative to the Grants schedule, but she believes that we can work around this. It was decided that if the City Space is still available, regular full Commission meetings will shift to the first

Tuesday of each month, starting at 4:30 pm in the large meeting room at City Space on the Downtown Mall. Mr. Irby will send us a confirmation of this prior to our November meeting. (See an Addendum to this item at the end of these minutes.)

c. Update on New Member Handbook (Adrienne Ward)

Ms. Ward expressed some frustration that fellow Commissioners have not responded to multiple requests for responses and contributions to the Handbook, and asks for some acknowledgement of the work, as well as a commitment to at the least respond, rather than remain unresponsive.

III. Email Communications Report (Adrienne Ward)

Ms. Ward reported on the requests from the past month, which were inquiries about our Grants program schedule (not yet posted) and the amount budgeted for our Grants. An invitation came shortly after our Retreat to a zoom meeting involving Sister Cities International and the US Embassy in Ghana—Ms. Ward missed this email communique and did not get that info out to the Commission in time to participate on October 3. Fortunately, the Winneba Foundation did receive that information separately, although Mr. Gharthey was unable to attend.

IV. City Rep Updates:

a. Winneba (Nana Gharthey)

1. Special Guest Presentation by Myra Anderson, 2020 Grantee, on her Grant “Peace, Love, Poetry” collaboration between Cville and Winneba. She traveled to Winneba in May 2021 with a delegation, facilitated a poetry workshop in a middle school there with around 20 student participants, recording herself using her mobile phone. Upon returning to Cville, she held the same workshop in a local park in Spring 2022 with students from Buford Middle School. Once again, she recorded the workshop using smart phones. The hope was to have a recording of both workshops from which a documentary would be crafted to premiere in Cville and share with Winneba. However, the audio quality was poor and as a result, she canceled the planned premiere. She has offered to send the CSCC the YouTube video (without sound) that she did create. Almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of the poems were collected in addition to 50-60 photos that were taken during the workshops. Mr. Herring suggested she contact the Winneba school to see if the students there would be able to audio record themselves reading their poems, which we could dub into the YouTube video she has. This may prove difficult to do given constraints on that end. Mr. Gharthey proposed considering a grant request to purchase a camera for someone to use on a future trip to Winneba. Ms. Anderson screen shared a portion of her finished YouTube video of students in Winneba reading their poems in their classroom setting. Encouragement from the Commission for Ms. Anderson to pursue additional support to improve on the finished product’s sound quality so that it can be the caliber product she wanted.

2. Mr. Ghartey requested \$2000 in City Rep Travel Funds for his May 2023 Delegation visit. Since there are at present three (3) requests for City Rep travel, we would need to agree that unused but earmarked funds for 2022 travel can be used in 2023 in addition to other City Rep Travel allocations (totalling \$4000 max) in FY 2023.

Ms. Ward made a motion that we approve unused \$2000 for City Rep travel in 2022 to support Ms. Smiley's deferred travel to Besançon in 2023, and that we approve the two requests for City Rep Travel funds from the 2023 budget to support Mr. Ghartey's and Mr. Herring's trips, both of which are also planned for the first half of 2023.

Mr. Herring seconded. **Motion passed.**

(see an Addendum to this item at the end of the minutes)

3. Status update on potential event with the Ambassador of Ghana (Mr. Irby)
No new update at this time. This event is not likely to happen until sometime in 2023, so we will have time to discuss how the Commission would like to support this event at an upcoming meeting.

- b. Besançon (Mr. Herring reported on Ms. Smiley's behalf)

Mr. Herring is now in direct communication with the teacher/exchange coordinator of the proposed high school exchange in Besancon. Currently looking at liability issues as well as identifying "owners" in one or more of our local schools who will commit to making the exchange happen. Mr. Herring has asked for a more detailed proposal from the teacher at the Lycee Jules Haag next. A first exchange, if approved, would be in October 2024.

- c. Poggio (Stella Mattioli)

The concert preparations are proceeding. It will take place on Dec 10 at the Front Porch. There will be 4 musicians. Ms. Mattioli is working on lodgings and also finding instruments for them. Poggio's city officials are paying for their flights. They arrive on Dec 9 and depart on Dec 11. Clarification that the musicians are adults and not minors.

- d. Huehuetenango (Edward Herring)

Mr. Herring postponed his planned trip in November due to Hurricane Julia. He has rescheduled his trip for February 2023. He is coordinating meetings in both Huehue and embassy officials in Guatemala City. He has asked officials in Huehue to issue an official request for this visit. He plans to have an escort during his trip, who will video record as much of his visits and sightseeing as possible so that he can return with footage to promote our friendship city relationship and the Commission upon his return.

Ms. Robinson reminded us that any City Rep can always compose a letter inviting members of City Council to accompany them in any of their Sister City trips.

V. Committee Updates:

- a. Grants (Adrienne Ward) No update, as Ms. Ward had left the meeting by this time.

- b. Outreach (Mr. Irby)
Deferred a post-Retreat conversation until Clare Denton-Spalding is present to facilitate. Ms. Wong asked for assistance accessing additional photos to use as she is updating the CSCC website. Mr. Herring will provide some photos of Besançon.
- c. Education (Vivien Wong and Edward Herring) No additional updates.
- d. Budget & Finance No updates at this time.

Ms. Robinson reminded us that the City will need ample time to prepare or purchase any type of Proclamation or Letter from the Mayor to be presented during a City Rep visit to any of our Sister Cities.

Mr. Irby will be in further contact about scheduling our November meeting. (See Addenda to this item at the end of the minutes).

Meeting adjourned at 6:20 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Smiley, Secretary & Besançon Rep

Addenda:

1) Email dated Oct 19, 2022 from Daman Irby to Commission regarding scheduling our next meeting:

Dear CSCC,

In September, the City Council voted to require boards and commissions to return to in-person meetings with the exception of up to three virtual meetings per calendar year. This resulted in a discussion on where the CSCC would meet. There is no known city-owned location available on the third on the third Tuesday of the month, and the Building Goodness Foundation has a regular meeting scheduled on those days. Kyna brought to my attention that the large conference room in City Space is available on the first Tuesday of each month from 4:30-6pm. I polled the commission leading up to last night's meeting and there were no objections. As there were also no objections to the date change during the meeting, those in attendance agreed to change our regular meeting dates to the first Tuesday of each month. It was pointed out that this would make the November meeting two weeks away on November 1 which is a pretty brief amount of time between commission meetings, so we agreed to determine our November plan via email. Below are a few ideas. Please send me your feedback today or tomorrow so we can plan accordingly.

1. *Meet two weeks from now as a full commission on November 1.*
2. *Keep the commission meeting in November on the 3rd Tuesday, Nov 15, and begin our first Tuesday of the month meetings on December 6.*
3. *Cancel our November meeting and meet on December 6 (That would be six Tuesdays between meetings and include Thanksgiving week).*
4. *Let the Grants and Finance Committee meet on November 1 to begin planning for the 2023 grant cycle, and have the next full commission meeting on December 6.*

Please let me know your preferences or if you have another suggestion.

Thanks! Daman

2) Email from Kyna Thomas to Commission dated Oct 21, 2022 clarifying the SOPs governing meetings and city staff presence:

Good afternoon,

At the conclusion of the locally-declared State of Emergency (resolution approved September 6), Council authorized the City Manager to develop a set of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for boards and commissions meetings. The Procedures allow for one meeting per month, with exceptions for the Human Rights Commission and Police Civilian Oversight Board. It will be up to the Commission to make the best use of its time together and for individual members to do any pre-work to come prepared for discussion. I understand there has been some discussion of whether it is necessary to have the staff liaison present for meetings and the answer is Yes. All boards and commissions are assigned a staff liaison at the direction of the City Manager, and I am unaware of a circumstance where the liaison does not attend meetings.

To request exceptions to the SOPs, I would suggest that the Commission Chair set up a meeting with the City Manager and City Attorney so that, if approved, amendments can be made to the SOPs. If exceptions are made without updating the document and distributing them to all boards/commissions, there could be some confusion and further questions. We are all in a position of adjusting to a new way of operating, so we appreciate all that you can do to work within the guidelines until any changes are made.

On another note, members will need to become familiar with rules stated in the SOPs regarding virtual participation for individual members. I have also attached a copy of the Council resolution regarding meeting attendance. Thank you.

Kyna Thomas, MBA, MMC, Chief of Staff/Clerk of Council, City of Charlottesville

3) Email from Daman Irby dated Oct 25, 2022 to Commission confirming change in upcoming meeting dates and locations for November and December:

Dear CSCC,

Based on your responses, we are moving forward with a meeting of the Grants and Finance Committees this upcoming Tuesday, November 1 at 4:30pm, to plan for the upcoming Grant cycle. Those included in this group are Adrienne, Vivien, Alicen, Claire, Michael, and me. The committee meeting will be virtual, so please keep watch for an agenda from Adrienne and for the Zoom invitation.

The next full CSCC meeting will take place in person in the large conference room at City Space on Tuesday, December 6, at 4:30pm. Since we are only able to meet once per month from this point forward, it's possible (if not likely) that additional committee meetings will be added at the end of our usual meeting times. This is particularly relevant to the Grants committee for the coming months, so members of that committee should attempt to block out extra time beyond our usual 6pm closing. Keep in mind that you are allowed to meet one-on-one with other commission members. I've attached again the SOP and the allowable reasons and procedures for attending in-person meetings remotely. Please become familiar with these.

Stella, please keep the group informed of any relevant updates related to the concert scheduled for December 10 since it's just a few days following our next full commission meeting.

Thanks to each of you!

Sincerely, Daman

4) Email dated Nov 1, 2022, from Mr. Irby following up on Mr. Ghartey's request for City Rep Travel Funds to support a trip to Winneba in May 2023:

Dear Nana,

Max Robinson has brought to my attention that since you received funding for travel to Winneba in December 2021 during FY 21/22, Winneba would not be eligible to receive CSCC travel funds in spring of 2023 (FY 22/23) since it would be two consecutive fiscal years. Cities may request travel funding no more than every other fiscal year. During the last meeting, the confusion came from the dates being two calendar years apart, but the policy is two fiscal years. For this reason, Winneba is not eligible for travel funds this spring. Winneba would be eligible for travel funds again beginning July 1, 2023.

Best regards, Daman