

Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission
MINUTES (updated Feb 1, 2023)
December 6, 2022
CitySpace Conference Room

Present: Alicen Brown, Claire Denton-Spalding, Nana Gharthey, Edward Herring, Daman Irby, Stella Mattioli, Sylvia New Strawn, Elizabeth Smiley, Adrienne Ward, Vivien Wong

Absent: Michael Grinnell

Non-voting members present: Maxicelia Robinson, Deputy Clerk of Council

Meeting opened at: 4:35 pm Daman Irby presided A quorum was present

I. Approval of September Retreat minutes

 Clare distributed and added to the Retreat minutes

Minutes unanimously approved

Approval of October Commission Meeting minutes

Minutes unanimously approved

Approval of November Grants and Finance Committee meeting minutes

Minutes approved by Committee meetings participants

II. Secretary's Report

 a. Elizabeth reviewed the action items from both the September Retreat minutes and the October minutes, noting that all have been completed.

 b. Daman reported that several Commissioners have exceeded the City's allowable number of meeting absences this year. Discussion followed. Edward suggested a need to clarify that if a Commissioner misses a monthly meeting due to planned Sister City travel it will not be counted as an absence. Adrienne expressed general concern that multiple absences by Commissioners affects Commission cohesion as well as the ability to complete its mission.

Motion (Edward Herring): *to develop a process whereby all Commissioners can offer input on their expectations regarding meeting attendance after which, guidelines will be drafted for the Commission to consider adopting.*

Seconded: Elizabeth Smiley

 Discussion: Edward was asked to coordinate the process

Motion passed with no abstentions.

III. Email Communications Report (Adrienne Ward reporting)

 No new business

IV. City Rep Updates

a. Besançon (Elizabeth Smiley, Edward Herring reporting)

CHS has approved a student trip to CERN over Spring Break 2023, to include a stopover in Besançon. Edward is assisting with the coordination of this trip and will accompany the student delegation.

The Commission has received an inquiry about travel funding support for students who wish to participate. Adrienne noted that our travel scholarship program (established Spring 2022) would be the logical vehicle for such funding, however the application cycle would need to be revisited and possibly amended to allow students for the CERN trip to apply. Edward noted that when he previously served on the Commission, we voted to award \$2800 in travel funds towards a similar CERN student trip. We agreed to defer further discussion on this to a future meeting. **Action item:** Alicen will follow up with the CHS teacher coordinating the trip to ascertain how much funding support this group is seeking.

b. Poggio (Stella Mattioli reporting)

The concert is Saturday, December 10, at the Front Porch, and the band is enroute to Charlottesville. At the start of the concert, Stella will welcome the band and offer greetings on behalf of the Sister City Commission.

There is an immediate need for lodging for two of the four musicians; Stella asked whether she could use CSCC funds to cover the cost of hotel accommodations for the musicians if needed. There was acknowledgment that historically there has been a budget allocation for each Sister City and that as City Rep, Stella has discretion to use funds from that allocation to cover expenses related directly to her Sister City programs.

c. Huehuetenango (Sylvia New Strawn, Edward Herring reporting)

Sylvia reported she has not had much luck connecting with some of the craft artisans and coffee growers in Huehue but plans to persist. Edward reported that some members of their commission have been replaced; he is scheduled for a zoom meeting with the current commission. His trip to Guatemala is planned for February 2023. He will provide a more concrete schedule of his planned visit at the January Commission meeting.

d. Winneba (Nana Gharthey reporting)

Nana submitted a request (via email to Daman Irby, dated Oct 31, 2022) for \$1000 from the Commission towards the cost to ship a container of donated medical supplies, toys for children and other items, which were collected by two local community members who participated in the May 2022 delegation trip sponsored by the Cville-WInneba Foundation. **Motion: to approve Nana Gharthey's request for \$1000 towards shipping supplies to Winneba**
Seconded: (not recorded in minutes) **Motion carried; request approved.**

A delegation of 23 community members will travel to Winneba at the end of December. While there, in addition to attending two year-end festivals, they hope to present the shipment of donated supplies to the Winneba Municipal Hospital on behalf of the City of Charlottesville.

Nana reported that Virginia State University has expressed an interest in participating in upcoming delegation visits to Ghana sponsored by the CWFoundation.

Nana's request for \$2000 in travel funding, which we approved at our October meeting, has subsequently been rescinded. This would have been a funding allocation to a single City Rep in two consecutive fiscal years, which is not permissible per our existing Spending Guidelines.

Action items: Nana will forward news articles/information about the upcoming shipment as well as the already-donated fire engine to the Outreach committee so that they can be shared via our website and social media platforms.

V. Committee Updates

a. Grants

1. 2023 Grants Cycle (Adrienne Ward reporting)

The 2023 Grants cycle opens on December 12; the deadline to apply is January 13, 2023. Due to a surplus of unallocated grant money from the last cycle, we are able to dedicate up to \$24K towards grants this year. The maximum single grant amount remains \$4000 (at least 6 grants can be funded).

A press release has been written, announcements will be posted on our website and our social media accounts, and flyers have been printed (these were distributed to Commissioners with a request to post around the community).

The 2023 application has been updated to require that applicants provide very specific information about their proposed grant expenses (for example: flights, lodging, supplies). It was clarified that applications from minor-aged applicants will require a parental signature.

With Max Robinson's assistance, the Grants Committee has petitioned City Council and has been granted a special meeting in January in order to review grant applications and prepare the slate of grant recommendations for full Commission review at our February meeting.

Nana requested to be consulted about grant proposals that would involve being onsite in Winneba, so that he can offer the committee feedback on the feasibility of the project in that setting.

Action item: Adrienne will send Claire a list of media outlets to contact with the Grants program announcement.

Action item: all Commissioners were asked to distribute flyers to locations around town to help advertise the 2023 Grants program.

2. Update on Henry Pollard grant (Stella Mattioli reporting)

The interactive website is live, however, the identified school in Poggio still has not yet responded to Henry's request for contact. Adrienne noted that the photos that have been already posted on the website need captions in order to be meaningful to viewers. **Action item:** Stella will follow up with Henry and ask him to create captions for the photos.

b. Outreach (Claire Denton-Spalding reporting)

Claire requested that 30 minutes be allocated to a Social Media & Outreach Committee meeting—this can be tacked on to an upcoming monthly Commission meeting if committee members are agreeable. **Action item:** Claire will let Max and Daman know when she'd like to schedule this committee meeting so that they can place it on the meeting schedule.

Sylvia would like to pursue developing an informative brochure to promote the CSCC and inform the community about our Sister Cities. Sylvia also proposed we have a poster made with info about our Sister Cities, to be placed in various community locations (eg Omni Hotel, the Center). She requested we consider allocating \$1500 to have a poster designed, printed and distributed. As there was no longer a quorum at the meeting, no motions were made and no votes cast. **Action items:** Sylvia and Claire will meet one-on-one to flesh out these suggestions for promotional materials and will report on their discussion at a subsequent Commission meeting.

c. Education (no report)

d. Budget & Finance

There was no report from our Treasurer, however there were several requests for clarification directed at Max. These included: whether we should be prepared to submit budget requests as early as October going forward (no, last year was singular); the best time for us to request to speak with City Council regarding our next budget request (December-during a Community Matters session); will City Councilors continue to request additional information from our Chair regarding our expenditures (only if there are questions from Council's finance committee).

VI. Other Business: CSCC Website

Vivien asked about the feasibility of shifting our website away from the Wix platform. She has been working on updating our site and noted that the current website is very clunky. Daman invited Vivien to create a draft web page using a different platform for our review. Claire noted that our Retreat brainstorming session identified some areas for website improvement, which she will forward to Vivien. Adrienne requested that we wait to migrate over to any new platform until after the current Grants cycle is completed.

Meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Smiley, Secretary & Besançon Rep

*Next Meeting: **Wednesday January 4, 2023 @ 4:30 pm, CitySpace Conference Room***