

## Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission

### MINUTES

January 4, 2023

CitySpace Conference Room

Present: Claire Denton-Spalding, Michael Grinnell, Kimberly Hayes, Edward Herring, Daman Irby, Stella Mattioli, Sylvia New Strawn, Elizabeth Smiley, Adrienne Ward

Absent: Alicen Brown, Nana Gharney, Vivien Wong

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

Meeting opened at 4:32 pm            Daman Irby presiding            A quorum was present

- I. Introduction of new Commissioner Kimberly Hayes (Business Rep). Commissioners also Introduced themselves to Kimberly.
  
- II. Approval of December meeting minutes  
**Motion** (Edward Herring): **to postpone approval of the December 2022 minutes until the Feb 2023 meeting so that Elizabeth can incorporate corrections received today**  
**Seconded:** Michael Grinnell  
**Motion passed**
  
- II. Secretary's Report (Elizabeth Smiley)  
No new business
  
- III. Email Coordinator's Report (Adrienne Ward)  
No new business
  
- V. City Rep Updates
  - a. Besançon (Elizabeth Smiley reporting)  
We have a new contact in the Office of International Relations, Mr. Florent Werguet. Elizabeth will soon begin planning her City Rep visit to Besançon anticipated for early April. Interested Commissioners are welcome to accompany her. Sylvia has shared a NYT article (Sunday, Jan 1, 2023) featuring Besançon.
  
  - b. Poggio a Caiano (Stella Mattioli reporting)  
The Dec 10 concert in the Front Porch space was a success, with an intimate audience of around 30 members. The four visiting musicians enjoyed their short stay in Charlottesville and made connections with various community members and friends of Poggio.
  
  - c. Huehuetenango (Edward Herring reporting)  
Edward departs for Guatemala on Feb 17; after 2-3 days in the capital city of Antigua, he will travel to Huehuetenango to meet with officials and Friendship City

Commission members there. A central objective remains to investigate educational partnerships as part of solidifying the steps towards a formal Sister City relationship.

d. Winneba (no report)

IV. Committee Reports

a. Grants (Adrienne Ward reporting)

The Grants Committee will meet on Jan 25 to review the applications received. Thanks to those who have assisted posting flyers around town. Another press release went out today as well as posts on our CSCC Instagram account. No applications have been received as yet.

Should we consider placing an ad in the Daily Progress? Edward suggested we purchase a “boost” on Facebook. Kimberly suggested we spend our money on social media ads, such as placing a sponsored ad on Instagram. Claire offered to research the costs of placing ads in the local newspapers.

Sylvia proposed that we craft a “story” about the Grants program for use as part of our outreach plan ; it was decided to defer this proposal until later since the current Grants cycle is already well underway.

**Motion:** (Adrienne Ward) *moved that we approve spending up to \$300 to purchase ad space on our social media platforms*

**Seconded:** Edward Herring **The motion passed.**

b. Education (Edward Herring reporting)

Return to the discussion begun at the December meeting: how might we support a request from Charlottesville High School’s Engineering Dept for \$4000 to assist students with travel expenses for their upcoming trip to CERN (April 1-9, 2023) which includes a 4-night homestay with families in Besançon. CHS is requiring that all participating students secure sufficient travel funding by the end of February.

It was noted that CHS organized a similar trip in the Spring of 2019, applied to the CSCC for travel funding via the Grants program, and was awarded a comparable level of assistance. **Action item:** for the current request, Edward proposed that he direct the CHS Engineering Dept to send a formal letter requesting funding, to be considered by the full Commission at our February meeting.

Going forward, what is the best way for the Commission to respond to funding requests for these types of student trips? Should the Travel Scholarship Program be modified so that it can accommodate requests as they arise? Or should these requests be considered by the full Commission, with input from the Treasurer and appropriate City Rep, on a case-by-case basis? More discussion is needed.

c. Outreach (Claire Denton-Spalding)

Michael requested to be relieved of his Outreach Committee duties. Kimberly was invited to join the Committee. **Action item:** Claire requested a 30-minute Committee meeting for 4 pm on the day of our next Commission meeting; Max will follow up with scheduling.

Claire has been meeting Outreach Committee members one-on-one to work on developing several of the ideas that came up during our September Retreat and to develop an Outreach Plan for full Commission consideration..

- d. Budget & Finance (Michael Grinnell)  
Current budget \$47,300. Only the Henry Pollard grant expenses (\$500) are outstanding.

VI. Other Business

Sylvia would like to host a dinner gathering for Commissioners at her home and asked whether this would be permissible within the current guidelines for City Boards & Commissions. Max clarified that as long as no CSCC business is discussed or conducted, we would be free to meet at a private event such as this one.

**Action item:** Elizabeth will follow up with Kimberly to schedule an in-person new member orientation session prior to the next Commission meeting.

**Action item:** Edward will send an email out next week soliciting input from individual Commissioners on the issue of excused absences (as a follow up from the December meeting).

Kimberly requested clarification on commission meeting day and time.

Meeting adjourned at 6 pm

Respectfully submitted,  
Elizabeth Smiley  
Secretary & Besancon Rep

Next Commission Meeting: *Tuesday February 7, 4:30 pm, CitySpace Conference Room*  
Special Grants Committee Meeting: *Wednesday January 25, time TBA*