

Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission
AGENDA
Meeting February 7, 2023

I. Approve Minutes from December and January Meeting

II. Secretary's Report

- a. Discussion on Absence Related to scheduled CSCC Travel

III. Email Communications Report

IV. Committee Updates:

- a. Grants
 - i. Review of Grant Finalists
 - ii. Discussion of Travel Scholarship Policy
- b. Outreach
- c. Education
- d. Budget & Finance

V. City Rep Updates:

- b. Besancon
- c. Poggio
- d. Huehuetenango
- e. Winneba

Next Meeting:

CSCC Meeting - Tuesday, March 7, 4:30-6:00pm, City Space Large Conference Room

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***

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*