

Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission

MINUTES

Meeting August 17, 2021

Zoom

Present: Daman Irby, Amanda Folsom, Michael Grinnell, Stella Mattioli, Dave Norris, Elizabeth Smiley, Adrienne Ward

Absent: Nana Gharthey

Non-members Present: Maxicelia Robinson, Lachen Parks

Meeting opened at 4:31 pm Mr. Irby presided

Mr. Irby started the meeting with three announcements not on the agenda:

1. Commissioners Joan Clarke and Neeley Minton have resigned
2. Because of his extended absence, Mr Gharthey has missed more consecutive meetings than our By-Laws permit and could be subject to removal from the Commission by CCouncil. Mr. Irby will follow up with Mr. Gharthey on this.
3. Mr. Irby will be drafting the Commission's 2020-21 annual report to file with the Clerk of Council (typically due June 30).

I. Approval of July minutes

Ms. Smiley noted she had already made a minor correction to Section IIIB Motion to approve as amended: Ms. Folsom Seconded:Mr. Grinnell Passed

II. Secretary's Report

Ms. Smiley outlined the steps she has taken to clean up and organize all files on the Commission's shared drive. These include: creating folders for each of the active sister/ friendship cities; deleting duplicate copies of agendas and minutes; organizing meeting agendas and minutes by calendar year; creating a folder for education committee materials; and relabeling files in a consistent format so that they are easy to identify.

III. City Rep Updates

a. Winneba-- Mr. Norris reporting

Plans remain underway for delegation trips to Winneba in December 2021 and May 2022. Mr. Gharthey is scheduled to return from Winneba during the first week of September. Mr. Norris will reach out to grantees for updates regarding the ongoing grant-funded projects. Mr. Grinnell clarified with Mr. Norris that expenses related to the still-

unfinished firefighters grant project will come out of the 2019 grants budget.

b. Besancon- Ms. Smiley reporting

Talks are ongoing regarding the proposed student sport exchange with Lycee Jules Haag, though this project may have to be deferred until the CCS Superintendent approves the resumption of student exchanges, currently suspended due to the pandemic.

We have received a request to assist with a return visit by African Blues musician Joyce Tape, as part of her international tour promoting her new album. She previously visited in 2019.

c. Poggio- Ms. Mattioli reporting from Poggio

Ms. Mattioli's plans to return to Cville are on hold as she awaits the approval of her travel visa.

In a follow-up meeting with the vice-mayor, she confirmed that there are no copyright issues preventing a Charlottesville screening of the Poggio-produced film "Filippo Mazzei-Cittadino Del Mondo" once she returns to town with Ms. Ward askea copy of the film. Ms. Ward asked whether the film might be shown in an online format if the pandemic will prevent an in-person film event until a later date; feasibility is undetermined at this point. Ms. Mattioli reported that the next UVA student J-term visit to Poggio, originally scheduled for January 2022, will be deferred until 2023.

d. Huehuetenango- various commissioners reporting

Ms. Ward reported that Rachel McLaughlin ("Peace and Creative Connection Through Arts" grantee) has secured the Northside Library as a location for the joint Charlottesville-Huehue art exhibition. The exhibit will be on display in October, with an opening to launch the show at a specific date tbd.

Mr. Irby presented the idea of collaborating with the UVA Center for Politics to invite Guatemalan ambassador to the US, Alfonso Quinonez, to speak as part of its "Ambassador Series." The event would be free, open to the public, and in-person at a date tbd in 2022. With the CSCC as a co-sponsor, we could promote the event broadly in the local community and use it as an opportunity to highlight our Friendship City relationship with Huehue. Commissioners signalled their support and asked Mr. Irby to reach out to the Embassy to sound out the ambassador's interest.

Mr. Grinnell reported that the Huehue page on the CSCC website is not yet public; he is still seeking images and text. Mr. Irby suggested requesting the short video that the Huehue participants presented at the July meet-and-greet.

Mr. Norris reported that has not yet written a letter to Council requesting a Friendship City Rep position, but will be making that a priority and will report back at our next meeting.

IV. Committee updates

a. Grants update- Ms. Folsom reporting

All the 2020 and 2021 grants are moving forward. She is working on creating a dashboard in the shared drive to allow progress reports on grants to be easily updated on an ongoing basis. The Speak/Bridge portrait project grant will launch this Fall; the grantees have requested help from City Reps with identifying possible portraiture subjects in our Sister Cities. The committee will focus next on developing their travel scholarship idea. Ms. Folsom requested that this item be placed on the Sept meeting agenda for a full commission discussion.

b. Outreach/Communications - Mr. Grinnell reporting

(See his comments in the Huehue report regarding needs in order to make the Huehue page on our website public) No other updates.

c. Education - no update on committee activities

d. Finance- Mr. Grinnell reporting

Per CSCC by-laws, he needs to submit an annual financial report to CC which he will be working on in the month ahead. Monthly budget update included two grant payments, one to Rachel McLaughlin for expenses related to the Mountainside Arts project, and the other to the Va Festival of the Book.

V. Annual Retreat

Will have to be virtual this year, per city requirement. Mr. Irby proposed designating the September 21 meeting as the Retreat, 4:30-7:30. Commissioners agreed. This will be a public meeting. Ms Ward asked if any portion of the Retreat might be made private in case there are any issues of a sensitive nature requiring our attention. It was noted that the

annual Retreats have always been public, even when they were conducted in person. Mr. Irby and Mr. Norris will meet soon to plan the Retreat agenda. Ms. Smiley suggested that commissioners review past Retreat agendas and minutes and forward any requests for 2021 topics/agenda items to Mr. Irby in advance.

VI. Other Business:

a. Filling the vacant Commission positions

Ms. Robinson reported that to date, we have not received any applications for the ongoing two vacant positions. There was discussion of how to find applicants for the now vacant K-12 position. Mr. Irby will contact Cville City Schools to follow up on this. Ms. Ward asked for clarification about replacing the (now inactive) Plevan Rep position that Ms. Clarke had filled. Ms. Robinson reported that the city is not currently advertising for the Plevan Rep position. There is a community member who has expressed interest in a potential Huehue Friendship Rep position; we discussed requesting special consideration from CC to approve this Commission position so that this candidate can apply with our endorsement.

b. Upcoming event of interest - Mr. Norris

The Charlottesville-Winneba Foundation is hosting a zoom presentation by UVA Architectural History student Shaheen Alikhan focusing on the architecture of slaving vessels. Ghana was one of the main transit points for the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. "Building A Slave Ship: Planning the Floating Prison," Thursday 8/19 @ 7 pm.

Motion to adjourn: Mr. Grinnell Seconded: Mr. Norris

Meeting adjourned at 5:45 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Smiley (Secretary and Besancon Rep)