

Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission

MINUTES

February 7, 2023

CitySpace Conference Room

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

Participating Remotely from Chicago: Adrienne Ward (per Condition #2 of the City's Guidelines for requesting remote participation in a Board/Commission meeting)

Absent: Nana Gharthey

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

Meeting opened at 4:32 pm

Daman Irby presided

A quorum was present

I. Approval of Minutes

Motion (Edward Herring) to approve the revised December 2022 and the January 2023 minutes

Motion Seconded (Kimberly Hayes)

No additional discussion of minutes

Motion passed unanimously

II. Secretary's Report (Daman Irby, Elizabeth Smiley)

a. Discussion on Absences Related to scheduled CSCC Travel

Daman reminded us that we are responsible for reporting to City Council when Commissioners are out of compliance with the City's requirements for meeting attendance. He distributed a proposed statement drafted by Edward. Adrienne expressed concern that as worded the draft seems to permit a member to be absent for as many as 6 meetings in a year. Discussion followed, members offered recommendations and a revised statement was generated as follows:

Absences while on recognized Commission business:

"That attendance at or travel to a scheduled event or meeting during regular CSCC meeting times, when this absence is part of fulfilling the member's assigned responsibilities, shall not be considered a meeting absence and therefore shall not be counted as part of the allowed meeting absences, as currently established. Advance notification to the CSCC Chair and/or Secretary, indicating the essential nature and urgency of the absence, is required."

Motion (Sylvia New Strawn) to accept the revised statement

Motion Seconded (Stella Mattioli)

Motion passed with 2 abstentions

III. Email Communications Report (Adrienne Ward)

- 1) A community member with an interest in puppetry has asked about opportunities to connect or collaborate with others in our Sister Cities
Action item: City Reps are asked to send Adrienne any information they may have or be able to find about organizations or individuals who may be involved in puppetry in our Sister Cities
- 2) A community member has emailed asking whether we have a document explaining our sources of funding and the use of our funds. The budget report, which Max maintains on the Commission's behalf, is public information and can be accessed with a FOIA request; Max suggested that Adrienne advise this community member to contact the FOIA officer for the City.
- 3) Adrienne read aloud an email letter received from Myra Anderson, 2022 Grantee and member of the January 2022 Winneba delegation trip. In her letter, Ms. Anderson expressed concerns about a fellow delegation participant who she observed engaging in disrespectful behavior towards other travelers during that trip.

[At this point in the meeting, community member and county resident Deanna McDonald requested the floor in order to read aloud a statement she had drafted expressing her own concerns about the traveler referenced in Myra Anderson's letter. Ms. McDonald and her husband were also participants in the January 2022 community delegation trip to Winneba. Ms. McDonald outlined behaviors she observed this traveler engaging in during the trip and described the distress she and her husband experienced personally as a result of interactions with this traveler. She requested an official apology from the traveler, and asked that the traveler be banned from all future participation in trips sponsored by the Sister Cities Commission and by the Charlottesville Winneba Foundation. She concluded with a request that those responsible for organizing Winneba trips examine their current protocols and develop guidelines for participation and expectations for delegates during trips. Commission Chair Daman Irby thanked Ms. McDonald on behalf of the Commission for coming forward with her concerns and requested that she email a copy of her statement to him, which she agreed to do.]

IV. Committee Updates:

a. Grants (Adrienne Ward, Daman Irby)

i. Review of Grant Finalists

Grants Committee members presented the 6 finalists and their proposed projects as follows:

Vivienne - "Besançon Music" and "Mapping & Art"

Adrienne - "Two Cities Podcast" and "Her Padded Truth"

Daman - "Sister Revolutions" and "Mismatch"

Commissioners offered the following recommendations:

“Mapping & Art” - Alicen suggested that the grantee contact local public school teachers so that the curriculum she develops is consistent with the current required standards of learning and can therefore be used by teachers

Commissioners asked questions and expressed the following concerns:

“Two Cities Podcast” - as the applicant is a former grant recipient, Alicen cautioned against awarding grants to the same grantees over and over; Adrienne clarified that prior grantees are eligible to apply for subsequent grants, though not in consecutive years. In addition, the applicant, who works for the Ixtatan Foundation in Cville, lives out of state. Does this affect eligibility?

“Her Padded Truth” - concerns about the eligibility of this applicant as well, who is not a Charlottesville resident and whose non-profit organization is located in Hampton, VA; Adrienne noted that our grant guidelines do not specify that applicants must be Cville residents

Action item: Max will need to clarify from the City’s end whether residency needs to be a requirement for grants applicants.

Motion (Michael Grinnell) to group all applications except for “Her Padded Truth” together for an approval vote and to defer approving the “Her Padded Truth” application pending further information regarding City residency requirement

Motion Seconded (Alicen Brown)

Motion passed unanimously

Motion (Elizabeth Smiley) to approve the five applications: “Besançon Music,” “Mapping & Art,” “Sister Revolutions,” “Two Cities Podcast,” “Mismatch”

Motion Seconded (Edward Herring)

Motion passed unanimously

ii. Discussion of Travel Scholarship Policy

CHS has requested \$6000 from the CSCC to support travel funding for the planned student delegation trip to Besançon/Cerne in April. Daman suggested that we consider approving a “sponsorship” in order to provide financial support for this trip, bypassing the Travel Scholarship fund at this time until it is determined whether future requests will need to be funneled through the Travel Scholarship cycle. Michael reviewed our current budget and anticipated expenses. It was proposed that we approve a \$4000 allocation instead.

Motion (Viven Wong) that we approve funding in the amount of \$4000 as a sponsorship in support of the CHS trip to Besançon/Cerne April 2-9, 2023.

Motion Seconded (Alicen Brown)

Motion passed with 1 abstention

- b. Outreach - report deferred to next meeting due to time constraints
- c. Education - report deferred due to time constraints
- d. Budget & Finance - report deferred (? Michael please confirm) due to time constraints

V. City Rep Updates - reports deferred to next meeting due to time constraints

Meeting adjourned at 6:20 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Smiley
Secretary & Besançon Representative

Next Meeting:

Tuesday March 7, 4:30-6:00 pm, CitySpace Conference Room