



Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission

AGENDA - Annual Retreat

Monday, September 11, 2023, 5:00 - 8:00 PM

**Jefferson-Madison Regional Library Central Branch
Swanson Case Room (3rd Floor)**

- I. Call to Order - Edward Herring, CSCC Chair
 - a) Greeting
 - b) Expectations
 - c) Attendance
- II. Minutes Approval: August 1, 2023, CSCC Meeting; August 1, 2023, CSCC Communications Committee Meeting
- III. Adoption of CSCC Remote Participation Policy
- IV. Update on Friendship City, Huehuetenango, Guatemala
 - a) Presentation to City Council
 - b) Huehue Exploratory Visit
- V. Vote to approve the allocation of up to \$6,000 to support the activities of the Huehuetenango Delegation visit
- VI. Elections
 - a) Committees – Proposal to change the name(s) of existing CSCC Committees and/or to establish CSCC Committee(s)
 - Communications and Community Engagement
 - Programs and Events Committee
 - Grants and Scholarships Committee

(Dinner break at 6:30 p.m.)

- b) Officers – Proposal for Title Change of Email Coordinator
(Recommendation: Director of Communications and Community Engagement)
- (c) General Election – Appointment of Officers and Committee Members

VII. Programs and Events

- a) October 2023 - December 2023
- b) January 2024 - December 2024
 - Sister City Month
 - Huehuetenango, Guatemala
 - Winneba, Ghana
 - Besancon, France
 - Poggio, Italy

VIII. CSCC Committee Discussions

- a) Budget and Finance
- b) Grants and Scholarships
- c) Communications and Engagement
- d) Education

Upcoming Meetings

TBD, September 2023, *Program & Events Committee* and New City Committee

Tuesday, October 3, 2023, 4:30-5:30pm – Sister Cities Commission - CitySpace

Tuesday, October 3, 2023, 5:30 - 6:00pm – New City Committee - CitySpace

Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission

MINUTES

Meeting August 1, 2023

CitySpace Large Conference Room

Present: Claire Denton-Spalding, Kimberly Hayes via zoom, Edward Herring, Stella Mattioli via Zoom, Sylvia New Strawn, Elizabeth Smiley, Vivien Wong

Absent: Alicen Brown, Nana Ghartey, Michael Grinnell

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

The Commissioners participating remotely cited the following allowable reasons, per [*FOIA Va. Code Sec. 2.2-3708 \(Effective Sept 1, 2022\)*](#):

- Kimberly Hayes *(B.4) unable to attend in person due to work obligation out of town and participating remotely from New York*
- Stella Mattioli *(B.4) unable to attend in person due to personal travel and participating remotely from Poggio a Caiano, Italy*

Meeting opened at 4:40 pm Interim Chair Edward Herring presided A quorum was present

I. Approval of Minutes

a. July Commission Meeting

Motion (Sylvia New Strawn) to approve minutes as written

Motion Seconded (Claire Denton-Spalding)

Motion passed with one abstention (Vivien Wong)

b. Education & Besançon Committee Meeting

Motion (Elizabeth Smiley) to approve minutes with edits (change language from “sub-committee” to “committee” throughout)

Motion Seconded (Edward Herring)

Motion passed unanimously by a quorum of those present at that meeting

II. Chairman’s Report (Edward Herring)

Edward reported on his presentation to City Council on July 17. Mayor Snook indicated his interest in traveling to Besançon at a future point. Support was expressed for exploring the concept of a “Sister City Week” event at a future point. Max was present at that meeting and noted that Edward was well received by the City Councilors. Claire inquired as to next steps for developing a “Sister City Week”. Edward responded that he intends to include this in an events planning discussion, to be on the Agenda for our September 11 Annual Retreat.

III. Secretary’s Report (Elizabeth Smiley)

At Edward’s request, Elizabeth reminded commissioners the procedure for requesting remote participation at meetings. Elizabeth reported that Fred Blanton, Sister Cities International-VA has requested an opportunity to attend one of our upcoming meetings in order

to meet us, to share information about what's going on with other sister city orgs in Virginia, and to learn how he might be able to serve as a resource to us (see discussion under item VI, during which it was decided to invite him to our October meeting if he is available).

IV. Other Updates - none

V. Feedback on Winneba Delegation visit (Edward Herring)

Three current Commissioners attended the Welcome Reception last Tuesday; three current Commissioners attended the African American Cultural Arts Festival last Saturday. Photos from these events have been posted on the CSCC Facebook page. Claire's press release was sent out to the Daily Progress and to NBC29. Sylvia asked Edward if he perceived that the delegates had a wholly positive experience while in Charlottesville. Edward responded in the affirmative.

VI. Huehuetenango Discussion (Edward Herring)

Edward reviewed several of the points on the document he sent to us prior to the meeting (attached). He also reviewed the issues that previously prevented the CSCC from issuing a formal invitation for a delegation to visit Charlottesville.

Sylvia stated that she sees this relationship as distinct from our other sister city relationships and remarked that it is a disappointment to learn that student/scholastic exchanges will not be feasible. She signaled her support for having a delegation come to visit and for continuing our commitment to the Friendship City relationship.

Vivien added that although student travel exchanges are important, they are not the only way for students to learn about one another. She wondered if we might consider developing virtual exchanges.

Edward reiterated that we need to explore moving forward without making any promises regarding the future of this partnership. If a delegation comes to Charlottesville in October as hoped, it will be an exploratory visit that includes conversations about what is feasible and where there is or is not concurrence on expectations for the future of the relationship.

Elizabeth suggested we reach out to Fred Blanton as a resource to help us as we decide how/whether to move forward in our relationship with Huehue. Edward suggested we invite him to attend our October meeting. Elizabeth suggested we Commissioners generate a list of questions to forward to him in advance of that meeting so that he can be prepared to share information and guidance. [Action item](#): EBS will follow up with the invitation to Fred.

VII. Retroactive Vote to extend an official offer of Friendship to Huehuetenango, Guatemala effective July 1, 2021.

Motion (Elizabeth Smiley) to formalize the understanding and intent of the cities of Charlottesville, Virginia and Huehuetenango, Guatemala, to form a Friendship City relationship, which they have been engaged in since July 1, 2021, and which they

intend to continue.

Motion seconded (Claire Denton-Spalding)

Motion passed unanimously

Edward will make another presentation to City Council on August 21 during the regular City Council Meeting, to request that Council extend an official invitation to Huehuetenango's commission to form a delegation for purposes of a visit to Charlottesville in October 2023.

Action item: Max will follow up with the City Attorney's office to draft a Resolution in support of extending such an invitation.

VIII. Open Issues (New Business)

No new business

Meeting adjourned at 5:32 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Smiley

Secretary & Besançon Rep

Next Meeting: Annual Retreat, Monday September 11, 5-8 pm, JMRL (Central Branch), Swanson Case Room, 3rd floor

Key Considerations

Charlottesville's Friendship City Huehuetenango, Guatemala

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic of 2020 - 2022, the development of, as well as the thorough vetting of the proposed sister-city relationship has not progressed as we would have hoped. Nor were we able to visit the city prior to initiating the Friendship Agreement.

We, as a commission, have already recommended to the City Council to extend an invitation for a delegation from Huehuetenango to visit Charlottesville as part of the exploratory process. This discussion is aimed at framing the relationship between our cities.

Steps Completed: Key Stakeholders.

1. Met with Kelly Eplee, Ixtatan foundation, and others to develop a comprehensive list of all the key stakeholders and obtain their contact information.
2. Met (via Zoom) with Elias Alonzo, Ixtatan's in-county executive director to identify and access local key governmental and non-governmental individuals and organizations in the Department of Huehue.

3. Initial visit to Huehuetenango by a member of the CSCC in February 2023.
4. We still need to identify and meet with local Key stakeholders from the Business Community, the University of Virginia, the Charlottesville City Schools and the Albemarle County Schools.
5. The Ixtatan Foundation will be asked to help form a support community apart from their own foundation.
6. Some of the officials we have identified and have met or have access to are...
 - a. The Office of the mayor of the city Huehue,
 - b. The Office of the Governor of the Department of Huehue,
 - c. The American Embassy in Guatemala City
 - d. The Guatemalan Embassy here in the USA

5. Key individuals from leading educational institutions (University and Secondary) in Guatemala.

6. Key individuals from other NGOs, Cultural and/or commercial undertakings in Huehuetenango.

Next Step: Define our relationship!

Additional Notes / Concerns:

1. Transportation: Huehuetenango is not quite inaccessible by air. There are no major commercial flights in or out of the city. Flights from the USA would fly to Guatemala City and change to a local carrier for a second flight from Guatemala City Huehuetenango on a small 12 passenger prop airplane - there is one flight daily.
2. The most common other means of arriving in Huehue would be Rental Car (@ 2 - 3 hours) or bus (@ 4 - 6 hours).
3. This is a mountainous area. Their roads go through all villages and towns and may be quite dangerous for drivers not accustomed to these driving conditions. The use of Rental cars might not be recommended, however, for short visits, a taxi/uber service with a guide could be retained for a week.
4. Guatemala is a beautiful country, however, as with many Central American countries, American business persons, tourists, students and other non-guatemalan visitors could be targeted for violence. Huehue lies on the Mexican border through which the all american highway from South America to North America runs, and is therefore a passageway for drug and trade and immigration flow.
5. The conditions of travel and security conditions would not support student exchanges. The public schools have very few resources and most local families would not be able to accommodate guests. It is not expected that regular student

exchanges would be a part of this city relationship. However, there may be some opportunity for teacher exchanges /collaborations.

6. The city layout is maze-like without direct routes through the city and the streets are narrow with streetside shops and traffic congestion. The city is not as walkable as one might want. Driving in the city would not be recommended for a first time visitor.
7. Hotel availability is limited.
8. Trade and commerce opportunities are limited. The major products produced in Guatemala are Coffee and Potatoes.
9. The majority of the people in Huehue work in home industries or family businesses with much fewer opportunities for employment than we have here.
10. There are women's cooperatives, but these are loose networks without a central distribution strategy in addition to the lack of protections to avoid abusive work conditions for women or child labor abuse.
11. The use of English in Huehue is limited.
12. Guatemala is ripe for tourism under the right conditions. With Mayan attractions as well as natural features in the city, the department and throughout the country, the area has a lot to offer tourists - however, more on the lines of

carefully packaged, all inclusive and supervised / guided tours. Whereas Americans can freely enter Guatemala for tourism purposes, the Guatemaltecas face very strict visa requirements which makes it difficult for them to visit the USA.

Thank you,

Edward Herring
edherring@gmail.com
434 825 3649

July 26, 2023

Minutes of the Communications and Outreach Committee Meeting

August 1, 2023

The members of the Communications and Outreach Committee met at 5:30 PM on August 1, 2023 after the regular CSCC meeting was adjourned

In attendance were:

Max Robinson, Claire Denton-Spalding, Vivian Wong, Sylvia New Strawn, Edward Herring

1. Communications Platforms

Claire Denton-Spalding spoke about using the retreat to discuss communications platforms – what we have and how we will use them. The group agreed that the retreat would be a good time to review this information.

2. CSCC Website

In other roles, Max updates the city website and uploads content. Max spoke with Kyna Thomas about the Sister Cities website. If Charlottesville City government creates a Sister Cities website, Max would manage content and information on the website.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Claire spoke about roles and responsibilities on the committees. Edward spoke about trying to restructure the committees during the retreat to have someone we can reach out to quickly for a number of issues. Claire and Edward will have a working session ahead of the retreat to describe roles across committees.

4. Events Committees

Edward identified the need for someone to manage events. Due to the restriction on meetings between members being one-on-one, we need to give people specific tasks so we can move forward with events. Edward mentioned that Sylvia is tied up to lead the events committee and we will be trying to restructure the committees during the retreat.

Sylvia said that earlier in the year, we went to Tom Tom people asking to participate in events. Sylvia proposed bringing materials from the maps program. Vivien said that the contact information for that grantee is on the Google Drive. Sylvia said that she could reach out to that person and see if it would be an event-worthy

5. NBC29

Edward spoke about an opportunity to host a monthly event on NBC29 to inform the public about Sister Cities. Claire and Edward said they would speak further about this.

6. Social Media

Edward mentioned that one of the underlying concerns about our presence is that our social media / website is poorly managed. We need someone to check all social media sites to keep current.

7. City Email Addresses for Members

Edward said that roles and responsibilities for email will change during the retreat. There will be a general email address for Sister Cities commission members, but before those are assigned, we will need to create a document about who does want. Edward said that he would like to have business cards created for members.

8. Media Outreach

Max provided information about outreach to public media outlets. She suggested keeping it to three outlets, and sending to all email addresses at once when sending out a press release.

The sub-committee meeting was adjourned at 5:55 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Claire Denton-Spalding

Preliminary Huehuetenango Delegation Visit Budget - up to 4 days

1. Rental VAN for 5 days	700.00
2. Community Reception	1200.00
3. Hosted Dinner	650.00
4. Gifts	200.00
5. Hosted Luncheon	500.00
6. Coffee Event	500.00
7. Local Attractions Fee	200.00
8. Programs and Printing	250.00
9. Advertisements / Promotion	300.00
10. Miscellaneous Meals	200.00
11. General Miscellaneous	300.00
12. Un-identified	900.00

Total	6000.00
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2022-2023 CSCC Officers and Committee Memberships

Officers

- Interim Chair – Edward Herring
- Secretary – Elizabeth Smiley
- Treasurer – Vacant
- Email Coordinator – Vacant (*proposal to change title of officer*)

Budget & Finance

- Chair/Treasurer - Vacant
- Edward Herring
- Claire Denton-Spalding

Communications and Community Engagement (not yet established)

- Claire Denton-Spalding, Chair
- Edward Herring
- Vacant Seat, Social Media Coordinator

Education

- Alicen Brown, Chair
- Edward Herring
- Elizabeth Smiley

Grants (pending name change)

- Kimberley Hayes, Interim Chair
- Alicen Brown
- Edward Herring

Social Media & Community Outreach (pending name change)

- Claire Denton-Spalding, Chair
- Sylvia New Strawn
- Stella Mattioli
- Elizabeth Smiley
- Nana Ghartey
- Edward Herring

New City Committee (Huehuetenango)

- Edward Herring
- Sylvia New Strawn
- Alicen Brown

Besancon

- Elizabeth Smiley
- Edward Herring
- Kimberly Hayes

Poggio

- Stella Mattioli
- Edward Herring

Winneba

- Nana Gharthey
- Edward Herring

Proposed 2023-2024 CSCC Officers and Committee Memberships

(Seeking Volunteers for Vacant Positions)

Officers

- Chair – Edward Herring
- Secretary – Elizabeth Smiley
- Treasurer – Vacant
- Director of Communications and Community Engagement – Vacant

Budget & Finance

- Chair/Treasurer - Vacant
- Edward Herring
- Vacancy #1
- Vacancy #2

Communications and Community Engagement

- Claire Denton-Spalding, Chair
- Edward Herring
- Vacancy, Social Media Coordinator

Education

- Alicen Brown, Chair
- Edward Herring
- Elizabeth Smiley

Grants and Scholarships

- Kimberley Hayes, Chair
- Alicen Brown
- Edward Herring
- Vacancy

Programs and Events

- Sylvia New Strawn
- Stella Mattioli
- Elizabeth Smiley
- Nana Ghartey
- Edward Herring

New City Committee (Huehuetenango)

- Edward Herring
- Sylvia New Strawn
- Vacancy

Besancon

- Elizabeth Smiley
- Edward Herring
- Alicen Brown

Poggio

- Stella Mattioli
- Edward Herring
- Vacancy

Winneba

- Nana Gharthey
- Edward Herring
- Vacancy