

Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission
AGENDA
Meeting October 17, 2023, 4:30 – 6:00PM
CitySpace, Small Conference Room

- I. Call to Order
- II. Approval of Minutes
 - a. August 1, Communications and Outreach Committee Meeting Minutes
 - b. September 11, CSCC Annual Retreat Meeting Minutes
- III. Chair's Report
 - a. Welcome and introduction of new commissioners
 - b. Expression of Thanks - Will Cooke, Charlottesville High School
 - c. Remote Participation Policy - Review for adoption
- IV. ~~Secretary's Report~~
- V. Budget & Finance Report
- VI. Committee and Officer Assignments
 - a. Committee Assignments Update
 - b. Role of Communications Officer - Review for adoption
 - c. Election of Communications Officer and Treasurer
 - d. Discussion of email communications, use of email accounts
- VII. Activities and Committee Updates
 - a. Huehuetenango Delegation Visit – Edward Herring
 - b. Huehuetenango-Request for funding to support delegation visit – Edward Herring
 - c. Grants Report – Kimberly Hayes
 - Update on 22/23 and 23/24 CSCC Grant Projects
 - Request to amend Sister Revolutions podcast grant budget
 - d. Grant Proposal for CHS Band – Edward Herring / Kimberly Hayes
 - e. Besancon Student Exchange – Alicen Brown
 - f. Request for SCC City rep Travel Scholarship - Nana Ghartey
 - g. Events and Projects - Sylvia New Strawn
- VIII. Schedule next regular Sister Cities meeting; Grants Committee meeting; Programs and Events Committee meeting
- IX. Adjournment

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

Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission
MINUTES
Annual Retreat September 11, 2023
JMRL Central Branch- Swanson Case Room

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

Absent: Nana Gharthey

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

Retreat opened at 5:15 pm Interim Chair Edward Herring presided A quorum was present

- I. Call to order (Edward Herring)
 - a) Edward welcomed everyone and expressed appreciation for their attendance
 - b) He reviewed expectations for meeting attendance. He plans to develop a more formal attendance policy for the Commission and would like at least one other person to work with him on preparing a draft for consideration and a vote at the October meeting.
 - c) He announced he is also working on developing a google form that will allow us to keep better track of attendance at meetings going forward.
- II. Approval of Minutes (Elizabeth Smiley)
 - a) August Full Commission Meeting

Elizabeth noted that Stella's August Poggio Rep report needs to be attached and distributed to the minutes. [Action item](#): EBS will attach that report to the final copy. Elizabeth asked for any additional edits or revisions needed.

Max requested an addition to Item VI Huehuetenango Discussion: "Max emphasized that the CSCC must conduct a thorough vetting of a sister city relationship with Huehue before submitting a recommendation to Council that we officially become Sister Cities."

Motion (Alicen Brown) to approve the minutes with the specified edits, including the attachment of the August Poggio Rep report

Motion Seconded: Sylvia New Strawn

Motion passed unanimously
 - b) August Communications & Outreach Committee Meeting

Edward requested that we delay the approval of the August Committee Meeting minutes until our October meeting since he did not get those minutes distributed to us prior to tonight's retreat
- III. Remote Participation Policy for CSCC (Edward Herring)

Edward noted that the existing FOIA Code of Virginia does allow for some discretion in the parameters for remote and hybrid meetings. We need to draft a policy

for remote participation specific to and appropriate for our Commission. Once developed, it will be adopted by vote as an addendum to the FOIA Code.

Discussion: Alicen raised the issue of her ongoing need to routinely participate remotely due to competing mandatory CCS meetings on the same day and time as ours. [Action item](#): Edward asked all commissioners to send him input on the parameters we feel are needed for our Commission, via email by Friday September 15 if possible, with a copy to all members.

IV. Update on Friendship City (Edward Herring)

a) Presentation to City Council- August 21

At this meeting, Edward updated City Council on the status of our Friendship City relationship, and requested permission to host an official delegation visit. City Council's response was positive and they voted to approve our request to issue an official invitation. Max reported that she mailed an official invitation to Mayor Cano on September 6th. No specific dates for a delegation visit were included. We are currently awaiting a reply.

b) Huehuetenango Delegation Exploratory Visit

If Mayor Cano accepts our invitation, he has been asked to provide us with a list of proposed delegates and possible windows for travel to Charlottesville.

Edward has recommended to the commissioners in Huehue that they send a delegation of 4-6 people and plan for a visit of 3-4 days.

Edward distributed a proposed draft budget for a possible delegation visit (attached)

Discussion: Max felt obligated to mention that in view of the recent bust of a local drug ring with links to Mexican drug cartels, we may need to consider the optics of hosting a delegation from central America. Claire noted that the US State Department will have to vet any visitors from Guatemala before issuing visas. We will continue to discuss and remain sensitive to community perceptions as plans progress.

V. Allocation of \$6000 to support a Huehuetenango Delegation Visit

Edward proposed we defer further discussion and a vote to a later meeting while we wait for additional information from our friendship city partners. It was agreed to defer the vote and to return to this topic at upcoming meetings.

VI. Committees: Proposed Changes (Edward Herring)

a) Proposed Name Changes to Existing Committees

Edward proposed the following changes:

- **Communications & Community Engagement Committee**
(to replace Social Media & Community Outreach, also formerly known as Communications & Outreach)
- **Grants & Scholarships Committee** (to replace Grants Committee)

b) Proposed New Committee: **Programs & Events**

Edward has proposed the establishment of a new committee tasked with developing and organizing events and programs to encourage greater community involvement and support of our Sister City partnerships.

Discussion followed about the combined roles of communication and community engagement; about the number of committees each Commissioner should expect to join; about how the proposed new Programs Events Committee might interface with the City Reps as well as the Community Engagement Committee; and about whether as a Commission we may be at a point where we want and need to revisit our organizing structure and slate of committees altogether. It was agreed that we will continue to consider all these proposed changes and examine our org structure overall. Action item: Elizabeth will work on developing some proposed language for By-Laws revisions to reflect potential structural changes to the Commission's committees.

(There was a dinner break at this point, during which Elizabeth announced that Fred Blanton will be able to attend an upcoming meeting and has numerous areas of information and expertise to offer us. Elizabeth suggested we provide him with questions to guide his presentation/discussion. Action item: Elizabeth will circulate a list of possible topics/questions to Commissioners and will pass top priorities along to Fred in advance of his visit)

c) Proposed Officer Title Change

Edward has proposed that the title of Email Coordinator be changed to **Director of Communications & Community Engagement** (Note: the Email Coordinator Officer position was adopted by the Commission at its September 2022 Annual Retreat).

d) Election of Officers (Max Robinson)

- Office of Chair 2023-24 FY

Max opened the floor for nominations

Claire nominated Edward, Sylvia seconded

Call for vote

Motion (Claire Denton-Spalding) to approve Edward Herring as Chair

Motion Seconded: Stella Mattioli

Motion carried unanimously

- Office of Vice Chair 2023-34 FY
Max opened the floor for nominations
Edward nominated Claire; seconded by Sylvia
Claire accepted the nomination and the Secretary reviewed the duties of the Vice Chair as written in the current By-Laws)
Call for vote
Motion (Edward Herring) to approve Claire Denton-Spalding as Vice Chair
Motion Seconded: Sylvia New Strawn
Motion carried unanimously
- Office of Email Coordinator 2023-23 FY
(Note: this will be considered an Interim Position this position name may be changing and the responsibilities of the position might also be changing this year)
Max opened the floor for nominations
Kimberly nominated Sylvia, who accepted
Call for vote
Motion (Kimberly Hayes) to approve Sylvia New Strawn
Motion Seconded: Claire Denton-Spalding
Motion carried unanimously
- Office of Treasurer 2023-24 FY (currently unfilled)
No nominations for Treasurer at this time
- Office of Secretary 2023-24 FY
Max opened the floor for nominations
Edward nominated Elizabeth, who accepted
Call for vote
Motion (Edward Herring) to approve Elizabeth Smiley
Motion Seconded: Kimberly Hayes
Motion carried unanimously

VII. Programs and Events

This agenda discussion item was replaced by a group brainstorming activity led by Claire to generate ideas for Sister City events over the upcoming 12-24 months. Claire will compile the ideas into a spreadsheet for distribution to the Commission following the Retreat.

VIII. Committee Discussions

This item was tabled due to time constraints

IX. Other Business

Max announced that there is a new City Communications Director as of September 6. With this position once more filled, the Commission can now move forward with its exploration of a new CSCC logo. Claire will spearhead this process and will consult with the new Communications Director.

X. Closing

Each participant was invited to say a few words about how they view the upcoming year.

Edward announced that he is in conversation with the news director at NBC29 to explore developing a weekly Sister City spot.

Claire passed out the new rack cards and asked for commissioners to distribute them throughout the community.

Retreat adjourned at 7:57 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Smiley
Secretary & Besancon Representative

Next Full Commission Meeting: Tuesday October 10, 4:30-5:30 pm via Zoom

Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission (CSCC)

Policy for All-Virtual Public Meetings and Remote Participation

The Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission (CSCC) is an established public body of the City of Charlottesville comprised of City Council-appointed members; therefore, by Virginia Code 2.2-3708.3 the Sister Cities Commission is authorized and required to adopt a uniform policy for all-virtual public meetings conducted by the commission and procedures for remote participation.

Enabling Statute

[VA Code Chapter 37 Virginia Freedom of Information Act § 2.2-3708.3](#)

The term “**meeting**” includes regular, special, and annual retreat meetings of the Sister Cities Commission. Any gathering of 2 or more members of the Commission, where the purpose of the gathering is the discussion or transaction of the business of the entity, is a “meeting”.

[PLACEHOLDER: all-virtual committee meetings]

[FOIA § 2.2-3708.3\(D\)\(2\)](#)

Any public body that creates a committee, subcommittee, or other entity however designated of the public body to perform delegated functions of the public body or to advise the public body may also adopt a policy on behalf of its committee, subcommittee, or other entity that shall apply to the committee, subcommittee, or other entity's use of individual remote participation and all-virtual public meetings.

- I. Members of the Sister Cities Commission may use remote participation instead of attending an in-person meeting of the Commission, in accordance with this subsection and the applicable provisions of the [Freedom of Information Act \(FOIA\)](#).
 - a. A commission member desiring to use remote participation must seek approval from the chairperson of the commission by submitting a written request via electronic mail, no later than (#) days prior to the start of the meeting and indicate the basis on which they satisfy at least one of the criteria set forth within FOIA Section 2.2-3708.3(B)(1)-(4).
 - b. The Commission Chairperson shall verify that the criteria are satisfied. If the request for remote participation is approved by the chairperson, the chairperson shall notify both the commission member and the staff liaison of the determination in writing via email no later than three (3) days prior to the start of the meeting. The chairperson shall be responsible for ensuring that the minutes of the commission meeting identify, by a general description the remote location from which the member participated, and

otherwise reflect the basis for remote participation under FOIA Section 2.2-3708.3(B)(1)-(4).

- c. If the member's participation from a remote location pursuant to this subsection is disapproved by the chairperson because such participation would violate the commission's policy for electronic meetings and/or FOIA regulations, then the chairperson shall be responsible for notifying the member no later than three (3) days prior to the start of the meeting and ensuring that the disapproval is recorded in the minutes of the commission meeting with specificity.
- d. [PLACEHOLDER: Re. FOIA Section 2.2-3708.3(B)(1) for remote participation due to a temporary or permanent disability or medical condition that prevents the member's physical attendance]
- e. No member of the commission may use remote participation due to a medical condition of a member of the member's family requiring the member to provide care that prevents the member's physical attendance more than (#) consecutive meetings, or any (#) meetings held per calendar year.
- f. No member of the commission may use remote participation due to the member's principal residence being more than 60 miles from the meeting location identified in the required notice for such meeting more than (#) meetings per calendar year. The member's "principal residence" shall be regarded as the "home address" listed on the member's Charlottesville Boards and Commissions Application.

Exceptions for additional exemptions?

Members must report a change of principle residence/ home address to the commission chairperson, secretary, and staff liaison. Notification may be submitted in writing via email or letter within seven (7) days of relocation. Letters may be mailed to: Office of the Clerk of Council, P.O. Box 911, Charlottesville, VA 22902. Members may also contact the Clerk's office at (434) 970-3113 to report their address change.

If a member's new address is outside of the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County area the staff liaison for the commission shall verify if the member continues to meet the requirements of eligibility for a Charlottesville board as set forth by City Council. Residents of the City of Charlottesville are given preference for Council appointments to Charlottesville boards and commissions. Additionally, "when City Council makes appointments it is with the expectation that the appointee is willing

and able to attend meetings and to devote the necessary time to be a full and meaningful participant on the board” ([Resolution](#)).

- g. No member of the commission may use remote participation due to personal matters more than two meetings per calendar year or 25 percent of the meetings held per calendar year (rounded up to the next whole number) whichever is greater as set forth within FOIA Section 2.2-3708.3(B)(1)-(4).
- h. The requirements of this subsection shall be applied strictly and uniformly to the entire membership of the commission, without exception, and without regard to the identity of the member requesting remote participation or the matters that will be considered or voted on at the meeting.

II. Remote Participation

- 1. Members must be on-camera throughout the duration of the commission meeting. On-camera presence is mandatory to establish a meeting quorum and for voting proceedings. Members will not be deemed present and voting if the member is not on-camera for the chairperson to establish a quorum and for voting proceedings.
- 2. **Exceptions/ stipulations for on-camera presence?**
- 3. Members should join the meeting early to make sure that their microphone and camera are working properly.
- 4. Members may not participate in more than one meeting simultaneously.
- 5. Members who wish to speak are responsible for unmuting their microphone prior to speaking.
- 6. Members must actively participate in the meeting.
- 7. A meeting host may mute/ deactivate a participants’ microphone when they are not speaking for the purpose of eliminating inadvertent background noise.
- 8. Members microphones may not be muted for the purpose of enforcing decorum.

III. Meeting Etiquette

- 1. Minimize distractions.

2. Mute your microphone when you are not talking.
3. Dress appropriately.
4. Be courteous.

IV. ALL-VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETINGS

“All virtual meeting” refers to a meeting at which (i) the members of the commission attending the meeting gather or assemble through electronic communication means (“zoom”, or other similar means within the FOIA definition of “electronic communication”), (ii) the purpose of the gathering or assemblage is the discussion or transaction of any public business, and (iii) all public attendance is by electronic communication means.

- a. The Commission may hold all-virtual meetings. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the total number of meetings held by a City Board during a calendar year (rounded up to the next whole number), or two (2) meetings per year—whichever is greater—may be all-virtual meetings.
- b. Conditions under which an all-virtual public meeting is scheduled and the procedure for scheduling an all-virtual meeting?
- c. Every all-virtual meeting conducted by the commission shall be in compliance with the requirements set forth within FOIA, Va. Code Sec. 2.2-3708.3(C).
- d. A City of Charlottesville administrative support personnel shall generate the Zoom webinar link for every all-virtual meeting and remote participate. Personnel will email the link for all-virtual meetings to members of the commission and post the meeting link on the City of Charlottesville website for members of the public to access.
- e. City administrative support personnel shall operate all City-owned audio and visual equipment used for all-virtual meetings and remote participation.
- f. Every all-virtual meeting shall be “hosted” by a City of Charlottesville administrative support personnel. Personnel may assign the chair and co-chair or designee as co-hosts of the meeting.

g. The commission may accept public comment during all-virtual meetings if it has first adopted a policy for public comment at an in-person meeting. Does the commission want to establish a policy? If so, liaison can provide legal requirements of policy.

h. Personnel shall manage the Zoom webinar during public comment segments.

i. Communication sent via the “chat” function in the webinar is a public record and will and will be managed by FOIA regulations.

V. Contents of the Required Meeting Notice - The required meeting notice will state that the meeting will be an all-virtual public meeting. The required meeting notice will also include a specific statement notifying the public that the method by which the City Board chooses to meet shall not be changed unless the City Board provides a new meeting notice in accordance with the provisions of § 2.2-3707.

VI. Public Access - The electronic communication means used will allow the public to hear all members of the commission participating in the all-virtual public meeting and, when audio-visual technology is available, to see the members of the commission as well.

Personnel shall provide a phone number or other live contact information by which a member of the public may alert the City Board if the audio or video transmission of the meeting provided by the City Board fails. Personnel will monitor the designated means of communication during the meeting, and after receiving an alert the City Board will take a recess until public access is restored (if the transmission fails for the public).

VII. Agenda packets and materials - The agenda packet and, unless exempt, all materials furnished to members of the commission for an all-virtual meeting will be made available to the public in electronic format at the same time that such materials are provided to members of the public body. “Made available in electronic format at the same time” means that the materials are either (i) posted on the City’s website, or (i) provided immediately.

VIII. Location(s) of members of the public body - No more than two members of the City Board participating in an all-virtual meeting will be physically together in any one remote location, unless that remote location is open to the public to physically access it.

- IX. Minutes of all-virtual meetings** - Minutes for an all-virtual meeting will include a statement that the meeting was held by electronic communication means and will specify the type of electronic communication means by which the meeting was held.

DRAFT

Communications Officer's job description

The CSCC Communications Officer acts as a public relations professional who distributes information/ content to promote commission-driven programs, activities, and events. This person acts as a liaison between the public, the commission, and the media. They will also implement and oversee a strategic marketing plan for the commission.

The role of a Communications Officer, together with the Chairman, is to build the image of the commission by setting the tone for PR messaging and highlighting the values of the commission. The Comms Officer is responsible for establishing relationships with local media outlets and handling public relations issues that may arise internally or externally.

The communications officer will also serve as a member of the Programs and Events committee.

Huehuetenango Delegation Visit Proposal

November 13 - 17, 2023 (Three days TBD)

We have been asked to host a delegation from Huehuetenango during the third week in November.

There will only be two participants (1) Mayor Adolfo Cano and (2) Counselor Martiza Rios. They will spend about 2.5 - 3.5 days in Charlottesville.

Meetings with Mayor Snook, the Visitors and Business Bureau and the Chamber of Commerce are envisioned along with a tour of Jefferson's Monticello. If time permits, they would also like to tour UVA and CHS.

There is a press opportunity with the joint signing of a Friendship Agreement between our cities (To be developed).

I will work with the Programs and Events committee to plan a "coffee" and other events for the public including a reception.

More details will be forthcoming as soon as the dates and participants are confirmed.

I am requesting a budget of 3000.00 for the visit which includes at least three lunches and dinners plus a rental car / van (to transport them more efficiently) during their time in the city. We will also plan two public events.

There is a remote possibility that the mayor may postpone the visit due to current countrywide strikes and demonstrations resulting from recent elections and power sharing problems at the federal level.

Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission
2023 Grant Recipients
Status on Grants

October 2023

- Sister Revolutions Podcast - Dr. Benjamin Bernard
 - Related Sister City Connection: Besancon
 - Status of Grant: Project research complete, expense reimbursement requested.
 - Partial amount of \$3,416.74 approved for payment, remaining balance of \$563.26 to be approved by commission
- A Tale of Two Cities podcast: Exploring Huehuetanago - Elias Alonzo
 - Related Sister City Connection: Huehuetanago
 - Status of Grant: *Initial Project Report scheduled for November 2023 - Reimbursement has not been requested*
- Mapping and Art: Teaching the Geography of the Sister Cities to Children - Alexandria Searls
 - Related Sister City Connection: All
 - Status of Grant: Reimbursement has not been requested
- Les Amities Musicales: Building ties with the Besancon music Community - Daniel & Shelby Sender
 - Related Sister City Connection: Besancon
 - Status of Grant: Project pushed to 2024

October 2023
CSCC Education Committee Report
By: Alicen Brown, SCC Education rep

Re: Sister City Student Visit

We have just found out that a group of students from Besancon is coming to Charlottesville this February! I have looped Elizabeth in but I wanted to email the group and put this event on everyone's radar. Typically, the students stay for 1 week, and are hosted by CCS families. This year they will be staying in Charlottesville 2/11-2/18 (sunday-sunday). A rough itinerary is listed below. This itinerary is based on the last student visit. The portions highlighted in YELLOW indicate that the Sister Cities Commission has historically been responsible for this. We are asking that the Sister Cities Commission kindly consider covering the cost of these items again this year.

Estimated Itinerary:

Sunday 2.11 - arrival

Monday 2.12- 8:45 am Lycee Pasteur arrives at CHS for a welcome breakfast reception provided by the Sister Cities Commission in A Commons. Meet student guides and attend classes.

Tuesday 2.13- 8:45 am meet at the Division Annex entrance to CHS to depart for all day at Monticello. Monticello visit, transportation, and lunch funded by Sister City Commission, Alicen will help to arrange. Need Sister City volunteers to be at Monticello for the day.

Wednesday 2.14- 8:45 am meet at the Division Annex entrance to CHS to depart for all day at UVA. UVA visit is free but transportation and lunch are funded by Sister City Commission or UVA. Need Sister City volunteers to be at UVA for the day.

Thursday 2.15: Students spend all day at CHS

Friday 2.16: Students spend all day at CHS. Adult Farewell dinner hosted by CCS for selected CCS leaders, Lycee Pasteur adults, Elizabeth & Alicen. CCS will cover the dinner, Can sister cities cover the bar tab? **City funds may not be used to purchase alcoholic beverages. MR**

Saturday 2.17: Local Charlottesville day, CCS family hosts farewell event for students

Sunday 2/18: meet at 8:30 am for student big Bon Voyage at CHS front entrance.

I know we are planning on talking about this on Tuesday, but I just wanted to send everyone the details ahead of time. Please let me know if you have any questions prior to our meeting!

Best,
Alicen

October 2023
CSCC City rep Monthly Report
Sister City Winneba, Ghana
City rep, Nana Ghartey

Report taken from an email to Edward Herring from Nana Ghartey, October 3, 2023

As a follow up to our meeting, I am writing today to formally request that the Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission support my upcoming travel to Winneba (departing in December 2023) to further the goals of the Charlottesville-Winneba Sister City partnership. As the Sister Cities Commissioners are hopefully aware, the longstanding practice of the Commission is to allocate \$2,000 every other year for each Sister City representative on the Commission to personally visit their Sister City. The last time the Commission allocated funds in support of my travel to Winneba was in December 2021, so my two years is now up.

I'll be pleased to be able to spend a good bit of time in Winneba in the coming months because it makes a big difference to have someone on the ground there who can help facilitate Sister City exchanges and projects. In fact, one of the main reasons Charlottesville and Winneba have been able to organize so many positive exchanges and launch so many mutually-beneficial collaborations is that we do have someone who splits time in both communities and can therefore serve as an ongoing conduit for 'citizen diplomacy' between our Sister Cities, in direct furtherance of the Sister Cities Commission's mission of "promoting understanding and fostering relationships between citizens and organizations in the Charlottesville area and our sister cities through cultural, economic, educational, and humanitarian activities." As the over 300 Charlottesville-area residents and University of Virginia faculty & students who have visited Winneba since 2009 can now personally attest, the relationship between Charlottesville and Winneba has been rewarding to both communities on so many levels. Perhaps most importantly, it's allowed so many African-American members of our community to return to the Motherland and connect with their ancestral roots and heritage. I hope you

will be able to visit Winneba someday so you can see for yourself how life-changing this experience truly is.

I know that one of the concerns about me spending part of each year in Winneba is that I occasionally have internet connectivity issues and therefore can't always participate in Sister Cities Commission meetings. Trust me when I say that I am working seriously to resolve this matter so that I can once again attend the meetings on a regular basis. In fact I will be utilizing a portion of the Commission's \$2,000 travel allocation to purchase a mobile wi-fi router that I can use whenever I'm in Ghana to be able to join the meetings virtually. Hopefully this will alleviate the concern that some may have.

On another note, you and I spoke about the fact that the Commission has a large unspent fund balance and I will once again reiterate my concern that the City Council has looked very negatively upon the Commission for this practice in the past, going so far as to eliminate funding for the Sister City program altogether when the Commission was seen to be 'hoarding' taxpayer funds. It took a great deal of trust-building to restore Council's confidence in the Commission the last time that happened and believe me, we never want to be in that situation again.

Toward that end, I hope the Commission will be open to creative proposals for utilizing its unspent funds to further the goals of the Sister Cities program. I would like to conclude this message by offering one such proposal.

Every year, the generous people of Charlottesville donate a huge amount of items requested by our friends in Winneba, and every year my home becomes the collection point for these donated goods. In the past the Commission has assisted with the costs of shipping donated items to Winneba and I would like to ask that the Commission consider an allocation of \$4,000 to send another shipment in fall of 2023. These are just some of the things that will be included in the shipment:

- * toys and clothes for children in orphanages
- * feminine hygiene products for girls who too often miss school for lack of them
- * emergency rescue equipment donated by the Charlottesville-Albemarle Rescue Squad (CARS), including a "Jaws of Life" apparatus that the fire service in Winneba has been requesting for many years
- * a large number of school desks that have been donated to an under-resourced school in an impoverished part of Winneba
- * athletic apparel donated by Charlottesville Parks & Recreation
- * medical equipment and supplies donated to the under-resourced Winneba Municipal Hospital
- * and much more

I hope the Commission will give serious consideration at our next meeting to both of these funding requests - \$2,000 for my travel as the Winneba Sister City representative on the Commission, and \$4,000 for shipping donated goods to Winneba this fall. Strong and ongoing support from the Commission for the Charlottesville-Winneba Sister City partnership is critical to its continued success. We have already made such a profound impact on so many lives through this partnership, but we must never rest on our laurels. And we must always proceed with determination and a 'can do' spirit. As Dale Carnegie once said, "Action breeds confidence and courage. If you want to conquer fear, do not sit home and think about it. Go out and get busy."

On behalf of my people in Winneba and my fellow citizens here in Charlottesville, thank you once again for your time and for your confidence and courage.

Nana

Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission
Besançon Rep Report
September 2023

- Ongoing zoom meetings with Florent Werguet, Director of International Relations for the Ville de Besancon. As part of the working partnership established during my City Rep trip in April, we have continued to meet approximately once/month to exchange information about current or ongoing projects, such as the two CSCC Grants (updates below). In upcoming meetings we will begin discussing plans for Mr. Werguet's first official visit to Charlottesville in 2024.
- Update on "Les Amitiés Musicales" Grant project (Daniel Sender)
As the designated CSCC point person for this Grant, I remained in regular contact with Daniel over the summer, providing input and facilitating connections with partners in Besancon. Daniel initially proposed coordinating his residency with the Lycee Pasteur and traveling to Besancon this October. After consulting with Florent Werguet, he was persuaded to work with the Besancon Conservatory of Music instead and postponed his residency until the Spring of 2024 to better coordinate with the Conservatory's calendar. Daniel and Florent are now in direct communication about scheduling and logistics for this upcoming visit and will keep me copied in on arrangements.
- Update on "Sister Revolutions" Grant project (Grantee: Ben Bernard)
Ben Bernard and his co-producer Sage Tanguy (WTJU) are currently editing the hours of interviews they recorded during their June trip to Besancon and producing the final podcast. They invited me to contribute commentary on the Besancon-Charlottesville Sister City relationship and I met with them on Sept 22 at WTJU for that recording. We also discussed their experiences in Besancon and possibilities for sharing the podcast with educators and interested community members there. The release of the podcast may be timed to coincide with Florent Werguet's visit, creating an opportunity for the Commission to host some type of official reception or community event.
- New request for possible CSCC sponsored exchange: Jean-Emma Evrard, the director of a gospel choir in Besancon contacted Florent Werguet to signal his interest in reprising a music exchange similar to one that was organized in 2016(?) He is seeking an organization/choir in Charlottesville to partner with for a 2025 exchange. Florent has organized a zoom meeting with Mr. Evrard in mid-October to learn more about this request and to translate if needed.

Submitted by Elizabeth Smiley, Besancon Rep

The Programs and Events Committee chairman and committee members serve as our in-house event specialists or program planners and are responsible for all aspects of event planning.

Their main duties include:

- A. Fully developing a CSCC approved program / events calendar,
- B. Organizing CSCC approved programs and events, duties include:

1. Selecting venues
2. Determining the cost - establishing the budget
3. Arranging event services
4. Booking event meeting locations
5. Scheduling transportation (if necessary)
6. Reserving lodging (if necessary)
7. Meeting with vendors at the venue to help with set-up
8. Collecting supplies and decorations
9. Working with staff to ensure the completion of a successful event
10. Establishing and maintaining relationships with vendors and venues
11. Planning event details and aspects, including seating, dining, and guests
12. Creating reliable financial reports and collecting payments on time
13. Remaining under budget with all costs
14. Evaluating events through guest feedback and making proper changes.

October 2023

CSCC Communications Committee Report By:

Claire Denton-Spalding

- Preparing for Huehuetenango Visit
 - Will work with Sylvia to advertise events
 - Will contact The Daily Progress, NBC29, and Cville Weekly to see if they want to run a feature story
 - Will post on Latin American media outlets, including Express Charlottesville
 - Goal to create communications campaign / press release by late October, once the schedule is fixed
- Events from Oct 2023-Oct 2024
 - Met with Sylvia to discuss events and promotions. We identified these four events before the
 - Guatemalan Coffee Event – November 2023
 - Tom Tom Festival – April 2024
 - Besancon podcast launch – TBD
 - Sister Cities Happy Hour at a winery / bar
 - I will create communications / outreach campaigns for each of these events
- Rack Cards
 - Could we allocate \$400 for rack card printing? We would like to print 1,000 rack cards