

Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission

Meeting - December 7, 2023, 4:30 pm to 6:00 pm

Small Conference Room - CitySpace, Charlottesville, VA 22903

1. Chairman - Call to order, acknowledgement of quorum present, acknowledgement of visitors
2. Secretary: Minutes submitted for approval - October 17, 2023
 Minutes submitted for approval - November 9, 2023
3. Chairman's Update:
 - a. Reactions to Huehuetenango Visit from council and residents
 - b. December 2, State Conference Notes
 - c. Maintaining the Momentum and Energy
4. Communications Update:
5. City Updates
 - a. Huehuetenango - including next steps
 - b. Besancon - upcoming visit from
 - c. Winneba
 - d. Poggio
6. Committee / Officer Updates
 - a. Finance - Including Fundraising update
 - b. Grants - Remaining exposure
 - c. Education - The DHS Student Exchange in February 2023
 - d. Programs and Events - 2024 Calendar
7. New Business: Comments and questions / Ex-officio commentary
8. Adjournment
 - a. Grants Committee Meeting, December 6 (virtual)
 - b. Besancon Committee Meeting, December 14 (CitySpace)
 - c. Next CSCC Meeting (January TBD)

**Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission
MINUTES**

Thursday November 9, 2023

CitySpace Large Conference Room

Present: Claire Denton-Spalding, Casey Eriksen (remote participant), Nana Gharthey, Edward Herring (joined at 4:42), Sylvia New Strawn, Elizabeth Smiley

Absent: Alicen Brown, Kimberly Hayes, Stella Mattioli, Murray Susen

Non-Voting Members present: Maxicelia Robinson, Assistant Clerk of Council

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

- Casey Eriksen (*B.4 unable to attend in person due to a work obligation out of town and participating remotely from Atlanta, GA*)

Meeting opened at 4:33 pm, Claire Denton-Spalding presided for Edward Herring until 4:42
A quorum was deemed present

I. Call to Order

Claire called the meeting to order. Guest speaker Fred Blanton and the Commissioners were invited to introduce themselves to one another. Fred will make his presentation following the business portion of today's meeting.

II. Approval of October Meeting Minutes (C. Denton-Spalding)

Motion (Sylvia New Strawn) to approve minutes as presented, with Elizabeth supplying missing names after reviewing the recording of the October meeting

Motion Seconded (Casey Eriksen)

Motion carried

III. Budget Report (C. Eriksen)

The current balance is \$28,586.05. Casey noted that we have spent \$7000 of the current FY appropriation and asked that we take this into consideration as we receive additional funding requests.

IV. Business Items (E. Herring)

a. Request for City Rep Travel funding from Nana Gharthey

Edward reported that Nana submitted a written request to him for \$3000 to support his (Nana's) upcoming travel to Winneba. Max then provided the following information for consideration prior to calling for a vote:

Nana requested and received travel funding in 2021; his term as Winneba Representative term expires in June 2024; there are no rules against a City Rep traveling to their city near the end of their term: Nana requested and received an allocation of \$4000 in October towards shipping costs for medical supplies to Winneba; Nana's work in Winneba has been mostly on behalf of the Winneba Foundation, with

some indirect benefit to the City; Commissioners have expressed concerns about Nana's extensive absences from CSCC meetings (8 absences in the past year); our annual request for \$15000 was submitted to City Council in September but has not yet been determined

Discussion followed. Edward proposed a lower allocation be approved as a gesture of support. Nana was invited to respond and modified his request to ask for \$2000.

Edward called for a motion to approve Nana's request for travel funds. **No motion was put forward**, therefore the request for funding was not considered.

Secretary's note: (As per parliamentary rules, if no motion is put forward, or if a motion is not seconded, the motion dies).

Nana was asked to provide the Commission with a list of Sister City contacts in Winneba so that continuity will be maintained once his term expires and a new Winneba Rep is appointed.

b. Request for Travel Scholarship - CHS Band Supporters

This was an out-of-cycle request that the Commission received earlier this fall. Max reviewed the Commission's Handbook guidelines regarding travel scholarships and noted that last year we actually gave \$10K in travel scholarships to CHS, although our guidelines set a \$6K cap. This item was deferred to the December meeting pending further discussion.

c. Amendments to All-Virtual Meetings & Remote Participation Policy

Claire read out the proposed addenda to the current policy. Edward called for a motion to approve the addenda.

Motion (Casey Eriksen) to approve addenda as written

Motion Seconded (Claire Denton-Spalding)

Motion carried

d. Proposed Name Changes to Existing Committees

- Communications & Community Engagement
(currently Social Media and Community Outreach)

This item was deferred until Murray Susen is present at a meeting and can participate in discussion and voting

- Grants & Scholarships
(currently Grants)

This item was deferred until Kimberly Hayes, Grants Chair, is present at a meeting and can participate in discussion and voting

e. Committee Assignments

The following Commissioners indicated their committee choices:

Programs & Events (Chair: S. New Strawn)

Elizabeth Smiley

Besançon (Chair: E. Smiley)

Casey Eriksen

Social Media & Community Outreach (Chair: C. Denton-Spalding)

Murray Susen (as communicated to CDS prior to meeting)

Education (Chair: A. Brown)

Murray Susen (as communicated to AB prior to meeting)

V. Planning and Implementation Review for Huehuetenango Delegation Visit (E. Herring)

- Edward reviewed the planned itinerary (*attached*) for the Huehue delegation visit
- Commissioners were asked to attend one or more of the 3 main public events.
- Claire distributed flyers for Commissioners to post around town.
- Edward requested an additional \$3000 for expenses related to the Huehue delegation visit. He answered questions about the additional costs and noted that a portion of these funds will be used to purchase CSCC banners and posters that can be used at other events beyond the Huehue delegation. (*updated budget request attached*)

Motion (Edward Herring) to approve an additional allocation of up to \$3000 for Huehuetenango delegation visit and CSCC promotions materials

Motion seconded (Casey Eriksen)

Motion carried with one abstention

(This concluded the business portion of the Meeting which was adjourned at 5:50 pm)

VI. Presentation/ Q&A with Fred Blanton, SCI State Representative for Virginia

Fred gave a brief overview of his role as a resource for and consultant to sister city organizations around the Commonwealth of Virginia. He had reviewed and offered feedback on the program ideas we brainstormed during our September Retreat. He made several suggestions for ways to strengthen local awareness and to recruit and retain community member involvement in the work of the Commission, noting that our governmental structure is not unique among sister city organizations in Virginia.

He remains available for further discussion at a future meeting, as well as one-on-one consultation if he can be of assistance. He concluded by announcing that he is organizing a statewide meeting in Richmond on December 2; he will send us details in a follow-up email.

Adjourned at 6:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Smiley, Secretary & Besançon Representative

Next meeting- Tuesday December 5, 2023 4:30-6:00 pm, CitySpace Large Conference Room

Attachments

Draft Delegation Visit – November 13 – 15 2023

Huehuetenango, Guatemala rev 4.5

Mayor Gustavo Cano, Mrs. Cano, Counselor Maritza Rios – Huehuetenango,

Elias Gonzales – Ixtatan Foundation (Escort and interpreter)

**Mayor Cano, Mrs. Cano and Senora Rios arrive in Charlottesville on Sunday, Nov 12.
Their hotel plans will be communicated after November 6.**

Monday, November 13

Lunch (Location TBD) 12:00 – 1:00

Kick-off session. Review the agenda and Introduction to the city of Charlottesville and the Sister Cities Committee - *Session may be in Spanish*

Building Goodness Foundation Mezzanine room 1:00 – 3:00

Driving Tour of the area.

Welcoming Meet & Greet (Members of the commission, UVA and Ixtatan guests) (Co-Hosted by CSCC and Ixtatan Foundation) 5:00 - 6:00

Event to be held in the UVA Fralin Museum. The Museum currently has a Mayan pottery exhibit on display. Free Parking in the Culbreth Garage.

Dinner (Co-Hosted by CSCC and Ixtatan Foundation) 6:30 PM

Tuesday, November 14

Open House - Coffee event – Public Invited 09:00 – 11:00

The Omni, in the Atrium Downtown Charlottesville

Tour Buford Middle School and Lunch 12:30 – 2:30

With Alicen Brown, Asst. Sup, Dr. Otey

Meeting – Center for Politics 3:00 – 4:00

Daman Irby and J. Miles Coleman

Dinner (TBD) 6:30

Wednesday, November 15

Tour of Jefferson's Monticello 9:30 – 12:30

(Spanish Speaking Guide available)

Lunch – Location TBD 12:30 – 1:30

Tour of JMRL – Downtown 1:45 – 2:30

Meeting with Dave Norris 3:00 - 4:00

(Purpose and function of the C'ville-Winneba Foundation)

At the JMRL Downtown Library

One-on-One Mayor Snook and Mayor Cano 4:30 – 5:30

(Time to be confirmed by Max)

Public Reception and Program 6:00 – 7:30

- . General Welcome by the Commission, Acknowledge of Guests**
- . Introduction of the City of Huehuetenango and film clip**
- . Selection of Virginia Music – CHS Ensemble**
- . Welcome to the delegation from Huehuetenango – Mayor Snook**
- . Response from the Mayor of Huehuetenango – Mayor Cano**
- . Signing of Friendship Proclamation and exchange of gifts.**

Closing remarks

**** Interpretations as needed by Edward Herring, Elias Gonzales, and Casey Eriksen**

No additional events planned – Departure after the Reception

November 15, 2023

Update to Budget request for the Huehue delegation visit.

1. Caterers/Food 3500
2. Restaurants 750
3. Local Transportation 250

Additional General Funds are requested for CSCC Promotional Materials

Banners, flyers and Posters 1500

Total Funds Required	6000	(Original request from July)
Funds Approved	3000	

<u>Additional Funds Requested</u>	<u>3000</u>
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Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission
Besancon Rep Report
November 2023

- Update on proposed Besancon delegation visit Spring 2024
In October and November, I held three zoom calls with Florent Werguet to begin planning for Cville/CSCC to host a small delegation of officials from Besancon in April 2024. As of this writing, travel dates are not firmly set, but I expect those to be determined by early December. I have scheduled a Besancon Committee meeting in mid-December to begin implementing the planning and prep process on our end.
- Update on Besancon-based Grant in process: “Sister Revolutions”
We are in discussions with Ben Bernard and his co-producer Sage Tanguy about planning a podcast launch event during the Besancon delegation visit in April. Both Florent Werguet and I were sent advance copies of Episode 1 (which is still being edited) to hear. The podcast will be released one episode at a time as episodes are completed; the launch event would be to highlight the project and the Sister City relationship, and to generate wider community awareness of the podcast.
- Update on Besancon-base Grant in process: “Les Amities Musicales”
Our Besancon contacts have identified a music school to partner with Daniel and Shelby Sender for Master Classes. They have also reserved a performance space for their concert during the Besancon residency, planned for May 5-9. We are in discussions with Daniel about scheduling his pre-travel Charlottesville concert to coincide with the Besancon delegation’s visit in April.
- Lycee Pasteur- CHS student exchange February 11-18, 2024
Conversations with both Alicen Brown and Will Cooke (who is coordinating the CHS host families and assisting with planning for the week) to discuss how I might best support the exchange. We will remain in contact as planning continues.
- Update on request for musical exchange in 2025
In October, Florent Werguet facilitated a zoom meeting with the director of Besancon’s Gospel Choir so that I could learn more about his proposal and explore the feasibility of this Sister City exchange. I agreed to assist with identifying potential Cville partners for this exchange and have already had preliminary conversations with several key community contacts, with plans to reach out to others over the upcoming weeks.

Submitted by Elizabeth Smiley, Besancon Representative

Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission New City Committee Report (Huehuetenango) November 2023

In August 2023, the city council approved the invitation of a delegation from Huehuetenango (friendship city) to visit the city of Charlottesville for an official visit as part of the city exploration process.

In Huehuetenango, the Sister Cities Commission is mainly composed of city counselors. Initially, only Mayor Cano and Counselor Rios had passports and visas, but the five remaining members of the commission obtained their visas at the very last moment and joined the delegation.

The delegation was accompanied by Mr. Alonzo from the Ixtatan foundation who served as their main guide, chauffeur, and interpreter.

The events started on Monday, November 13, 2023, and main highlights of the visit were:

(a) an orientation session where basic information and history about the city of Charlottesville was given along with welcome kits.

(b) a “Meet and Greet” at UVA’s Fralin Museum where a Mayan Pottery exhibition was on display. The event was well attended with about 30 guests along with the delegation.

(c) an “Open House” Coffee event in the Omni Hotel lobby on Tuesday morning. During the two-hour event, between 50 - 75 people came, including Mayor Snook.

The event was a great success. This event gave us the opportunity to create exposition materials for the CSCC which we can use on future occasions.

(d) Dr. Alicen Brown facilitated a visit by Mayor Cano and Vice Mayor Rios to Buford Middle School, where they were quite impressed. Dr. Otey, assistant Superintendent for Instruction joined us and the Buford Principal for lunch.

(e) Former CSCC Chair, Damon Irby, hosted us at the UVA Center for Politics where expert J. Miles Coleman led an interesting session on American Politics and the Political differences between Guatemala and the USA.

(f) Wednesday morning began with a tour of Jefferson's Monticello, followed by lunch at Michie Tavern, hosted by the Ixtatan Foundation.

(g) Krista Farrell, former CSCC Co-Chair and JMRL Library director, hosted us for a discussion and tour of the downtown library. That was a big success, followed by a brief visit to council chambers where the delegates were permitted to sit in the council seats - that was definitely a highlight for them.

(h) The final event was the Mayor's Reception with Mayor Snook, Councilor Payne and the delegation from Huehuetenango. The program was live streamed on the city's website and attended by more than 75 persons.

We streamed a video of Marimba music before the program. The Marimba is the Guatemalan national music.

The impressive and award winning choir from CHS led by Mr. Will Cooke performed a medley of Shenandoah.

Mayor Snook and Mayor Cano both gave impressive discourses and exchanged city gifts.

The Commission's Facebook page is full of photos from all the events: be sure to take a look.

During the week, we received over a half dozen inquiries about getting involved with the commission. Thank you!

Submitted by Edward Herring, New City Committee Chair

Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission
Poggio Rep Report
November 2023

In the last few days, I got in contact with Darnell Lamont Walker, the winner of the 2023 Poggio's grant. His project was about filming and creating a short movie for kids about Poggio a Caiano and Charlottesville. He went in Poggio in July, and in our email exchange he confirmed that the editing part is almost over (he is currently adding a voice over in some parts of the movie). We can work on inviting him to report on the project in one of our next meetings.

Nothing else to report.

Submitted by Stella Mattioli, Poggio rep