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 Ghartey
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.

Edweard 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