

Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission

MINUTES

Thursday April 11, 2024

City Space Small Conference Room

Present: Alicen Brown, Edward Herring, Kimberly Hayes (attending remotely, see note below), Stella Mattioli, Sal Moschella, Sylvia New Strawn, Elizabeth Smiley, Cherry Stewart, Murray Susen

Absent: Claire Denton-Spalding, Casey Erickson, Nana Gharthey

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

Kimberly Hayes received approval to participate remotely from New York, citing FOIA 2.2-3708.3 allowable reason (4): her job requires her to work onsite in NYC two weeks of every month.

Meeting opened at 4:43 pm. Edward Herring presided. A quorum was present.

1. Approval of Minutes - Commission Meeting March 12, 2024
No corrections to minutes necessary.
Motion to approve as written: S. Moschella
Motion seconded: M. Susen
Motion passed unanimously
2. Chair's Update (Edward Herring)
 - a) Request for approval to re-purpose \$35 of the funds approved at the March meeting (\$125 total to purchase supplies to make hanging equipment for flags). The funds would be used to make a 24x36-inch foam core "Welcome to Charlottesville" poster, specific to the Besancon delegation visit, to display at the Commission's three public events
Motion to approve the use of these remaining funds: S. New Strawn
Motion seconded: S. Moschella
Motion passed with one (1) abstention (E. Smiley)
 - b) Meeting times for 2nd half of 2024
Tuesday Sept 3 is not available for a Commission meeting
Tuesday Nov 5 not available for a commission meeting (election day)
All remaining first Tuesdays are clear. [Edward will draft a list of the remaining meeting dates and will work on finding a date in September for our Annual Retreat](#)

Edward clarified that an individual commissioner is limited to 3 absences for FOIA "personal reasons" exemption per year
3. Secretary Update (Elizabeth Smiley) - no update

4. Communications Update (Edward reporting for Claire Denton-Spalding)
Edward commended Claire for all her work on publicity for the Besançon delegation visit that begins tomorrow. Our facebook page has received hundreds of visits.
5. Finance Update (Max Robinson reporting for Casey Erickson)
The current balance is \$23,253.75 Outstanding payments include: CCS breakfast for the Lycee Pasteur students; Daniel Sender's grant reward; Ixtatan Foundation grant expenses

City Council will approve the budget on April 15. [Max and Edward will work with Casey to develop the Commission's budget for the next fiscal year based on our expected allocation.](#)

6. Grant Report from Elias Alonzo (Ixtatan Foundation) - "A Tale of Two Cities Podcast: Exploring Huehuetenango." Elias joined virtually from Atlanta, GA.
The Ixtatan Foundation, which has offices in Charlottesville (USA) and Huehuetenango (Guatemala) has served as a bridge organization for projects in Huehue, including implementing and administering grant projects funded by the Sister Cities Commission.

Elias gave a quick review of the completed project, which consists of six (6) 30-minute podcast episodes designed to introduce the culture, people, and history of Huehuetenango to the residents of Charlottesville. The Ixtatan Foundation partnered with a Guatemalan producer to draft the episode outlines and conduct interviews for the episodes.

There were a total of 547 listeners across the 6 episodes. Episodes were publicly available on spotify and apple podcast; the grant provided for only 12 months of a subscription to these hosting platforms, however. Elias will share the audio files with the Commission so that we can make them available on our own media platforms. The project expenses amounted to \$3840 of the \$4000 grant award. All of the receipts have been submitted to the City as well as a final report. It proved to be very time consuming and expensive to make the podcast, so there are no plans to continue with this particular project; however, a logical second phase would be a podcast series on Charlottesville in Spanish for the residents of Huehue.

Max requested clarification on the Ixtatan Foundation's \$5000 contribution to the project. [Kimberly will follow up with Elias offline about this as well as any additional grant funds details still needing to be settled.](#)

A quick search in the meeting by Max found that the Huehue sister city's dedicated website (www.huehuecharlottesville.com) , where the podcasts were to be found, was not active. [Edward will follow up with Elias about this, since the hosting fee for that website was prepaid for 5 years.](#)

To conclude his presentation, Elias reported that Huehue city officials remain excited about continuing on with our friendship city partnership. While in Huehue this past February, he had discussions with city officials about the possibility of creating a monument somewhere in the city. He will return to Huehue in June.

7. Activity Updates

- a) Besancon: Elizabeth gave an update on the delegation visit (April 12-18) and passed out the finalized Itinerary, thanking Commissioners for their help with planning, preparation and anticipated onsite support during events
- b) “Les Amities Musicales” Concert - no additional updates
- c) “Sister Revolutions” Podcast Launch - no additional updates
- d) Sister City Community Reception - no additional updates
- e) “Mapping Our Sister Cities” event, Saturday April 20, Lewis & Clark Exploratory Center: Sylvia confirmed that the event, now officially part of the Tom Tom Festival, is scheduled for 10 am - 4 pm. There will be a treasure hunt with a \$250 visa gift card as prize (donated). The prize will be awarded at the end of the day if there are at least 25 people who have attended and participated. Sylvia asked for Commissioners to come to the event and assist. Edward, Murray, and Elizabeth plan to attend. Sylvia plans to purchase lunch for the folks working the Event. Claire would like to be reimbursed for supplies she purchased to be used at the event ([a vote to approve this reimbursement was deferred, as two commissioners had departed the meeting and there was no longer a quorum](#)).

Other business:

Kimberly was unable to hear much of the first half of the meeting and asked to be brought up to speed on business she missed; Edward provided a quick review.

Meeting adjourned at 5:48 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Smiley, Secretary & Besancon Rep

Next full Commission meeting: Tuesday May 7 4:30 pm CitySpace Small Conference Rm