CHARLOTTESVILLE SISTER CITIES COMMISSION (CSCC) AGENDA
Tuesday, August 6, 2024, 4:30pm – 6:00pm
Virtual/Electronic meeting - Zoom

CALL TO ORDER

1. **Approval of Minutes** – July 2, 2024 CSCC meeting; June 4, 2024 CSCC meeting
2. **Chair's Report** – Edward Herring
3. **Secretary's Report** – Elizabeth Smiley
4. **Finance Report** – Casey Ericksen
5. **Grantee Report** – Darnell Walker, MisMatch Around The World Project
6. **2025 CSCC Grant Application Review / Program Update** – Kimberly Hayes
7. **Communications Report** – Claire Denton Spalding
8. **City Reports**
    - **a.** Huehuetenango, Guatemala – Edward Herring
    - **b.** Besancon, France – Elizabeth Smiley
    - **c.** Poggio a Caiano, Italy – Stella Mattioli
    - **d.** Winneba, Ghana – Kimberly Hayes
    - **e.** Pleven, Bulgaria – Edward Herring

ADJOURNMENT

- Annual CSCC Retreat: Tuesday, September, 10 from 5:00pm to 8:00pm, UVA Equity Center, 201 W Main Street.

Individuals with disabilities who require assistance or special arrangements to participate in the public meeting may call (434) 970-3182 or submit a request via email to ada@charlottesville.gov. The City of Charlottesville requests that you provide a 48-hour notice so that proper arrangements may be made.

Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission
MINUTES
Tuesday June 4, 2024
City Space Small Conference Room

Present: Claire Denton-Spalding, Edward Herring, Kimberly Hayes, Stella Mattioli, Sylvia New Strawn, Elizabeth Smiley, Cherry Stewart, Murray Susen
Absent: Alicen Brown, Casey Erickson, Nana Ghartey, Sal Moschella
Non-voting Members Present: Maxicelia Robinson, Deputy Clerk of Council

Meeting opened at 4:33 pm. Edward Herring presided. A quorum was present.
Max requested that henceforth the Secretary note each late arrival and early departure of any Commissioners, along with the times.

I. Approval of Minutes - Commission Meeting May 7, 2024
Motion to approve with noted amendments: C. Denton-Spalding
Motion seconded: S. Mattioli
Motion passed unanimously

II. Chair's Report (Edward Herring)
Edward did not receive the reports he requested from City Reps and Committee Chairs regarding 2023-2024 accomplishments and goals for 2024-2025 so that he can incorporate these into his Annual Report to City Council. He has requested these by Friday 6/7.

Edward distributed an updated list of 2024-2025 programs and events, distributed by Claire at the May meeting ***(copy attached)***. This latest copy includes an additional event: staffing a Commission information table in the Community Tent at the July 4 Ceremony at Monticello. Edward plans to attend and invites other Commissioners to join if they are available that day. He intends to purchase 5 standing flag holders, using the remaining $121.40 of the amount the Commission approved In March, which he will take to this event along with other Sister City display items for the info table.

III. Secretary's Report (Elizabeth Smiley)
Elizabeth was asked to workshop an orientation to the shared google drive during our September Retreat. Edward will also orient us to the Google photo folder he set up last month at the same time.

IV. Finance Report & 2025 Budget Approval (Max/ Edward reporting for Casey Erickson)
Current balance is **$20,526.42**
Max reviewed the outstanding expenditures. She has received invoices from Sir Speedy that require more detailed information. Claire will review them and clarify those expenditures with Max.

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Edward reviewed a second and final draft of the proposed 2024-2025 Budget. The singular change to this version is to redistribute an additional $1000 from the City Rep travel budget to the Grants & Scholarships budget for a total allocation of $8500.

There were questions and discussion to clarify the items and amounts. One issue for discussion was a possible visit from representatives from Poggio; we have not received a Poggio delegation since 2018. Stella reported that she has extended an invitation to the Mayor and City Council to visit next year and he has responded affirmatively. She plans to follow up with an in-person discussion when she is in Poggio this summer. Any such visit would not likely occur in the upcoming fiscal year (prior to June 30, 2025).

Motion to approve the current Proposed 2024-2025 Budget: S. New Strawn
Motion seconded: C. Denton-Spalding
Motion passed unanimously

V. Grants Program Review & Approval (Kimberly Hayes)

Kimberly distributed an updated (as of today) Grants Cycle Proposed Timeline ***(copy attached)***. Edward distributed a document entitled "Suggested changes to budget and repayment section of the Grant application and Contract" ***(copy attached)***

Kimberly reviewed the current reimbursement status of all 2023-2024 approved Grants, as well as the working version of her revised 2024-2025 Application. The plan is to digitize the application using Jotform to create an online form.

Kimberly reviewed the proposed timeline for two (2) Grant cycles in 2024-2025. After the current fiscal year, the proposal is to establish set application deadlines of April 1 and December 1 for all future years.

Kimberly noted that new proposed guidelines for Grant application and expectations of Grantees clarify that our Grants are reimbursement-based (they are not stipends) and contain a clear procedure for the reimbursement process to ensure transparency for anyone who might wish to examine our grant program.

There was discussion about the process of approving Grants that the Grants Committee has vetted and proposed for Commission consideration. It may prove useful to have top applicants present their proposals to the full commission, either virtually or in person. Prior to launching the July 1 Grant application process Kimberly will finalize updates and revisions to the Application and guidelines, including that a prior Grantee is ineligible to apply for another Grant within 3 years of receiving a grant.There is a publicity plan in place for wider promotion of the upcoming Grant RFP relative to prior grant cycles.

Kimberly requested that any Commissioners who would like to suggest changes or additions for inclusion in the Grant Application email those to her directly as soon as

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possible.

Motion to adopt the proposed 2024-2025 Grant Cycle Timeline : K.Hayes
Motion seconded: C. Stewart
Motion passed unanimously

Kimberly was asked to clarify how many Grants we expect to award and at what amounts for this upcoming Grant cycle. There was discussion about various proposed amounts. Edward suggested we consider 3 Grants of up to $2500 and then have $1000 to use for Travel Scholarships. Max suggested we consider earmarking one (1) of the Grants specifically for local programming, to increase the Commission's footprint in Charlottesville. This Grant could also be awarded at a lower amount.

Motion to approve 2024-2025 Grant Application with revisions to terms and reimbursement guidelines as discussed, and with the change to reflect Grant amounts of up to $2000 each: K. Hayes
Seconded: C. Denton-Spalding
Motion passed unanimously

VI. Program Committee Update/2024-2025 Activities (Claire Denton-Spalding & Sylvia New Strawn)

Claire distributed a more detailed chart of proposed 2024-2025 programs and events incorporating input received from Commissioners following last month's meeting about high-priority events ***(copy attached***). Kimberly suggested adding a Bastille Day event; Elizabeth noted the Alliance Française of Charlottesville does already sponsor a Bastille Day event each year, but that she would reach out to the AFC Director to explore the possibility of partnering in 2025 (the 2024 event will already have been planned).

VII. City Reports

a. Huehuetenango (Edward Herring)

Edward initiated conversations with both the Charlottesville and Albemarle school systems about donating used computers to the Ixtatan Foundation for distribution to the schools in Huehuetenango

b. Besançon (Elizabeth Smiley)

Elizabeth reported that Daniel Sender will be invited to our July meeting to make his presentation on his completed "Les Amities Musicales" Grant project. She has just received copies of the written report (in French) and a more detailed description with photos, which Florent Werguet submitted to Mayor Vignot following the April Besancon Delegation Visit. These will be uploaded to the shared google drive and Elizabeth will bring a complete copy to share at the July Commission meeting.

Edward reported that CHS theater students have been approved to travel to Besançon over their Spring Break (April 2025). They will stay with host families from the Lycée

Pasteur and will offer one or more performances of “A Chorus Line,” which is their musical production for the upcoming school year. The Commission’s own Murray Susan is the director of this CHS production and will be part of the exchange. David Becker, CHS Drama teacher and Edward will accompany the student delegation.

We have received a request from a middle school in greater Besançon for assistance identifying a local middle school who would be interested in becoming a partner school for possible cultural exchanges. Alicen has been made aware of the request, and Edward has agreed to courtesy contact colleagues in several of the county middle schools to facilitate a first connection if there is interest. Any partnering would be developed independently between the schools and would not be considered a CSCC program.

c. Poggio a Caiano (Stella Mattioli)
Stella reported that the “Mis-Match” Grant project has been completed, however it has been difficult to nail the Grantee down on a time to make his final presentation to the Commission, as he travels out of town often. She will see if he can come in July.

The Chamber of Commerce is planning a trip to Tuscany in March 2025 which will include a stop in Poggio. The Chamber reached out to Edward to join the trip at his own expense. Stella and Edward will meet in September to discuss plans for some kind of event in Poggio for the visitors, highlighting the Sister City relationship.

d. Winneba (Edward Herring reporting)
Nana’s commission expires on June 30 and City Council has appointed Kimberly as the new Winneba Rep. She has traveled to Ghana and is excited to take this position. She will relinquish her Business Rep position, which will be open and unfilled as of July 1.

e. Pleven (Edward Herring)
Mayor Wade received an email from staff in the Embassy regarding community interest in reactivating our Sister City relationship with Pleven. Edward has written to the American ambassador in Bulgaria to see if there appears to be clear community interest there as well before we continue any further discussions.

VIII. Other Business
Murray Susan has reapplied and if re-appointed, will serve one more year until he graduates from Charlottesville High School in June 2025.

Max reported that discussions are ongoing with the City’s IT department regarding migrating to their platforms for our media presence.

Meeting adjourned at 5:58 pm.

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Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Smiley
Secretary & Besançon Representative

Next full Commission Meeting: Tuesday, July 2 @ 4:30 pm at CitySpace

attachments

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2024-2025 Sister City Events Calendar - updated 05/02/24

July 2024
1. Music festival at Boars Head 2. African American Cultural Festival 3. Farmers Market Meet and Greet 4. Fourth of July at Monticello 5. Sister Cities Cooking Classes 6. Chef Exchange / Feast Days
August 2024
1. Ghanaian recipes 2. Farmers Market Meet and Greet 3. Italian recipes 4. French recipes 5. Chamber of Commerce Collaboration 6. Pop-up Wine / Cocktails Event
September 2024
1. Partner with UVA language meet-ups 2. Photo exhibit 3. Coordinated service projects between Sister Cities 4. Cville Sabroso 5. UVA football season
October 2024
1. Global Week at UVA 2. Film festival 3. Wine festival 4. Bamff Mountain Film Festival 5. Fall fruit events 6. Literature contest 7. Friends of the Library Sale
November 2024

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1. Food of Sister Cities
2. Artisans and foods market featuring Sister Cities
3. Virginia Film Festival

December 2024

1. Video call with mayors / citizens
2. Karaoke fair
3. Christmas market / holiday markets

January 2025

1. Foreign language festival
2. First Fridays

February 2025

1. Heritage month
2. Paramount season

March 2025

1. Pasta making class
2. Jefferson Theater concerts
3. Festival of the Book

April 2025

1. Dogwood Parade

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Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission - Grants

2024/25 Grants Cycle Proposed Timeline 1

June 2024
6/13: Announce Program
Open Applications

July 2024
7/21: Application Deadline
7/22-7/31: Grants Subcommittee reviews and deliberates on candidates

August 2024
8/6: Make recommendations to the commission on potential grantees
8/13: Announce Winners

2024/25 Grants Cycle Proposed Timeline 2

November 2024
11/1: Announce Program
Open Applications

December 2024
12/15: Application Deadline

January 2025
1/6-1/10: Grants
Subcommittee reviews and deliberates on candidates

February 2025
2/4: Make recommendations to the commission on potential grantees
2/14: Announce Winners

December 2025
Deadline to complete Project

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CSCC Grants Reimbursement

June 4, 2024

Suggested changes to Budget and repayment section of the Grant Application and Contract;

Basis for Payments:

The Deliverables and the Basis / Requirements for Payments to Grantees shall be identified at the time the grant is awarded. This is part of the Grant contract: All reimbursement requests must line up with the detailed approved budget.

1. Basis A: Paid receipts for budgeted items and or expenses paid: Examples (a) sub contractors, vendors, materials, service providers. These items are reimbursement only.

2. Basis B: Paid receipts from travel and or other per diem expenses: Tickets, Meals, Hotels, other Transportation, Mileage. These items are reimbursement only.

3. Basis C: Timed activities: Creative activities - Required to be specified in the contract at an agreed upon rate and related to the completion of a specific deliverable.

4. Basis D: Product Delivery (a) Workshops (b) Presentations (C) Public or Private Performances (d) Books (e) Films, etc. Dates, times, details, locations and attendance must be documented.

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2024-2025 Proposed Events List - distributed by Program Committee at June 4 meeting

#	Event	Description	CSCC should move forward with this effort	I would like to lead this effort	I would like to support this effort
1	Monthly Cultural Presentations/Discussion over Wine or Coffee	These could be arranged at local wineries or coffee shops. Sponsored by CSCC and open to the community. Each attendee will contribute a certain amount to cover wine and honorary for the guest lecturer/facilitator. Participants can also bring/purchase their own food.			
2	Harvest and Wine Festival (October)	A wine-tasting to showcase wines from our Sister Cities as part of an evening event. I feel it could be well-attended and would get us out-and-about for something "seasonal." Virginia is a wine "region," and attendees could share in the harvest of other wine regions surrounding our Sister Cities. Venue-Possibility 1: I am willing to approach Market Street Wine Shop to see if they would be interested in hosting us. This could be beneficial because they already hold regular tastings, have the venue, are centric, etc. People could also buy bottles from the shop, as they usually do at such events, so it brings a commercial benefit to them. They might host us for free/nearly free knowing that they can sell bottles of the region-specific wine. Venue-Possibility 2: I am willing to donate a selection of wines from Besancon/surrounding area, donate Ghana-based palm-wines, acquire Huehue Cab-Sauv wine barrel-aged coffee, and several bottles of Bolgheri Vermentino (Poggio) varieties a CSCC event/wine-tasting. I could reach out to venues nearby, such as Common House or C&O Gallery, to see if they'd consider hosting us there (though there would be a venue-rental fee for the Commission). I would happily host at my house, though it is in the			

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#	Event	Description	CSCC should move forward with this effort	I would like to lead this effort	I would like to support this effort
		County, and 20 mins from Downtown, so not ideal for access.			
3	Film Night	Partner with Uva/PVCC and host film night or partner with local movie theaters. Pick interesting movies and make it a CSCC movie night, followed by discussion.			
4	International Cooking Classes	Partner with PVCC and/or local restaurants for international cooking classes or international food tasting. Perhaps we could partner with the Happy Cook for cooking lessons.			
5	CSCC Cooking Classes	CSCC could host 1-4 cooking days/cooking classes to showcase a main dish from each city/culture. The Intl. Center at UVA has a great/useful/large kitchen, I would be willing to reach out to them to inquire about using it. Food/materials are usually quite cheap, and the Commission could reimburse someone to pick up ingredients/lead respective cooking days. I'd be willing to lead one for Besancon. If this is a multiple day/month event, could help round out the calendar without great expenses incurred. If we want to ensure good attendance, we alternatively could invite/organize elementary trips and make the event only open to a class/grade as a school "trip."			
6	Chamber of Commerce Collaboration: Winter 24-25 sometime	Finding ways to create connections between local business, small businesses, artisans, etc. in Charlottesville and in our sister cities. This could be something as simple as a series of monthly social media posts featuring makers and businesses in each city (in similar industries or not).			
7	Festival of the Book: March 2025	There is a precedent for this: in past years, writers from our Sister Cities have been invited to participate in the festival. We'd need to reach out to the FoTB planning committee soon about their interest in featuring or showcasing authors from our Sister Cities in next year's program (if it's not already too late), and then work with our sister city contacts to find English-speaking authors who would like to attend and discuss their books. There's the issue of language-I'm not sure how this was handled in the past. Or we work with FoTB to showcase authors from our Sister Cities or to showcase travel writings/travel books/photo books about our Sister Cities.			

#	Event	Description	CSCC should move forward with this effort	I would like to lead this effort	I would like to support this effort
8	CSCC Poetry Reading	New Dominion consistently hosts lovely events; perhaps we could have a poetry reading of works from writers/regional writers from one/several Sister Cities. Perhaps something centered upon Victor Hugo (born in Besancon)? If we like the idea, I can approach/ask as to feasibility. Truly might not be everyone's cup of tea, but I think it would be a lovely way to showcase something artistic/cohesive and to bring in University students.			
9	Farmer's Market: August, September and October 2024	I have already cultivated a good working relationship with the Cville-Albemarle Visitors Bureau and they are definitely interested in making connections with our sister cities to discuss ways to promote tourism. They bring their mobile visitors booth to the market at IX at least once a month (or maybe every week?). Perhaps we could work together with them to have information about each of our Sister Cities available to distribute from their mobile booth at the Farmer's Market. This would involve each City Rep obtaining brochures, maps, tourism materials (in English as well) from their Sister City's tourism office that the Visitors Bureau would agree to display and distribute. It might involve a Commissioner(s) agreeing to attend the farmer's market to greet visitors to the booth answer questions about the sister cities.			
10	Chihamba / African-American Cultural Arts Festival	CSCC could have a presence at the Chihamba Annual Arts Festival, and have resources available to share information regarding our partnerships.			
11	State SCI Conference	Hosting the Virginia Sister Cities International conference in Charlottesville.			
12	UVA Global Week	Representing CSCC at UVA Global Week.			

Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission
MINUTES
Tuesday July 2, 2024
CitySpace Large Conference Room

Present: Claire Denton-Spalding, Kimberly Hayes, Edward Herring, Sylvia New Strawn, Elizabeth Smiley
Absent: Alicen Brown, Stella Mattioli, Sal Moschella, Cherry Stewart, Murray Susen
Non-voting Members Present: Maxicelia Robinson, Deputy Clerk of Council

Meeting opened at 4:36 pm. Edward Herring presided. A quorum was deemed present.

I. Approval of Minutes
Commission Meeting June 4, 2024
Motion to approve: *deferred to August meeting pending addition of cited attachments*

Commission Meeting May 7, 2024
Motion to approve with final amendment, as noted below: C. Denton-Spalding
Motion seconded: S. New Strawn
Motion passed unanimously

Amended: Section IXCity Reports/Poggio a Caiano - change to read: ***"He plans to meet with the Director of the Chamber of Commerce to learn more about their planned March 2025 trip to Poggio and will invite the Chamber to be part of the conversation about a potential future delegation visit."***

II. Grantee Presentation by Daniel Sender - "Les Amitiés Musicales"
Daniel's written report was circulated to the Commission ahead of his presentation. This project to establish musical friendship between Charlottesville and Besançon, consisted of free public concerts in both cities and a daylong masterclass with youth musicians in Besançon.

To create the program for the concerts, Daniel researched composers that had been born or worked in the Besançon region then secured digital scans of their sheet music from the National Library in France. He was later surprised to find that some of these composers/musicians were actually unknown within the Besançon music education community. The masterclass was so popular that it lasted twice as long as he had anticipated, and was attended not only by the student musicians, but by their families, local music teachers, and interested locals.

Commissioners asked Daniel how to gauge the impact of his project in both communities. He reported that his visit/concert/masterclass was highly promoted in Besançon, with a local news article and high quality posters everywhere in the city.

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In Charlottesville, he acknowledged the greatest impact among the already established classical music community and colleagues/others at UVA. However, he thinks holding his concert during the visiting delegation week did raise awareness of our Sister City program in general.

There was additional discussion about how to deepen and broaden the impact of projects like this on the larger C'ville community. Daniel would like to be an ambassador for the Sister City program and to stay in conversation with the Commission about ways to do this. One suggestion was to conceptualize an all-sister city musical event at some point in the future.

Edward asked Daniel to provide some information related to his prior experience with a similar grant project in Pleven, Bulgarian (2017-18 CSCC Grant recipient). Daniel reported that there was a lack of structural support on either the C'ville or Pleven side to assist with that project and to help coordinate his visit there.

III. Chair's Report (Edward Herring)
Edward and Sylvia will staff a CSCC information table in the Community tent during the Monticello annual July 4 ceremony. This is the first time we have been invited to participate (but hopefully not the last time) and it is a good way to promote the Sister Cities program.

IV. Secretary's Report (Elizabeth Smiley)
No report

V. Finance Report (Edward Herring reporting for Casey Erickson)
Our current balance is **$ 15,974.42**
Outstanding expenditures include reimbursements for three grants: Les Amitiés Musicales (Daniel Sender), MisMatch Around the World (Darnell Williams), and Tale of Two Cities podcast (Ixtatan Foundation). Additional pending expenditures are: reimbursement to Edward Herring flag poles purchased to display sister city flags at events; breakfast items not yet purchased for the State SCI Conference we will host in November; and mileage reimbursement to Zan Allen (via Mt. Zion church) associated with transportation of our Besancon delegation from Dulles Airport to Cville in April. For this last item, we are still waiting on an invoice from Mt. Zion church; Kimberly will follow up with Pastor Alvin Edwards on this.

VI. 2025 Grant Application Review /Program Update (Kimberly Hayes)
Kimberly will have a finalized grant application prepared by the end of this week. Edward will then review and forward it to Max for inclusion in an upcoming City Council meeting, where it will need to be approved.

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VII. Program Committee Update (Claire Denton-Spalding & Sylvia New Strawn)
Claire circulated the current program events list ***(copy attached)*** and asked the members present to indicate their level of interest (go forward or not) and their availability to participate in the events they have most interest in. She is awaiting responses from other commissioners who are remote this summer. Once all the responses are received, she will finalize the list and distribute a copy to the Commission.

VIII. City Reports

a. Huehuetenango (Edward Herring)
Collaboration is ongoing with the Ixtatan Foundation to obtain used computers from C'ville/Albemarle schools to donate to the schools in Huehue. Due to our limited budget, a cost-effective way to ship/transport any donated computers will be essential.

b. Besançon (Elizabeth Smiley)
Elizabeth circulated a printed copy of Florent Werguet's April Delegation Visit report for members to see. Mayor Wade has been invited by the Mayor of Besancon to visit Besançon and to attend the 80th Anniversary Ceremony celebrating the Liberation of Besançon on September 8; he and his spouse have accepted the invitation. Elizabeth is making slow progress on assisting with a Gospel Choir Exchange proposal/request for the summer of 2025. Edward added that plans are ongoing to find a performance space in Besançon for the CHS theater student performance of A Chorus Line, planned for April 2025 as part of a Spring Break exchange with the Lycée Pasteur.

c. Poggio a Caiano (Stella Mattioli)
Stella will meet with Poggio's Mayor on July 25 to explore more concretely how we might establish some kind of school-based partnership. She will also open a conversation about a possible Poggio mayoral delegation visit to Charlottesville some time in 2025.

d. Winneba (Kimberly Hayes)
Kimberly has notified SCI that she is our new Winneba Representative. She has already reached out to Dave Norris (Winneba Foundation) and is awaiting a reply to schedule a time to meet and exchange information.

e. Pleven (Edward Herring)
Edward has been contacted by 3 community members who read his Annual Report to City Council and are interested in getting involved should we pursue the reactivation of this sister city relationship. Sylvia would like to be involved in this as well. Max suggested that Edward review the SCI Guidelines for Affiliation to determine if Pleven has "ticked the boxes" necessary for reactivation on its end. Edward hopes to speak to the American Ambassador to Bulgaria some time in the next week.

VIII. Other Business

- Sylvia offered to investigate the possibility of securing book donations to send to Huehue schools that could be sent in diplomatic pouches to save shipping costs.

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- Max suggested that Kimberly check out the contact list for Winneba that is in the shared google drive.
- Darnell Williams (“MisMatch Around the World”) will be invited to present his grant project at our August meeting.
- The August meeting will be virtual.
- Edward will check with JMRL about reserving the Case Swanson Room for our Annual Retreat.
- Kimberly requested the Annual Retreat be scheduled during the second week of September so that she can participate in person.

Meeting adjourned at 5:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Smiley
Secretary and Besançon Representative

Next Monthly Commission Meeting:
Tuesday, August 6 @ 4:30 pm, Virtual

Annual Commission Retreat:
Tuesday, September 10 5:00 - 8:00 pm, location TBD

attachment

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Report to the Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission

Project Title: *MisMatch Around The World*

Dates of Filming:
- July 5 - July 10

Point of Contact:
- Stella Mattioli

Special Thanks:
- Mayor: Riccardo Palandri
- Vice Mayor: Diletta Bresci

Overview:

During our filming in Poggio A Caiano, Italy, we had the pleasure of staying in the neighboring town of Prato. My colleague, Welford McLellan, Jr., and I utilized public transportation to commute to and from Poggio A Caiano each day. The experience was enriching, both personally and professionally, and the hospitality extended to us by the local community was truly exceptional.

Information about Poggio A Caiano:

Poggio A Caiano is a charming town in the province of Prato, Tuscany. Known for its historical significance and picturesque landscapes, Poggio A Caiano is home to the renowned Villa Medici, a UNESCO World Heritage site. The town offers a unique blend of cultural heritage and modern amenities, making it an ideal location for exploring the daily lives of its residents. The welcoming nature of the people and the town's rich history provided a perfect backdrop for our project.

Purpose of *MisMatch Around The World*:

The primary goal of "MisMatch Around The World" is to introduce the children of Charlottesville to the everyday life of the people in Poggio A Caiano, broadening their understanding and appreciation of the world beyond their immediate surroundings. The show aims to:

- Showcase how schools, libraries, museums, gardens, and play areas in Poggio A Caiano resemble those in Charlottesville.
- Provide an opportunity for children to learn about different cultures and languages.
- Foster a sense of global connectedness and curiosity.

How MisMatch Around The World Furthers the Mission of the CSCC:

MisMatch Around The World aligns with the mission of the Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission (CSCC) by fostering relationships among individuals, communities, and cities worldwide. Through this project, we aim to:

- Dive into the heart of Poggio A Caiano and showcase its unique charm and hospitality.
- Highlight the warmth and openness of the local families and individuals we encountered.
- Encourage viewers to see the world as a welcoming place and to embrace new cultures and experiences.
- Create connections that go beyond the screen, inspiring viewers to explore and engage with the global community.

Key Players:

- Darnell Lamont Walker, Producer & Director
- Welford McLellan, Jr., Host & Puppeteer
- Stella Mattioli, Guest
- Diletta Bresci, Host & Guest
- Darnell Walker-Jones, Editor

Budget and Final Expenses:

- Total Budget: $4,000
- Airfare: $1,999.38
- Food + Lodging: $1,108.67
- Transportation: $430.41
- Editor: $500
- Total Expenses: $4,038.46

The Experience:

Our time spent in Poggio A Caiano was absolutely incredible. The entire town came together to make us feel at home and ensure we had everything we needed. Poggio's local newspaper even mentioned our project and the joy of having us in town. We arrived with little knowledge about Poggio A Caiano but left feeling like we were leaving behind family. The experience not only deepened our understanding of Poggio A Caiano but also strengthened our connection to Charlottesville.

A Poggio le riprese di una mini serie tv

E' destinata ai bambini e curata da due giovani americani arrivati da Charlotteville per un sopralluogo

POGGIO A CAIANO

Una serie *tv americana per bambini girata a Poggio a Caiano. Nel giorni scorsi due giovani americani Darnell Walker e Mack McLellan hanno girato per le vie, i giardini e le piazze per scattare foto e, soprattutto, fare video. Nelle riprese, che racconteranno come si vive in questa cittadina, ci sono due pupazzetti che hanno attirato la curiosità e l'attenzione di chi li ha visti, animati dalle mani di McLellan. La mini serie sarà rivolta ai bambini e racconterà di questi simpatici personaggi che intraprendono un viaggio di apprendimento da Charlottesville a Poggio, documentando quanto successo durante la permanenza in Toscana: dalle persone conosciute, ai luoghi visitati. Poggio a Caiano, lo ricordiamo, è gemellata con Charlottesville in Virginia e Walker e McLellan arrivano proprio da questa città. Gli Usa hanno una tradizione lunga quasi cinquant'anni col Muppet Show televisivo, dove simpatici pupazzi incontrano un ospite e propongono parodie, coreografie per il divertimento di grandi e piccini e ora le immagini, i suoni e le voci di Poggio entreranno nella tv americana per incantare ancora i bambini. In Comune, Darnell Walker e Mack McLellan hanno incontrato anche il sindaco Riccardo Palandri che si è complimentato per il loro lavoro.*

«I luoghi – racconta Darnell Walker – sono meravigliosi e i posti uno più bello dell'altro. E poi il cibo, fantastico. Una sera sono stato a mangiare la bistecca in una piazza (durante una serata di 'Poggio in vetrina', ndr): era buonissima! Le persone incontrate sono state tutte molto disponibili e gentili».

Terminate le riprese, seguirà la fase del montaggio dei video che durerà circa tre mesi. I due artisti sono stati seguiti durante i vari giri dagli assessori Patrizia Cataldi e Diletta Bresci.

Il sindaco di Poggio a Caiano, Riccardo Palandri, con i due registi americani Darnell Walker e Mack McLellan che hanno visitato il Comune mediceo

Additional Notes:

While Poggio A Caiano wasn't necessarily affordable for what we wanted to create in its entirety, the people of the town truly stepped in and helped feed us, drive us around, and welcomed us into their world, allowing us to save where possible. It truly is a community, very much like the one I was born and raised in. Their generosity and support were crucial in making this project a success.

We would love to return and expand this project further, continuing to build bridges between our communities and fostering a deeper sense of global unity.

Conclusion:

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission for providing us with the opportunity to create "MisMatch Around The World." The experience has been invaluable, and we are excited to share the final product with the children of Charlottesville. We believe this project will inspire a new generation to embrace the world with open hearts and minds.

Thank you for your continued support and belief in the power of cultural exchange.