

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, Casey Erickson, 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 IX City 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.

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.

- 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.

- 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

