

Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission

MINUTES

Tuesday August 6, 2024

ZOOM

Present: Claire Denton-Spalding, Casey Erickson, Kimberly Hayes, Edward Herring, Stella Mattioli (participating remotely), Elizabeth Smiley, Cherry Stewart

Absent: Alicen Brown (on maternity leave), Sal Moschella (had previously notified Edward of his expected absence), Sylvia New Strawn, Murray Susen (had previously notified Edward of his planned absence)

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

The Commissioners participating remotely cited the following allowable reasons, per *FOIA Va. Code Sec. 2.2-3708 (Effective Sept 1, 2022)*:

- Stella Mattioli *(B.4) unable to attend in person due to personal travel and participating remotely from Poggio a Caiano, Italy*

Meeting opened at 4:40 pm. Edward Herring presided. A quorum was deemed present.
Late arrivals noted: Cherry Stewart joined the meeting at 4:43 pm

I. Approval of Minutes

Commission Meeting June 4, 2024

Motion to approve: C. Denton-Spalding

Seconded: K. Hayes

Motion passed unanimously

Commission Meeting July 2, 2024

Motion to approve: C. Denton-Spalding

Motion seconded: S. Mattioli

Motion passed unanimously

II. Chair's Report (Edward Herring)

We have been approved to participate in UVA Global Week Oct 26-Nov 2, 2024. Edward will be discussing details with Daman Irby at the UVA Center for Politics about our role and involvement; he will provide additional details at our September Retreat meeting.

Max is missing a number of Committee meeting minutes from the past year. Edward went through each of the missing set of minutes and asked each responsible Commissioner to provide those to him.

On Sept 26, Edward will be a guest on a podcast “Today y Mañana” as part of the I Love Cville network. He will be introducing each of our Sister Cities; it will be possible to show slides of our Sister Cities as well; he will work with Claire on visuals for this interview.

Monticello 4th of July- Edward and Sylvia staffed a CSCC info table under the Community Tent. A number of visitors stopped by.

Edward asked Commissioners to visit the CSCC facebook page and “like” a number of events and other news (check out the article on Kimberly Hayes!)

Prior to our Retreat, Edward asks that Commissioners spend some time looking at our current website and be prepared to offer feedback about design and content. This will be incorporated into ideas for a redesign before/as the City assumes the “hosting” and management of it.

Cherry asked if the Retreat date and time is changeable, as she may not be able to attend due to her teaching obligation that evening. Edward reported that we voted on the date and time for the Retreat at our last meeting and that it is now set on the City calendar.

III. **Secretary’s Report** (Elizabeth Smiley)

Elizabeth is still available to offer an orientation to the Commission’s shared google drive at the September retreat. Max replied that she has reviewed the records and documents currently on our drive and that there are many which we need to discard in order to be in compliance with state guidelines for record keeping. Elizabeth will work with Max on identifying which documents need to be purged after she has had a chance to review the guidelines, which Max will forward to her.

IV. **Finance Report** (Casey Erickson)

Our current balance is **\$ 30,481.00**

The only expense incurred so far this fiscal year is for the website.

There remain several carryovers including reimbursements for three grants: “Les Amitiés Musicales” (Daniel Sender), “MisMatch Around the World” (Darnell Williams), and “Tale of Two Cities” podcast (Ixtatan Foundation). The “Tale of Two Cities” reimbursement has been approved and will be processed this week. Kimberly needs to make additional adjustments to the “Les Amities Musicales” reimbursement and will send the finalized request to Max next week. Teenage Life During Covid has not been closed out yet.

Additional pending expenditures: reimbursement to Edward for 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 Besançon delegation from Dulles Airport to Cville in April.

V. **Grantee Report: “MisMatch Around the World”** (Darnell Walker, Grantee)

Grantee written report, attached

Darnell visited Poggio in July 2023 to film content intended to introduce local children to our Italian Sister City. He was supported by Renaissance School teacher and puppeteer Welford McLellan. They were able to shoot 6 episodes (he will send the Commission a link to these), which will be available on YouTube streaming soon.

Several Commissioners had questions and feedback about the project:

Edward asked about Darnell’s plan for making local community members aware of these new episodes. (Darnell plans to reach out to his existing media contacts as well as school administrators. Edward suggested that Darnell consult our K-12 Rep about best ways to get these episodes into the hands of teachers for use in the classroom. Cherry, who is acting on behalf of K-12 Rep Alicen Brown during her maternity leave, agreed to reach out to Darnell to follow up on this.

Elizabeth asked the target audience age for MisMatch (Pre-K, ages 4-7). Cherry noted that it could also be appropriate for ESL students who are somewhat older.

Claire asked if Darnell would he be interested in offering some type of public viewing opportunity and/or as media interviews to highlight the project as a sister city exchange (Yes)

Kimberly asked Darnell if his marketing for the episodes indicates that he was supported by the Sister Cities Commission. She also asked what type of outlets in the community he plans to use for promoting the episodes. (Yes, CSCC is mentioned in the credits. He plans to promote to several local parenting groups as well as on facebook)

Cherry offered to put Darnell in touch with her professional contacts at ReadyKids and other community organizations that serve preschool children. (Darnell would welcome those connections)

Edward noted that in general it seems like Darnell and the Commission should work together to create a distribution plan for these episodes. He asked Darnell to agree to further meetings with Cherry and others to create a plan. Cherry agreed to be the point person for the planning; Kimberly is interested in helping with this as well. Darnell was receptive and appreciative of this proposal, as he has nothing formalized yet himself. Edward noted that taking this step is important, as one of the requirements for all future CSCC grants will be a clearly articulated plan for how the project will be promoted and be of benefit to the community.

VI. **2025 Grant Application Review /Program Update** (Kimberly Hayes)

Revised Grant application wording has been submitted to the City Attorney's office and is pending approval. Max will try to move this along this week. Assuming a positive response, the 2025 Grant Cycle start date will be set. This could be as soon as August 19. Claire requested as much advance notice as possible so that she can start promoting it.

VII. **Communications Report** (Claire Denton-Spalding)

Claire will follow up directly with Cherry on MisMatch promotions, with Kimberly on 2025 Grants announcements, and with Edward on Annual Retreat planning.

VIII. **City Reports**

a. Huehuetenango (Edward Herring)

No updates other than continuing to solicit computer donations from Cville/Alb schools. We have received word that there is a new "chair" of the Huehue sister city commission and Edward hopes to be in touch with that person soon.

Sylvia will present more information on her project to collect Spanish language books of all kinds to ship to Huehue to develop a community library there.

b. Besançon (Elizabeth Smiley)

Mayor Juandiego Wade and his spouse will be in Besançon Sept 6-8 to participate in several events commemorating the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Besançon by American soldiers of the 7th Army Infantry Division . Elizabeth has worked closely with the Mayor and with the Office of International Relations in Besançon on preparations for this visit. She will be in contact with Mayor Wade throughout his visit and will debrief with him upon his return.

Elizabeth will meet with Carla Mullen at CACVB later this month to explore the possibility of displaying sister city information at the Mobile Visitors Center at the IX market on Saturdays. She will report further on this at the Retreat.

c. Poggio a Caiano (Stella Mattioli)

Stella has met with the Mayor and Vice Mayor of Poggio and they have signaled their interest in an official visit to Charlottesville in summer 2025. They would like to include a few members of the community and will need to open applications for community members in March for a summer trip. Edward asked Stella to specify that the visit would need to be scheduled July 1 or later to allow the Commission to include expenses for hosting a small delegation in its FY 2025-26 budget. We will also need to vote to approve asking our City Council/Mayor to invite the Mayor of Poggio to organize an official delegation visit. Stella will follow up with the Mayor of Poggio to confirm next steps.

On a related note, Edward reported that the Cville Chamber of Commerce trip to Italy next year will not include a stop in Poggio as previously thought. Max asked if the Chamber is aware that Poggio is one of our Sister Cities. Edward responded that they do, the decision was taken because there was a lack of interest in visiting Poggio in 2017 when the Chamber last organized a similar trip.

d. Winneba (Kimberly Hayes)

Kimberly has continued to make contacts with various Winneba partners, including some of the delegation visitors from 2023 and Dave Norris at the Winneba Foundation.

e. Pleven (Edward Herring)

Edward is continuing to move slowly but deliberately in making contact with local community members who have some historic interest and connection to Pleven or to Bulgaria. He plans to organize a meeting to get this group of people together. Cherry Stewart signaled her interest in becoming more involved with Pleven if there is genuine momentum on reactivating that relationship.

VIII. Other Business

Max needs to get the food for our Retreat ordered. Edward will send out an email to the Commission with dinner choices for feedback and then will coordinate with Max.

Murray will resume attending Commission meetings in September.

Meeting adjourned at 5:49 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Smiley
Secretary and Besançon Representative

Annual Commission Retreat:

Tuesday, September 10, 5 - 8 pm at the UVA Equity Center, 201 West Main Street (on the Downtown Mall)

attachments

