

Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission

MINUTES

Tuesday October 1, 2024

CitySpace Main Conference Room

Present: Kimberly Hayes (participating remotely), Edward Herring, Stella Mattioli, Sal Moschella, Sylvia New Strawn, Elizabeth Smiley, Cherry Stewart, Murray Susen

Absent: Alicen Brown (on maternity leave), Claire Denton-Spalding; Casey Erickson

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

Meeting opened at 4:50 pm. Edward Herring presided.

A quorum was NOT deemed present until the later arrivals of Cherry Stewart and Sal Moschella

Late arrivals noted: Cherry Stewart arrived 4:54 pm; Sal Moschella arrived 4:56 pm

I. **Introduction of Mayor Wade** (Elizabeth Smiley)

Elizabeth introduced the Mayor, who was invited to the meeting today to report on his official visit to Besançon September 6-9, 2024, as an honored guest of Mayor Anne Vignot, to participate in the events commemorating the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Besançon by troops of the US 3rd Infantry Division on September 8, 1944.

II. **Report: Visit to Besançon September 6-9, 2024** (Mayor Juandiego Wade)

Mayor Wade thanked the Commission for preparing him for his visit to Besançon September 6-9, 2024. Our partners in Besançon made him feel very welcome; he participated in several ceremonies with high-ranking American and French military officers. He offered three sets of prepared remarks and was also invited spontaneously to speak at other events including a community concert with an audience of 300.

Mayor Wade offered 5 takeaways on the issues of greatest importance to him:

1. The partnership is strong, thanks to the prior and ongoing work of the Commission and City staff. It's important that we continue to have regular visits between citizens and our elected officials.
2. Besançon has successfully created a pedestrian friendly community; seeing this reinforced the value of working in C'ville to share our streets even more.
3. Racial diversity: while on the surface Besançon might appear racially homogenous, he learned that there are 180 ethnic groups living and working in the greater Besançon area. Their current municipal council believes strongly that the more diverse the community is, the stronger and more resilient it is.
4. Ways in which Besançon has invested in youth include designated community spaces, activities offered on school holidays, and discount coupons for use in local venues and businesses.
5. Transit/public transportation : Besançon has benefited from national investment to make this a priority in ways that also address environmental issues, such as

parking lots that have been reclaimed for public spaces and an electric tramway system that serves the entire metropolitan area.

As a result of his meetings and visits the Mayor made a number of good connections and has already been back in touch with many of them. In addition, he returned with concrete ideas and suggestions that might be implemented in Charlottesville, in particular with regard to youth programs and transit. He also reported that he has already reached out to his contacts in other school districts about their interest in establishing school partnerships with schools in the greater Besançon area.

Commissioners responded to the Mayor's remarks and asked questions. Edward noted that he is working on a possible media interviewing opportunity to inform the community about the Mayor's trip. Mayor Wade will travel to Winneba in the Spring on a trip being organized by the Cville Winneba Foundation (this is not a Sister City Commission delegation visit and the Mayor will be paying his own travel expenses).

- III. **Grantee Report-** 2023 Grantee Benjamin Bernard, "Sister Revolutions" Podcast
Ben Bernard presented virtually. Ben's slide presentation recapped his project, including the timeline, his research in Besançon, the development of the podcast episodes, and the syllabus of the course in which UVA students developed Episode 4 (exploring the remembered revolutionary history in Charlottesville). An event is planned in Besançon on November 15 to highlight the project. The guest list includes those in Besançon who were involved with the podcast as well as a number of amateur historians and community members who have supported the Sister City partnership in various ways.

Edward asked Ben how we might make the project more available to members of both the Charlottesville and Besançon communities. Ben would like for us to have links to the podcast episode available from our website and social media platforms. In Besançon, he has explored the idea of sharing the podcast episodes with the CLA for use with students in their immersive French language classes and programs.

- IV. **Approval of Minutes** (Edward Herring)
Full Commission meeting - August 6, 2024
Motion to approve as written: M. Susen
Motion seconded: S. Mattioli
Motion approved

Annual Retreat - September 10, 2024
Motion to approve as written: S. New Strawn
Motion seconded: S. Moschella
Motion approved

Elizabeth will attach Claire's two summaries from our Retreat brainstorming activities to the October minutes.

IV. **Grantee Report** - no report

V. **CSCC Website Update** (Murray Susen)

Murray and Claire will schedule a meeting to discuss several proposed changes to the website.

VI. **City Rep Reports**

a. **Huehuetenango** (Sylvia New Strawn)

- Book initiative update: after talking with Elias Gonzalez of the Guatemala Alliance (formerly called the Ixtatan Foundation), it was decided that the books being collected should go to the existing public library in Huehue. The books will continue to be collected over the next 6 months, after which Sylvia will arrange a date for a first shipment.

b. **Besançon** (Edward Herring; Elizabeth Smiley)

- A student delegation from the Lycée Ledoux high school will be visiting October 2-11. This is the partner exchange school for Monticello High School. Elizabeth has been invited to greet the students when they arrive in Charlottesville and offer a welcome on behalf of the Sister City Commission.
- Edward reported that the CHS/Lyceé Pasteur Theater exchange scheduled for April 2025 has been approved. Two performance spaces in Besançon have been procured and plans are ongoing with partners at Lycee Pasteur for host families, performance rehearsals, etc.
- An "American weekend" program of events highlighting Charlottesville is being planned in Besançon by the Official of International Relations for November 15-17. We have been asked to send some high quality photos from around Charlottesville for the publicity and promotional materials. Elizabeth will follow up on these.

c. **Poggio a Caiano** (Stella Mattioli)

- Stella will forward names and titles to Edward to prepare a draft for an official invitation.
- Max will need a preliminary request for a delegation visit to give Mayor Wade.

d. **Winneba** - no report

VII. **Committee Reports**

a. **Programs** (Sylvia New Strawn)

- Sylvia asked if we want to participate in the Tom Tom Festival again and if so, we'll need to generate some ideas for the type of event or program

- Sylvia and Elizabeth are working on the IX Market booth idea to present at our next meeting.
- Sylvia plans to invite the Commission to her home on 12/14 for a social gathering. No Commission business will be conducted at this event.
- UVA Global Week is scheduled at end of October; Edward will reach out to individual commissioners to help staff a CSCC information table during this event.

b. Budget & Finance (Edward Herring reported in Casey Erickson's absence)

Current balance as of 9/29/24 **\$22,753.27**

Outstanding expenditures of **\$4121.40** (\$4k is the "Mismatch" grant award)

c. Grants - deferred to November meeting

d. Education - deferred to November meeting

VIII. Closing Remarks/Adjournment (Edward Herring)

Meeting adjourned at 6:01 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Smiley, Secretary and Besançon Representative

Next Commission Meeting:

Tuesday, November 12 @ 4:30 pm CitySpace Small Conference Room

attachments

September 2024 Retreat Event Planning Brainstorm - Summary Report

Event	Festival of the Book
Date	March 2025
Lead	Cherry
Support	Claire
Notes from July 2024 Meeting	
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.	
What will the event look like?	
<i>In conjunction with the Virginia Festival of the Book, Piedmont Virginia Community College (PVCC) solicits stories from adult learners, publishes them as a book, and hosts a reading of some of these stories by the writers. This experience highlights the stories of adult learners as one of many activities during the Virginia Festival of the Book. The Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission would like to work with PVCC to extend the invitation to participate in this event to adult learners in our sister cities – Poggio a Caiano, Italy; Besancon, France; and Winneba, Ghana, as well as our Friendship City Huehuetenango, Guatemala. CSCC representatives will find comparable adult learning programs in these cities and extend an invitation to participate. Selected stories will be translated by volunteers, included in the book, and read by volunteers during the event. To build the connection to the VA Festival of the Book, PVCC and CSCC can invite an attending writer to speak at the event. CSCC and PVCC will contact the VA Festival of the Book to see who might be an appropriate speaker. Although she has not yet applied for the VA Festival of the Book, writer Luma Mufleh, a writer who wrote about her experience creating a school for refugee children, could bring an international perspective.</i>	
Where will we host the event?	
PVCC – Dickinson Building	
Who will we invite?	
PVCC students and staff; reading ESL K-12 families; TJACE and families	
How will we get the word out about the event?	
Facebook, PVCC Communication, Flyers attached to backpacks with K-12 teachers	
How much will the event cost?	
Potential speaker fees (TBD) food and drink (\$100-150)	
Any other ideas or considerations for the event?	
Looking to see if VA Festival of the Book is inviting anyone if Luma Mufleh (possible speaker) is not attending Include a raffle or giveaway	

Event	Farmer's Market
Date	August, September, and October 2024
Lead	Sylvia
Support	Elizabeth
Notes from July 2024 Meeting	
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.	
What will the event look like?	
Hosting a booth at the IX Farmer's Market. We will be under a shade tent with material. We will attend a few times per year based on participant interest.	
Where will we host the event?	
IX Farmer's Market	
Who will we invite?	
Farmer's market customers will stop by	
How will we get the word out about the event?	
Captive audience at the farmer's market.	
How much will the event cost?	
We may need to purchase a pop-up tent for our use. Might have to pay a fee to IX market.	
Any other ideas or considerations for the event?	
Participation by commissioners is important. City reps can collect materials from Sister Cities, especially brochures in English.	

Event	UVA Global Week
Date	October 26 – November 2, 2024
Lead	Edward
Support	Stella
Notes from July 2024 Meeting	
Representing CSCC at UVA Global Week.	
What will the event look like?	
One table with CSCC materials and staffed during select hours to present and answer questions about CSCC.	
Where will we host the event?	
UVA – exact location TBD	
Who will we invite?	
Part of an established group at UVA and open to students, faculty, and visitors.	
How will we get the word out about the event?	
1. Part of a UVA Announcement 2. Our own website and FB Page 3. Sent our announcements to International and Language Departments.	
How much will the event cost?	
Max \$250 – TBD	
Any other ideas or considerations for the event?	
We need flyers, pens, and other paraphernalia.	

Event	International Food Tasting / Cultural Event
Date	Before end of year / multiple times per year
Lead	Sal
Support	Kimberly
Notes from July 2024 Meeting	
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. 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."	
What will the event look like?	
Engage restaurants to create recipes related to Sister Cities. Create a group dining experience for a reasonable price. Includes a mini lecture / talk related to the Sister City.	
Where will we host the event?	
Various restaurants in the area.	
Who will we invite?	
Entire community.	
How will we get the word out about the event?	
Local media, social media, website	
How much will the event cost?	
\$0 – self-sustaining	
Any other ideas or considerations for the event?	
Goals: community engagement exposure, create awareness about Sister City, support local business. Reach out to restaurants directly.	

Event	Harvest and Wine Festival
Date	
Lead	Casey
Support	
Notes from July 2024 Meeting	
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 County, and 20 mins from Downtown, so not ideal for access.	
What will the event look like?	
Where will we host the event?	
Who will we invite?	
How will we get the word out about the event?	
How much will the event cost?	
Any other ideas or considerations for the event?	

Sep 2024 Retreat
Website Updates

- Contact Information
 - Need updated members
 - Need updated contact information – Charlottesville gov't website not Gmail
 - Contacts for tourism offices in Sister Cities
 - Contact – who to talk to about planning a trip
- Scholarship / Grant
 - There is a new deadline
 - The website speaks about 2023 like it is in the future – change to 2024 process
 - Need updated details on how to apply
 - What is the process?
 - What is required to qualify for a grant?
- Volunteer / Participate with CSCC
 - Remove green writing, make sure everything is legible
 - About us – change address for questions
- Info about Sister Cities
 - Need to update with information from each commissioner
 - Sister Cities links not working
 - More button not working
 - Page for each Sister City with demo, location, photos, maps, pics of projects, \$\$ travel info, main attractions
 - Links to various resources
 - Past projects from each city with links