

Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission

MINUTES

Tuesday November 12, 2024

CitySpace Main Conference Room

Present: Alicen Brown, Claire Denton-Spalding, Kimberly Hayes (participating remotely), Edward Herring, Stella Mattioli, Sal Moschella, Sylvia New Strawn, Elizabeth Smiley, Cherry Stewart

Absent: Casey Erickson, Murray Susen

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)*:

- Kimberly Hayes *(B.4) unable to attend in person due to her employer's requirement that she work two weeks each month in NYC; she attended remotely from NYC.*

Having exceeded the allowed number of meetings that can be attended remotely per the Commission's Policy for All-Virtual Meetings and Remote Participation (Section I, item 4), Kimberly was not permitted to be a voting member at this meeting.

Call to Order

Meeting opened at 4:33 pm. Edward Herring presided and noted an interested community member in attendance. A quorum was not deemed present until late arrivals, as noted: Cherry Stewart at 4:34 pm; Claire Denton-Spalding at 4:35 pm; Alicen Brown at 4:59 pm.

I. **Approval of Minutes** (Elizabeth Smiley)

Commission Meeting October 8, 2024

Approval of October meeting minutes was deferred to the December meeting.

- It was determined that a number of those present had not reviewed the October minutes since Agenda packets were not sent to members prior to the day of the meeting.
- Commissioners were instructed from now on to access and print their own copies of the Agenda packet from the City website prior to each meeting. The Agenda packet will be available for download 5 days prior to each meeting.

II. **Project Proposal - VA Festival of the Book** (Cher Stewart/Claire Denton-Spalding)

Cher provided an overview of the project to work with school partners in Besançon to identify adult learners who are immigrants and to solicit stories from them for inclusion in the Voices of Adult Learners program in the March 2025 VABook festival. Story writers are given a set of tips and rules for writing their stories; the focus is on the immigrant experience of learning a new language in a new country.

Cher has made several initial contacts and is awaiting a clear commitment to participate from teachers in Besançon. PVCC and VABook have already endorsed the project. The program will not require any financing from the CSCC. If Besançon is not interested in participating, Cher and Claire will explore reaching out to one of our other Sister Cities. Cher will follow up at the December meeting with updates and additional details.

- III. **Project Proposal - IX Farmer's Market Program** (Sylvia New Strawn/Elizabeth Smiley)
Sylvia asked members to read over the program proposal in preparation for further discussion and a vote decision at the December meeting. This is a low-cost/no-cost program for the Commission but will require full participation from members to succeed.

There was a brief discussion regarding obtaining tourist info from each of our Sister Cities to make available at the IX Market information table. City Reps were asked to investigate obtaining pdfs of materials that the Commission can print; Claire will coordinate the printing.

Edward stated that he would like to revive efforts to create a "traveling trunk" of CSCC and Sister City promotional materials that can be used at the market events. Claire volunteered to assist Edward in creating a wishlist for such a trunk, which then can be presented to the Commission for consideration and vote at an upcoming meeting.

- IV. **Secretary's Report** (Elizabeth Smiley)

Elizabeth announced that she will be absent from the December meeting. Claire has agreed to take minutes. Sal will assist with minutes during portions of the meeting when Claire is herself reporting.

- V. **Finance Report** (Edward Herring for Casey Erickson)

Current balance: \$22,730.27

Outstanding expenditures:

- MisMatch Around the World 2023 Grant reimbursement (\$4000.00)
- Annual Sister Cities International membership dues (\$610.00)
- Flag poles purchased for Sister City flags (\$121.40)
- Breakfast items for Nov 16 Sister City Statewide Conference (undetermined)

Outstanding credit related to meals during the Lycee Pasteur student exchange in February 2024: (\$253.50, due from Charlottesville High School)

- VI. **Chair's Report** (Edward Herring)

- Edward participated in UVA Global Week at the end of October.
- Sister Cities VA Statewide Conference on Saturday November 16, 10 am - 3 pm. The CSCC is hosting the meeting at the UVA Equity Center. Fred Blanton, VA State SCI Rep will run the meeting. We will provide morning coffee and pastries

and assist with technical/av set-up for any remote participants. Edward would like for our Commission to be well-represented, and expects about 20 in-person attendees from around the state.

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

The Grant application process could theoretically go live as soon as next week, however, we will need to promote it to the community first.

Motion to allocate up to \$350 toward the promotion of the 2025 Grants cycle for advertising and printing costs: E. Herring

Motion Seconded: S. New Strawn

Motion passed unanimously

November 25 was set as the date for the 2025 Grant Application Cycle to officially open. The application window will be open for thirty (30) days. Claire will strive to have promotional information distributed to accommodate this timeline.

Kimberly reported that the MisMatch Around the World Grant reimbursement will be processed once she and Grantee Darnell Williams have completed a review of several items submitted for reimbursement.

VIII. **CSCC Strategic Plan 2025-2028** (Claire Denton-Spalding)

Claire and Edward developed a draft 2025-2028 Strategic Plan, which was made available in the Agenda packet. A vote to approve the plan was deferred to the December meeting so that commissioners have time to review the proposed language.

IX. **City Rep Reports**

a. Huehuetenango (Edward Herring)

- Mayor Wade has expressed an interest in conducting a mayoral visit to Huehue in October 2025. Edward has reached out to the Mayor of Huehue to request a formal invitation for an official Cville delegation visit. Three City Council members have approached Edward within the past week saying they would like to travel to Huehue when a visit is organized.

b. **Besançon** (Elizabeth Smiley)

- Elizabeth shared a letter received by Mayor Wade following his visit Sept 6-8.
- She announced the retirement on December 31 of longtime sister city partner Dominique Levrey (Asst Dir of International Relations for the City of Besançon).
- November 12-17 is a “Weekend in Charlottesville” program of events, organized by International Relations in Besançon, highlighting Charlottesville and American culture, sports, and politics.

- Plans are underway for a Gospel Choir Exchange, welcoming singers from Besançon to Cville in July 2025
- Elizabeth will give a presentation on Besançon at the Speak!Language Center's monthly "Tea and Travel" series on November 19. Commissioners are welcome to attend.

Alicen reported that she has recently been back in contact with Sylvie Schmidt about the primary school exchange proposal presented by Sylvie during the Besançon delegation visit last April. Alicen will follow up directly with Elizabeth to provide more information and a status report.

- c. Poggio a Caiano (Stella Mattioli)
 - The official invitation to assemble a delegation to visit Cville (written by Edward, translated by Stella) has been signed by Mayor Wade and will be sent to the Mayor of Poggio.
 - Stella inquired about the possibility of an honorary street naming for Poggio, possibly during the anticipated delegation visit. Max reported that the street naming process has been put on hold for the past 2-3 years, but will speak with Kyna (Clerk of Council) about whether this might be a possibility.
- d. Winneba (Kimberly Hayes)
 - Kimberly met last week with Nana Ghartey (former Winneba Rep, CSCC), Dave Norris (Director, Cville Winneba Foundation), and Mayor Wade to lay the groundwork for making contacts with key partners in Winneba and to explore the viability of organizing her first official City Rep visit to Winneba in 2025. and to establish a positive working relationship with the Cville Winneba Foundation
 - It was noted that Kimberly's appointment to be the Winneba Representative represents the first time that there has been a clear separation between the work of the Commission and the work of the Foundation.

Edward asked Kimberly to invite Dave Norris to attend an upcoming CSCC meeting to tell us about the upcoming CWF program and to discuss how we might link, overlap, or support their projects.

- e. Pleven (Edward Herring) - no update

X. **Committee Reports** - none scheduled for this meeting

Other Business

- Alicen revived the discussion of having a timekeeper at our meetings. Edward stated that he is not in favor of this, as he has worked to trim the agenda and adjourn the meetings no later than 6 pm. There was no call for a motion to discuss or vote on this item.
- Sylvia asked if members are still interested in having a social gathering at her home on December 14. Members replied in the affirmative. This will be a private social event and no Commission business will be discussed or conducted.

XI. **Adjournment** (Edward Herring)
Meeting adjourned at 5:56 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Smiley,
Secretary and Besançon Representative

Upcoming meetings:

Sister Cities International VA Statewide Conference, hosted by CSCC
Saturday, November 16 from 10-3 @ UVA Equity Center, Downtown Mall
201 W. Main Street, 3rd floor

Next Commission Meeting:
Tuesday, December 3 @ 4:30 pm CitySpace Conference Room