

Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission

MINUTES (APPROVED 2/4/2025)

Tuesday December 3, 2024

CitySpace Main Conference Room

Present: Kimberly Hayes, Edward Herring, Sal Moschella, Sylvia New Strawn, Cherry Stewart, Murray Susen, Claire Denton-Spalding

Absent: Alicen Brown, Stella Mattioli, Casey Erickson, Elizabeth Smiley

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

Meeting opened at 4:37 pm. Edward Herring presided.

Late arrivals noted: N/A

- I. Edward Herring opened the floor to three visitors who were attending from a UVA democracy class

- II. **Approval of Minutes** (Edward Herring)
Full Commission meeting - October 1, 2024
Motion to approve as written: Sal Moschella
Motion seconded: Sylvia New Strawn
Motion approved

Approval of Minutes (Edward Herring)
Full Commission meeting - November 12, 2024
Motion to approve as written: Kimberly Hayes
Motion seconded: Murray Susen
Motion approved

III. **Discussion: SCI State Conference**

- A. The CSCC hosted the SCI Virginia Statewide Meeting on Saturday, November 16. Cherry, Sal, Kimberly, Sylvia, Elizabeth and Edward attended. Former Mayor Dave Norris attended virtually. Cherry brought coffee and gifts for the attendees. After lunch, Edward presented a list of Charlottesville Sister City events. Charlottesville has a boards and commissions structure, while other cities like Norfolk and Virginia beach have director models. The conference went longer, as many groups discussed their events.
- B. Sal mentioned speakers who spoke about how they bring tourists to sister cities. Cherry said that her big takeaway was using native language speaker volunteers in the community who help with fundraising and execution of the event. Fred Blanton said that lots of other groups are doing this and we should as well. Max said that the bylaws state that CSCC should reach out and utilize volunteers. Cherry suggested that we reach out to more volunteers through the committee

structure. Sylvia said that the sister city group was diverse and exciting. Kimberly wished there was more individual time meeting with representatives from other sister cities. Cherry suggested hosting a Zoom or a meeting with the Richmond group and Edward agreed. Cherry and Edward will discuss.

IV. Discussion: CSCC Long-term Goals

- A. Claire asked if people had any updates or changes to the strategic plan.
- B. Edward wants to add language under a "Responsibilities" section at the end. The text of this "Responsibilities" section will say "A liaison role will coordinate between our mayor and city council and any sister city or friendship city contacts."
- C. Edward spoke with Mayor Wade about this idea and he agreed. This came up in relation to his trip to Ghana this year and former Mayor Snook's trip to Ghana last year. Even if it is a private trip, we should still communicate with city counselors. Max asked to include a sentence about what the liaison role looks like.
- D. Claire asked about the objective section about fundraising and if CSCC could do it. Max provided an update and was able to verify donations CSCC received around the early 2000s. According to Charlottesville's Finance Director, it is okay to fundraise, but we need to develop fundraising guidelines. Edward said that we will put together a fundraising committee / working group to develop the guidelines and begin to fundraise.
 - 1. **Motion to approve as modified by adding the "Responsibilities" section:** Sylvia New Strawn
 - 2. **Motion seconded:** Sal Moschella
 - 3. **Motion approved**

V. Website Revision Update – Claire Denton-Spalding & Murray Susen

- A. Claire has updated the website with the list of items to update that came from the annual meeting. She said that the website will be updated once we release the grant application.

VI. Traveling Trunk Recommendation – Edward Herring & Claire Denton-Spalding

- A. Edward said that we need to work to create a brochure about Charlottesville that we can send to our Sister Cities. The business bureau and Chamber of Commerce have some resources. Edward would like the brochure to be in English. He would also like to ask our Sister Cities to create brochures and we will translate and print them. Edward will set up a meeting with Charlottesville tourist organizations in January and will report back to the commission.

VII. City Reports

- A. Huehuetenango, Guatemala - Edward Herring
 - 1. Mayor Wade will go to Huehue October 10-16. Edward is coordinating with Ixtatan to be Mayor Wade's guide. They will be picked up at the

airport in a van and use that van the entire trip. Approximately 10-20 people may be able to come on the trip.

B. Besançon - Edward Herring (reporting in Elizabeth's absence)

1. Charlottesville High School will hold a public performance of the musical "A Chorus Line," directed by Commissioner Murray Susen, in Besançon over the CHS Spring Break week. CHS will bring approximately 32 students. Besançon will host us as an unofficial delegation. There is talk of a more official delegation trip to Besançon in 2026.

C. Poggio a Caiano, Italy – Edward Herring (reporting in Stella's absence)

1. Official letter has been sent by Mayor Wade to the mayor of Poggio inviting him to visit after July 1, 2025.
2. Edward said that he thought the budget must be submitted to the City Council by March 1, 2025. Max said we may not need to submit a budget in March, but need to present it to the City Council in June. We can ask for an increase in June 2025, but we will not get it until FY 2026. Max said that if we want to increase our allocation for 2025, we will need to start requesting that increase now.

D. Winneba, Ghana – Kimberly Hayes

1. Kimberly said that we have made great progress with Winneba. She met with Nana Gharthey and Dave Norris. Nana put Kimberly in touch with his contacts.
2. They discussed that it would be best if Kimberly would visit independently outside of the Charlottesville Winneba Foundation visits. Kimberly is projecting an April 2025 City Rep visit. Kimberly said that she thinks we will have a strengthened relationship as a result of the visit.
3. Edward and Kimberly discussed funding her visit to Winneba with the designated city rep funds.
4. Edward said that if the Charlottesville Winneba Foundation is requesting funding, we will need to have them come visit and present their proposal.
5. Max said that in an email exchange between Kimberly and Kyna, that there is a procedural document about how funding is requested and made by City Reps. At this time, Max would not like to have a discussion about guaranteed funding for each Sister / Friendship City, as there is not yet a formal process. Edward said that we need to have a formal process outside of the commission if they have a request. Kimberly said that we need to be clear that there is protocol if an outside organization requests funding.

VIII. Committee Reports

A. Budget & Finance – Edward Herring (reporting for Casey Erickson)

1. Edward reviewed the budget, pending credits, and pending expenditures.
2. Kimberly said that she is working with Darnell to get itemized receipts. If there are not itemized receipts, they will not be covered. It should be completed by the end of this week.

3. Edward said that he communicated with a company about flagpoles and that he will get an itemized receipt and submit it.

B. Grants – Kimberly Hayes

1. Grants will go live on Wednesday, December 11 once it is published in Cville Weekly. We need to submit an ad copy by Monday, December 09.
2. Kimberly said that we have \$8,000 allocated for grants.

C. Education – Alicen Brown

1. Alicen sent Edward a note to read. Last April during the Besançon mayoral delegation visit, Sylvie Schmidt (representing the department of education for Besançon and environs) presented a proposal to build a program between Besançon and Charlottesville Middle School teachers. It did not work out as well as we thought, but Walker Elementary would like to have a program. Sylvie and Alicen are currently working on a teacher exchange. The age groups are different, with the Besançon students being a bit older.
2. The 2025 Sister Cities International Young Artist and Authors Showcase competition has been announced and Alicen has provided information to fine arts, performing arts and English teachers at CHS to share with students who may be interested in participating this year.

D. Programs & Events – Sylvia New Strawn

1. Book Drive for Huehuetenango
 - a) Sylvia said her planning with the book drive is doing well. Gordon Avenue Library is the recipient of the UVA Library. The librarian said we can have anything from any book sale in Spanish. Sylvia knows a lot of Spanish scholars who will provide books.
 - b) Edward asked Sylvia if they could bring books during the Commission visit in October 2025.
 - c) We need a repository where people can drop books to donate. Sylvia suggested Food Lion on Pantops. Cherry suggested Barnes and Noble, the Library. Northside library might have a location.
 - d) Claire needs to know where the books will be placed in order to write a press release.
 - e) Max suggested Habitat for Humanity at IX Park or the Habitat for Humanity Store. Sylvia will ask Habitat for Humanity if we can place a book bin.
2. IX Farmer's Market
 - a) Commission members should email Sylvia if they would like to participate in the IX Farmer's Market event.
 - b) Once she gets a group, she will let the IX Farmer's Market leads know.
3. Adult Learner / Book Festival

- a) Cherry has been in contact with the Besancon group and asked if they are interested in finding participants. The Festival of the Book and PVCC are interested in

IX. **Closing Remarks/Adjournment** – Edward Herring

- A. Edward said for people to cc sistercities@charlottesville.gov if they are using non-government emails for Sister Cities correspondence.
- B. Max said that she just sent out a handout about parliamentary procedures. One thing she wanted to emphasize is that a quorum needs to be physically present to begin a meeting. If someone leaves and the quorum is no longer met, the meeting must end. Also, once a meeting adjourns, need to make a motion to adjourn.

Kimberly made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:49 pm and Sal Moschella seconded. It was passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Claire Denton-Spalding, standing in for Elizabeth Smiley, Secretary and Besançon Representative

Next Commission Meeting:

**Tuesday, January 7, 2025, at 4:30 pm at CitySpace, 100 Fifth Street NE,
Charlottesville, VA 22902**

attachments

[Strategic Plan FY25-28 - Draft.docx](#)