



Sister Cities Commission Meeting

Tuesday, September 9, 2025

5:30pm – 8:00pm

CitySpace, Large Conference Room

100 Fifth Street NE, Charlottesville, VA 22902

Call to Order

I. Welcome – Edward Herring

- Opening Remarks
- Introductions – New and Continuing Commissioners

II. Minutes Approval – August 5, 2025; August 28, 2025

III. Welcome Activity – Kimberly Hayes

IV. State of the Commission – Edward Herring

- Review of CSCC Annual Report to City Council
- 24-25 Major Achievements
- Meeting Attendance Policy & Expectations

V. Discussion & Review of Status of Friendship City, Huehuetenango, Guatemala

- History and Background Information
- Friendship City versus Sister City
- Request from Mayor Cano of Huehuetenango
- Recommendation of the New City Committee
- Mayoral Delegation visit to Guatemala

VI. Strategic Planning – Edward Herring and Sal Moschella

- Survey Review
- Process Recommendations
- CSCC Logo review
- Technology and training needs

VII. Work Sharing, Collaboration and Succession Planning Workshop – Edward Herring and Kimberly Hayes

VIII. Innovation & Problem-Solving Session – Sal Moschella and Kimberly Hayes

- Challenge Identification
- Solution Brainstorming

- Solution Presentations

DINNER BREAK

IX. **Sister City Updates** – City Representatives

- Besancon
- Poggio a Caiano
- Winneba

X. **Committee / Program Updates**

- Budget & Finance
- Communications
- Grants
- Programs / Events / Marketing
- Education

XI. **Committee Signups**

XII. **Elections / Appointment of Officers**

XIII. **Wrap-up & Next Steps**

- Key Takeaways
- Action Items
- Feedback

Individuals with disabilities who require assistance or special arrangements to participate in the public meeting may call (434) 987-1267 or submit a request via email to ada@charlottesville.gov. The City of Charlottesville requests that you provide 48 hours' notice so that proper arrangements may be made.

Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission
MINUTES
Tuesday August 5, 2025
Virtual Meeting (ZOOM)

Present: Kimberly Hayes, S. Lisa Herndon, Edward Herring, Stella Mattioli, Sal Moschella, Elizabeth Smiley

Absent: Alicen Brown, Cherry Stewart

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

Late arrivals noted: none

City security features prevented the meeting host (Max Robinson) from being able to start the meeting remotely. When these were resolved Edward was able to call the meeting to order.

Call to Order

Meeting was opened at 4:49 pm. Edward Herring presided. A quorum was deemed present.

I. **Approval of Minutes** (Edward Herring)

Full Commission meeting - July 8, 2025

Approval was deferred until the September meeting

II. **Chair's Report** (Edward Herring)

Edward noted that he has received phone calls and emails from the Gospel Choir Exchange, including two community members who have applied to be on the Commission as a result. Mayor Wade has also sent his kudos.

a. Discussion: CSCC Annual Retreat

Edward asked for volunteers to help him plan the Retreat, help lead a workshop at the Retreat and coordinate the meal order with Max. Kimberly volunteered to help with planning and work with Max to order the food. Sal volunteered to help with Retreat preparation after August 11, when he is back in town.

Edward has a couple of ideas for topics but welcomes Commissioner input and requests that no later than August 15. **Action item:** Edward will circulate a proposed Retreat Agenda by September 1 for Commissioner review and response.

Kimberly suggested Edward consider developing a document that commissioners can respond to anonymously in case there are members who would be more comfortable offering feedback and ideas that way. **Action item:** Kimberly will send Edward a template to consider.

We will also elect officers and make committee assignments at the Retreat. The officer positions that will need to be filled include Vice Chair, Treasurer and

Communications Chair. Commissioners were asked to consider what roles they might be willing to take on for the coming year.

Three new community members have submitted their applications to join the Commission and will be considered for appointment by City Council at their August 18 meeting. One of the potential candidates is the person who attended our June meeting on behalf of the YMCA.

III. **Finance/Budget Report** (Edward Herring)

Current balance is \$28,751.78. This figure includes our FY 26 allocation of \$15,000.00, leaving us with an unspent FY25 balance of \$17,323.05.

No additional discussion or report

EBS hopes to have final spending figures from the Gospel Choir Exchange to present at the Retreat meeting.

IV. **Reports & Updates**

a. **Communications Update** (Edward Herring, for Cherry Stewart)

Cher has begun to upload new information to the website, including an article she found from a Besancon newspaper about the recent Gospel Choir exchange.

b. **Program and Events Update**

In Cher's absence, it was decided to defer discussion of purchasing t-shirts until a future meeting

c. **Grants** (Kimberly Hayes)

Kimberly will be meeting with the current Grantee on Friday and will have a status update at the Retreat.

Plans for next Grants cycle: **Action item:** Kimberly will prepare a proposed timeline for the next cycle and present it at the Retreat. She anticipates needing additional Commissioners to serve on the Grants Committee including someone who has some experience or interest in financial matters.

Max clarified that any Commission member can volunteer to serve on the Grants Committee. She also asked for clarification that the Grants Committee had previously developed some guidelines for determining grant application selection. Kimberly confirmed that there had been discussion of using a point system but that this has not yet been officially implemented.

d. **Education** - no report

e. **Outreach** - no report

f. **Huehuetenango, Guatemala** (Edward Herring) **friendship city*
October trip update: airline tickets will be purchased on September 1. If the current applicants make their payments by the end of August, the delegation will be 9 people. S. Lisa noted that she had filled out the online application but had not heard back - Edward will follow up on this.

Library Book Drive: Sylvia and Edward met with the Embassy's Attache for Cultural Affairs, who indicated the need to solicit the Ambassador's approval. As a result, the shipping arrangements are still in limbo. The Commission may need to find an alternate way to ship the books.

g. **Besançon, France** (Elizabeth Smiley)
The Gospel Choir Exchange was successfully completed on July 23 following a packed house for the final concert on Tuesday 8/22 at Mt. Zion FABC. Special thanks go to Claire Denton-Spalding for her help with the poster, press release, and ad for Cville newspaper; to Edward for remarks at events and for chaperoning the Monticello visit; and to the other Commissioners who volunteered to usher and to host. Elizabeth will meet with the two Cville choir directors in two weeks to de-brief.

h. **Poggio a Caiano, Italy** (Stella Mattioli)
Stella met with the current Mayor of Poggio who signaled that he still intends to travel to Charlottesville, with one other Councilman, who has previously visited Cville. He anticipates a short stay of 2 nights in early December. There was a brief discussion of how to make their visit a "red carpet" experience so that the Mayor returns home with a real ongoing interest in our Sister City partnership.

i. **Winneba, Ghana** (Kimberly Hayes)
Kimberly met with Mayor Wade last week and has also spoken with former Mayor Walker, who maintains strong ties with officials in Winneba. Both of these individuals have indicated that they are willing to facilitate communication between Kimberly and partners in Winneba to promote reestablishing a working relationship with the Sister Cities Commission.

Max offered that upon reflection, having Winneba Foundation Board members also serve on the CSCC, as they have in past years, may have created a conflict of interest and contributed to blurring the lines between the work of Commission and that of the CWF. S Lisa asked if the City of Cville has an existing "conflict of interest" agreement; Max

noted that the City does not, but could assist the Commission with drafting one.

A conflict of interest agreement would not only be important as the Commission strives to reestablish a working relationship with Winneba, but also as a guiding document for Grant application decisions. **Action item:** As she has familiarity with this, Edward asked if S Lisa would share a copy of this type of agreement with the Commission for consideration.

V. **Other Business:**

Ix Market info table Sept 13 and October 11:

Edward volunteered to take an “early shift” and to be the table captain for September 13; Sal will be table captain for October 11. Additional volunteers may be needed. **Action item:** Elizabeth will contact those who had also previously signed up and update the Commission at the Retreat.

Edward will be presenting the CSCC Annual Report on September 22 at either the 4 pm City Council work session or at the 6:30 City Council meeting.

Update on Commission website upgrade: Edward will meet with someone from the City IT department to discuss options and then present them to the Commission for consideration.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting: Kimberly Hayes

Motion seconded: S.Lisa Herndon

Motion carried

Meeting adjourned at 6:01 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Smiley, Secretary & Besançon Representative

Annual Retreat: Tuesday, September 9, 5:00 - 8:00, CitySpace Large Conference Room

Sister Cities Committee Meeting Minutes

8/28/2025

- Present: Edward Herring, Maxicelia Robinson, Cherry Stewart, Kristen Petros de Guex
 - Meeting called to order: 3:30 p.m.
 - Adjourned: 4:16 p.m.

Edward: Charlottesville and Huehuetenango (Huehue) have been friendship cities for 4 years (since July 2021). A delegation from Huehue, including Mayor Cano, visited Charlottesville two years ago. Mayor Wade approached Edward earlier in the year and said it was time for us to go to Guatemala.

In 2018, City Council together with the Sister Cities Commission, sought out a Spanish-speaking city – in countries ranging from Argentina to Mexico. The options were narrowed down and, in the end, the Ixtatán Foundation helped steer the decision toward Huehuetenango. The Commission decided to make a friendship city designation.

9 members of the city council came to visit Charlottesville. Edward has worked with Héctor Méndez and other members via email in preparation for the delegation meeting. Searching for the fit. Not a commercial fit; we are looking for a cultural fit.

The Ixtatán Foundation has become the GuateMaya Alliance. Original members who promoted the relationship are no longer there. Kelly Eplee is currently on the Board of the GuateMaya Alliance. GuateMaya facilitated transportation costs during the Huehuetecos' visit to Charlottesville, and wants to emphasize their commitment to supporting this relationship.

Current state of affairs: Mayor Wade asked Edward to arrange a trip to Guatemala. The mayor from Italy visited Charlottesville. Mayor Wade traveled to France; very excited to go to Guatemala.

Wrote to Mayor Cano to request an official invitation to Mayor Wade. Chose dates and have been working on the trip arrangements.

An official invitation was received about a week ago. Mayor Cano would like to conclude the relationship while Mayor Wade is there and move to a full sister city relationship. They would like to name a newly paved street in Huehue, *Calle Thomas Jefferson*. The U.S. ambassador will be present during the official visit. Will host a dinner in the capital city and

in Huehue. Hopes to raise the profile of Huehuetenango with his presence. We're trying to fit into literacy programs (books, etc.)

Do we move forward? Stay where we are? Eliminate the relationship? It is not ideal to back out of the relationship, since Mayor Wade will be visiting. We're called the New City Committee since this is what it was called in the beginning. Responsible for locating new cities. If Huehue becomes a new sister city, it will have a new representative. We have a role beyond just Huehue.

Cherry: How many friendship cities have we had in the past? (all sister cities start as a friendship city) How long have you been doing this, Max? (~3 years) What is the typical amount of time and communication before a friendship city becomes a sister city? I'm interested in Huehue and Guatemala; I don't know if they've met all of the requirements regarding what it takes to make the commitment. I'm just curious – there was COVID, some lack of communication – have they been able to show that they can commit to following the rules of the Sister Cities? I think it's lovely they want to name a street after us, but perhaps we could discuss the name, based on all the history and everything that has come out of that. Perhaps recommend other names that would be less controversial.

Max: In terms of whether the sister city meets expectations/requirements to move from a friendship to sister city – haven't gone point by point to ensure Huehue checks the boxes. I can tell you that the friendship city courtship has met the requirements of a 3-year friendship relationship. We are over that time frame. Incumbent upon the commission to show validation that Huehue now meets all of the expectations for a sister city relationship.

Cherry: Do we have to decide before we go to Guatemala?

Max: We need to pitch to the commission, approve whether or not the proposal should go before the city council.

Cherry: Do they make their decision before or after the visit?

Max: Before. If the plan is to commemorate or have a signing when we have a delegation visit there.

Cherry: Edward is the only person who has visited / had communication with them.

Edward: Including the people with the GuateMaya Alliance, including Kristen. A lot of them speak some degree of English. In order to make programs happen, we need to have some English (Mayor Cano speaks English). We have to try to make something work, more than just for one person.

Max: Main issue for the commission to work through: what would that relationship with Huehue look like so that it is beneficial to the city at large? Some are concerned about what exchanges would look like. May not be able to do exchanges with high school students. Something the commission could investigate.

Edward: Interest in high school exchanges. There are quite a few middle-class families in Huehuetenango. Few weeks to an entire semester. Or Spanish teacher from here, going to teach English, and vice versa. (Cher teaches English) In France, two teachers switched houses. Sal's wife came from France, got married, and stayed here. She came with an exchange program from France. Individual student exchanges between families; possibly between teachers. We have possibilities with museums of cultural artifacts from Huehuetenango coming here, and vice versa. Our interface/connection will be more educational and cultural exchanges vs. commercial. With more people on board, we may actually be able to make some things happen.

Cherry: The Relationship in France has been going on for 20 years. Guatemala is more representative of cultures in our community. Ok to not expect the same type of relationships/programs. Smaller exchanges would be good to start and build on those. Winneba, Ghana – seems like people go there to visit. (Edward – Winneba has a 150-year historical relationship with Charlottesville.)

Kristen: Visas are sometimes difficult to come by with Guatemalan citizens; let's not rule out virtual exchanges (Peace Corps has a virtual service project, for example).

Edward: There won't be an open visa policy with Guatemala in the near future (drug and human trafficking); we can go there as U.S. citizens without visa restrictions.

Cherry: Didn't know that there was a substantial Guatemalan population in Albemarle County.

We should have a reception, event to gather Guatemalans in Charlottesville. Sin Barreras C'ville Sabroso Festival is happening on September 20 – we could table there.

Section 6b: question on the need to post for the public to provide input. Do we need to do that to become sister cities? (Max: To my knowledge, that was for becoming friendship cities.)

Edward: We haven't established a Memorandum of Understanding – it's to ID key points on which our relationship is based. Sister Cities International has a document re: what it should include. Hector Mendez responded to Edward's inquiry as to what they can offer us. Desires, wishes that we agree upon with input from both sides. Hector discussed with Mayor Cano. Edward will connect Kristen and Hector via WhatsApp.

Edward will discuss with Max more to see if there are outstanding steps for the committee to make a decision. Cherry will reach out to Sal – he has materials, we need to include him and gather his input. It would be great to have a draft of an MOU sometime next week. We'd have to convene again and decide whether or not to recommend it by next Thursday, if possible. We need to have it so we can put it on the agenda for the September 9 retreat. We can convene on Monday, September 8, and come out with a recommendation.

We depart for Huehuetenango on October 10. Ed, Cherry, Kristen, Kimberly, S. Nicole are all attending. Hiring a videographer to bring something tangible back to Charlottesville.

Max: The October 6 city council meeting agenda is really the only date that's available for folks to take a vote; submit to Max by Wednesday, September 24.

Cherry: Think of things that we can do, bringing anything special from Charlottesville to Huehue. Host a farewell dinner (Edward) and some sort of presentation about what the future may look like. Max: Staff would have to approve paying for dinner; not generally something we cover when visiting cities. Edward will make a recommendation in writing to Max.

Kristen and Cherry will work together, then loop in Sal, and come up with a draft to present at the retreat. Kristen and Cherry will be listed on the agenda. Edward will send his input for the MOU, as well. Succinct, one-page document.

Any other comments? Nothing else to add. Kristen to email minutes to Edward.



2024 - 2025 Annual Report to City Council

Programs and Activities of the Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission

Submitted July 2025



OUR SISTER CITIES:

- Poggio a Caino, Italy, Charlottesville's first sister city in 1976.
- Besançon, France, Sister Cities since 2006
- Winneba, Ghana, Sister cities since 2010
- Huehuetenango, Guatemala, Friendship city since 2021, in exploratory phase.

COMMISSIONERS:

Alicen Brown, K-12 Education

Kimberly Hayes, Winneba

S. Lisa Herndon, At-large

Edward Herring, At-large

John Mason, At-large

Stella Mattioli, Poggio a Caiano

Salvatore Moschella, Higher Education

Bonita Patton, At-large

Kristen Petros de Guex, Business

Elizabeth Smiley, Besançon

Cherry Stewart, At-large

Youth Commissioner - vacant

Maxicelia Robinson, Staff Liaison

BESANÇON, FRANCE:

The year began with Mayor Wade's visit to Besançon upon the invitation of the Mayor, Madame Anne Vignot, to join in the September 8th celebrations of the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Besançon by the American troops.

The highlight of the year was a trip by 30 Theater students of Charlottesville High School to Besançon this past April. The students performed the Broadway show "A Chorus Line" to packed audiences at two performances.

Spring 2025 was dedicated to planning for the visit of the United Gospel Choir of Besançon to make a return visit to Virginia in July. They will sing in several concerts with the University Baptist Church and the Mt. Zion First African Baptist Church.

Early discussions are starting between the commission and the International Affairs office in Besançon concerning the 20th anniversary of our becoming sister cities in September 2006.

POGGIO A CAIANO, ITALY:

Poggio representative Stella Mattioli is working with the current Mayor of Poggio to organize a visit by the Mayor and a delegation to Charlottesville in 2026. The last official visit by a delegation from Italy was in 2017.

After the Poggio elections on May 15, 2024, Ms. Mattioli worked to establish new contacts with the elected mayor and city to assure the continuance of a strong relationship between the cities.

WINNEBA, GHANA:

The Sister City relationship between Charlottesville and Winneba continued to grow and strengthen this fiscal year. In May of 2024, the Charlottesville-Winneba Foundation continued with its latest trip to Winneba, once again allowing Charlottesville-area residents to experience our sister city.

Mayor Wade, as a private citizen, joined in on this trip.

Our new Winneba representative, Kimberly Hayes is currently working with the Mayor of Winneba to plan the next official Commission visit.

HUEHUETENANGO, GUATEMALA:

The relationship between Charlottesville and Friendship City Huehuetenango continued to be in the exploratory phase.

There are two major developments in place with Huehue. Former Commissioner Sylvia New-Strawn spearheaded a book drive to collect 10 cartons of new and used books in both Spanish and English as a donation to a new library in Huehuetenango.

We are currently working with the American Embassy in Guatemala to facilitate the shipment. We expect that they will be delivered by early fall.

The second event under way is a visit to Huehuetenango by a delegation headed by Mayor Wade in October of this year. The GuateMaya (formerly Ixtatan) Foundation is assisting with the planning and travel organization.

Additional Activities:

In addition to activities and exchanges with our cities, the commission has worked with the local community during the year.

- Tom Tom Festival - As part of the 2024 Grants Program, the Commission sponsored a program with the Lewis and Clark Exploratory Center at Darden Park entitled “Mapping the World”. This program was a “hands on” activity where residents used their skills to create maps of the locations of our sister city. This was an outstanding success with more than 80 local participants.
- Jefferson Founders Day - For the second time, the commission was asked to join other area civic leaders and take part in the “Laying of the Wreaths” at Thomas Jefferson’s grave site on the anniversary of his birth.
- Monticello Naturalization Event - The Commission hosted an information table at the event along with 20 other community and civic organizations.
- IX Farmers Market - The Commission takes seriously its mission to bring the work and focus of Sister Cities to the area residents. We will host and staff a table at various times each year to

be available to answer questions from our citizens as well as give them opportunities to get involved.

- Virginia Festival of the Book - The Commission participated in PVCC's Literacy program "Voices of Adult Learners. Meaningful stories from adult learners of English as a second language about family and work. The Commission was able to have stories from English learners in our sister city of Besancon included in the event.
- Relaunching the Grants Program - The Commission's Grant Program was suspended during the first half of the Fiscal Year and relaunched earlier this year with the awarding of a Grant entitled "Disrupting the Single Story: African Stories as Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Doors". This Grant project will work to strengthen the ties between Charlottesville and our sister city of Winneba in Ghana.

CHARLOTTESVILLE

SISTER



CITIES

COMMISSION

**A RESOLUTION
REGARDING MEETING ATTENDANCE BY
CITY COUNCIL APPOINTEES TO CITY BOARDS, COMMITTEES,
TASK FORCES AND COMMISSIONS**

WHEREAS, the City Council makes a number of appointments to boards and commissions required by law, and to other boards, committees, task forces and commissions established by the Council for the purpose of performing certain delegated functions or advising the City Council on matters of concern to the City; and,

WHEREAS, when City Council makes appointments it is with the expectation that the appointee is willing and able to attend meetings and to devote the necessary time to be a full and meaningful participant on the board; and,

WHEREAS, Virginia law provides that members of a Planning Commission or Economic Development Authority may be removed from office by the local governing body if the commissioner or board member is absent from any three consecutive meetings, or any four meetings within any twelve month period; and,

WHEREAS, the members of City advisory boards, committees, task forces and commissions are appointed to serve at the pleasure of the City Council, yet there is no established City policy requiring regular attendance at meetings of the respective boards; and,

WHEREAS, it will be in the best interests of the respective boards, committees, task forces and commissions and their members, as well as the public, to have established rules regarding attendance at meetings of the board.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Charlottesville, Virginia that:

(1) Effective upon the passage of this Resolution, it shall be the policy of the City Council that a City Council-appointed member of any City board, committee, task force or commission shall be subject to removal from office if he or she is absent from any three consecutive meetings, or any four meetings within any twelve month period.

(2) In the event that any board, committee, task force or commission member fails to meet the meeting attendance requirements as stated in this policy, the chair or presiding officer of the board, committee, task force or commission in question shall notify the Mayor of the absences.

(3) Upon the receipt of information indicating a failure to meet the meeting attendance expectations set forth in this policy, City Council will provide notice to the board member in question and provide an opportunity to respond to the concerns regarding meeting attendance. The City Council may thereafter, in its discretion, remove the member from office. Any City Council consideration or discussion regarding the removal of a City Council appointee from office may take place during a duly convened closed session of City Council.

(4) This Resolution shall only apply to City Council appointees to boards, committees, task forces and commissions. It shall not apply to the removal of any person from office when removal is provided for and governed by state law.

(5) The Clerk of City Council is directed to provide a copy of this Resolution to all affected City boards, committees, task forces and commissions.

Approved by Council
November 3, 2014



Clerk of Council

**Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission (CSCC)
Policy for All-Virtual Public Meetings and Remote Participation**

The Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission (CSCC) was established on June 19, 2006, by resolution of the Charlottesville City Council. Pursuant to Virginia Code § 2.2-3708.3, public bodies are authorized and required to adopt a uniform policy for all-virtual public meetings and procedures for remote participation.

Enabling Statute

VA Code Chapter 37 – Virginia Freedom of Information Act (§ 2.2-3708.3)

The term “*meeting*” includes regular, special, committee, and annual retreat meetings of the Sister Cities Commission. Any gathering of two (2) or more Commission members, where the purpose is to discuss or transact the business of the entity, is considered a “meeting.”

I. Remote Participation by Members

Members of the CSCC may use remote participation in accordance with this policy and applicable provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

1. A member requesting remote participation must submit a written request to the Chairperson via email no later than three (3) business days before the meeting, except in emergencies. The request must include the applicable criteria under FOIA § 2.2-3708.3(B)(1)-(4).
2. The Chairperson shall verify whether the criteria are met. If approved, the Chairperson must notify the member and the staff liaison in writing via email at least two (2) business days before the meeting. Meeting minutes must include a general description of the remote location and the basis for participation under FOIA.
3. If the request is denied, the Chairperson must notify the member at least two (2) business days before the meeting and ensure the reason for denial is recorded in the meeting minutes with specificity.
4. Remote participation is permitted for an individual member if they have a temporary or permanent disability or other medical condition that prevents their physical attendance at a public meeting.

An individual member of a public body who qualifies as a person with a disability, as defined in § 51.5-40.1 (“*Person with a disability*” means any person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, or who has a record of such impairment), and who participates remotely, shall be counted toward the meeting quorum.

5. Remote participation is also permitted when a member must provide care for a family member with a medical condition that prevents the member's physical attendance at the time of the meeting. This type of remote participation is limited to two (2) consecutive meetings or four (4) total meetings per calendar year.

If the member is a caregiver for a person with a disability (as defined in § 51.5-40.1) and participates remotely under this provision, the member shall be counted toward the quorum.

6. Remote participation due to a member's principal residence being more than 60 miles from the meeting location is limited to three (3) meetings per calendar year. A member's *principal residence* is defined as the "home address" listed on their Boards and Commissions application.

- Members must report any change of residence to the Chairperson, Secretary, and staff liaison within seven (7) days of relocation. Notifications may be submitted by email or mailed to:

Office of the Clerk of Council
P.O. Box 911
Charlottesville, VA 22902
Phone: (434) 970-3113

- If the new address is outside of Charlottesville or Albemarle County, the staff liaison will confirm continued eligibility for board service. City Council gives preference to City residents and expects appointees to attend meetings and be full participants.
7. Remote participation due to personal matters is limited to two (2) meetings per calendar year or 25% of total meetings held annually, whichever is greater (rounded up to the next whole number).
 8. These requirements will be applied strictly and uniformly to all Commission members, regardless of identity or meeting content.

II. Remote Participation Requirements

1. Members must be on camera for the entire meeting to be considered present and eligible to vote.
2. Members should join early to ensure their microphone and camera are functioning.
3. Members may not participate in multiple meetings simultaneously.
4. Members are responsible for unmuting themselves when speaking.
5. Members must actively participate in the meeting.

6. Meeting hosts may mute participants to eliminate background noise, but not to enforce decorum.
 7. Members' microphones may not be muted to enforce decorum.
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III. Meeting Etiquette

1. Minimize distractions.
 2. Mute your microphone when not speaking.
 3. Dress appropriately.
 4. Be courteous.
-

IV. All-Virtual Public Meetings

“All-virtual meetings” are defined as meetings where:

- All members participate via electronic communication (e.g., Zoom).
 - The purpose is to discuss or conduct public business.
 - Public attendance is also via electronic means.
1. The Commission may hold all-virtual meetings up to ~~25%~~50% of its total annual meetings (rounded up to the next whole number), or two (2) meetings annually, whichever is greater.
 2. All-virtual meetings must comply with FOIA § 2.2-3708.3(C).
 3. An all-virtual CSCC meeting may be called by:
 - The Chairperson
 - The Vice-Chairperson (in the Chair's absence)
 - A Committee Chairperson (for committee meetings)
 4. Conditions that may justify an all-virtual meeting include:
 - Inclement weather
 - Safety concerns
 - Loss or unavailability of the meeting location
 - Anticipated quorum issues due to absences
 - Recommendation from at least 75% of members
 5. City administrative staff will:
 - Generate the Zoom link
 - Distribute it to members

- Post it on the City website for public access
 - Operate City-owned A/V equipment
 - Host the virtual meeting and may assign co-hosting roles
6. Chat messages sent during the meeting are considered public records.
 7. Meeting notices will clearly state that the meeting is all-virtual and must comply with FOIA § 2.2-3707 if the meeting method changes.
 8. The public must be able to hear (and see, when possible) all members during the meeting.
 - A live phone number or contact method will be provided for public technical issues.
 9. Agenda packets and materials must be made available to the public at the same time they are provided to Commission members (via website or direct electronic distribution).
 10. Physical Location Limitation – No more than two members may be in the same remote location unless that location is open to the public.
 11. Meeting Minutes for all-virtual meetings must indicate that the meeting was held via electronic means and specify the type used.

Checklist: Affiliating with a New Sister City

Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission

Purpose

To promote understanding and foster relationships through cultural, economic, educational, and humanitarian activities. Charlottesville can have a Sister City relationship with another city for various reasons including, but not limited to historical, governmental, educational, or humanitarian.

I. CRITERIA FOR CONSIDERATION

Ensure the following are met:

- Citizens in both cities demonstrate interest in affiliating
 - Governments of both cities demonstrate interest in affiliating
 - An advocate group is interested in supporting the relationship
 - Citizens can communicate with each other
 - Citizens can travel between cities
 - Opportunities for cultural, educational, medical, governmental, economic, or humanitarian exchanges
 - Evidence that the relationship would be sustainable over time
-

II. PROCEDURE

A. Initiating a Request (Advocate Group Responsibilities)

- Establish contacts in the proposed city
- (Optional) Visit proposed city
- Submit written proposal to the Commission addressing key criteria
- Present proposal to the Commission

Presentation must demonstrate:

- How the proposed city meets the selection criteria

- A list of willing volunteers, organizations, and institutions responsible for establishing a relationship
 - Advocate Group's willingness to fundraise to support the partnership
 - Sufficient proof of the Advocate Group's commitment to maintaining active exchanges and activity in the partnership
-

B. Commission's Response

- Contact Sister Cities International to confirm no impediments
- Advocate Group conducts additional research and contacts U.S. State Dept. and embassies
- Determine if another U.S. city shares this Sister City and assess cooperation potential
- Solicit public comment during Commission meeting
- Commission votes whether to pursue the proposed Sister City
- If approved, the commission presents a recommendation to pursue a new sister city to City Council
- City Manager sends a request for the establishment of a "Friendship City" relationship to the Mayor of the proposed city.

If response is positive:

- Commission approves Friendship City status
 - Appoint Chair and New City Committee
 - Recruit volunteers and gather support letters
 - Conduct at least one exploratory visit between cities (ideally includes at least one elected official)
-

After a 3-year Friendship City period:

- New City Committee presents to the Commission
Presentation must include:
 - Summary of relationship during the 3-year period
 - Demonstration of active sufficient volunteers and fundraising plans

- Updated letters of support from local entities
 - 2-year activity/exchange proposal with budget
 - Commission votes on whether to seek City Council approval
 - If **approved**, proceed to Council presentation
 - If **denied**, Commission must vote to continue or end Friendship City status
-

C. City Council Response

- Council votes on Commission's recommendation

If approved:

- Council adopts resolution to enter into a Sister City relationship
- Partner city adopts a similar resolution

If denied:

- Commission votes to either continue or end the Friendship City relationship
-

D. Official Affiliation

- Official Sister City Agreement signed during a formal visit by Mayors or top elected officials
- Plan reciprocal visits within 1 year
- Translate and share signed agreements in both English and the partner city's language
- Submit copies of all official documents to:
 - Sister Cities International
 - U.S. Embassy in sister city country
 - Partner country's U.S. Embassy

Sister City Affiliation Checklist

The Charlottesville city council approved a “Friendship” relationship with the city of Huehuetenango, Guatemala effective July 1, 2021.

Included here are the conditions for advancing the relationship to a full sister city partnership.

1. Conduct at least one exploratory visit between cities (ideally includes at least one elected official)

The exploratory visit occurred in February 2023 by the New Committee Chair - Edward Herring. The visit in October 2025 will be the first visit by an elected official and the commission requests the waiver of the visit by an elected official requirement.

2. Summary of relationship during the 3-year period

Following the visit by the committee chair, the de facto commission from Huehuetenango, consisting of the city mayor, Sr. Cano and 6 members of his city council made an official visit to Charlottesville in November 2023.

With the support of the GuateMaya Alliance, former commissioner Sylvia New Strawn collected 700 new books for juveniles to support the promotion of literacy which is a key objective of the Commission. We are working with the Alliance

and the American Embassy to complete delivery of these books to the Banco of Guatemala Library in Huehuetenango.

3. Demonstration of active sufficient volunteers and fundraising plans.

We have had a community response to over 25 persons seeking information on traveling with Mayor Wade to Guatemala. Ten persons completed the signup, including five commissioners.

We have not identified several families with contact to Huehuetenango who wish to get involved. Additionally, one of our new commission appointees is involved with the GuateMaya Alliance and helps facilitate their support.

4. Updated letters of support from local entities

A support letter from the GuateMaya Alliance President, Kelly Eplee is being drafted.

5. Two (2) year activity/exchange proposal with budget

If an advancement in the partnership is approved by the city council, an additional request of 5,000 per year will be submitted beginning with the 2027 fiscal year. It is expected that a return visit by a delegation from Huehuetenango will take place in Calendar year 2027.

6. Vote: Commission votes on whether to seek City Council approval. If approved, proceed to Council presentation. If denied, Commission must vote to continue or end Friendship City status.

Memorandum of Understanding

Between the City of Charlottesville, Virginia, USA

And the City of Huehuetenango, Guatemala

Background

The City of Charlottesville and the City of Huehuetenango have maintained a Friendship City relationship since July 1, 2021, based on mutual respect and a shared commitment to cultural exchange, community engagement and economic development. Both cities seek to strengthen ties through collaboration in areas such as education, culture, commerce and public service, fostering goodwill and understanding between their communities.

Purpose

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to formalize the Sister City relationship between Charlottesville and Huehuetenango to promote ongoing cooperation, mutual learning and sustainable partnerships for the benefit of both communities.

Scope of Collaboration

The Sister City partnership will encourage and support the following activities:

- Promote cultural exchanges and shared celebrations to foster cross-cultural understanding and appreciation.
- Facilitate educational collaborations, including academic exchanges, language programs and shared research opportunities.
- Support economic development initiatives that benefit both communities, including business networking and sustainable and fair trade practices.
- Encourage community and youth engagement through joint programs, volunteerism and capacity-building activities.
- Share best practices in municipal governance, public health, environmental stewardship and social services.
- Explore opportunities for future collaborative projects in areas of mutual interest (e.g., textile weaving, storytelling, food sovereignty, land justice, murals, music and art education and exchange).

- Explore historical and eco-tourism tour opportunities between both geographical regions.

Roles and Responsibilities

Both cities commit to:

- Foster open and respectful communication between partners.
- Seek opportunities to involve local organizations, educational institutions and residents in partnership activities.
- Promote awareness of the sister city relationship within their respective communities.

Duration and Review

This MOU shall take effect upon the date of signing by the authorized representatives of both cities and shall remain in effect indefinitely. The parties agree to periodically review the terms and activities of this Memorandum of Understanding to ensure it continues to meet the interests and needs of both communities.

Acknowledgments

The parties recognize and appreciate the important role of community organizations that have supported this relationship, including the GuateMaya Alliance.

Signatories

Signed by the Mayor of the City of Charlottesville, Virginia, USA:

Juandiego Wade

Mayor, City of Charlottesville

Date: _____

Signed by the Mayor of the City of Huehuetenango, Guatemala:

Gustavo Cano

Mayor, City of Huehuetenango

Date: _____



Charlottesville
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