



Sister Cities Commission Meeting

Tuesday, October 21, 2025

4:30pm – 6:00pm

CitySpace, Small Conference Room

100 Fifth Street NE, Charlottesville, VA 22902

Call to Order

I. **Approval of Minutes** – September 9 Annual Retreat; October 2 Poggio Committee Meeting

II. **Chair’s Report** – Edward Herring

- a. Delegation visit to Huehuetenango
- b. Meeting Format recommendations

III. **Election of Officers and Committee Appointments** – Alicen Brown & Maxicelia Robinson

IV. **Review the CSCC Logo**

V. **CSCC All-Virtual Public Meetings & Remote Participation Policy**

VI. **Report: VA & West VA SCI Statewide Meeting** – Cherry Stewart

VII. **Committee Updates & 2026-2027 Goals**

- Education – Alicen Brown
- Grants – Kimberly Hayes
- Besancon, France – Elizabeth Smiley
- Huehuetenango, Guatemala (friendship city) – Edward Herring
- Poggio a Caiano, Italy – Stella Mattioli
- Winneba, Ghana – Kimberly Hayes

VIII. **Program Updates**

IX. **Adjournment**

The next Sister Cities Commission meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 4, 2025, at 4:30 p.m. in the CitySpace Small Conference Room.

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 - Annual Retreat
Tuesday September 9, 2025
CitySpace Large Conference Room

Present: Alicen Brown, Kimberly Hayes, S. Lisa Herndon, Edward Herring, John Mason, Stella Mattioli, Sal Moschella, Bonita Patton, Kristen Petros de Guex, Elizabeth Smiley, Cherry Stewart

Absent: none

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

Late arrivals noted: Cherry Stewart at 5:39 pm; S. Lisa Herndon at 5:51pm

Call to Order

The retreat was opened at 5:38 pm. Edward Herring presided. A quorum was deemed present.

I. **Welcome** (Edward Herring)

- Opening remarks
Edward noted that we have completed a busy and challenging year and look forward to another full year ahead
- Introductions - New and Continuing Commissioners
Kimberly initiated a round robin in which each person introduced themselves with a 6-word story about why they sought to serve on the Sister Cities Commission

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

Full Commission meeting - July 8, 2025

Motion to approve with additions proposed by Max: Kimberly Hayes

Motion seconded: Sal Moschella

Motion carried unanimously by all those present at the July 8 meeting

Full Commission meeting - August 5, 2025

Elizabeth read in a proposed addition to the draft August minutes

Motion to approve minutes as amended: Kimberly Hayes

Motion seconded: S. Lisa Herndon

Motion carried unanimously by all those present at the August meeting

New City Committee meeting - August 28, 2025

Edward called to approve with one amendment: addition of the signature of the minutes taker

Approved with amendment by the committee members

III. **Welcome Activity** (Kimberly Hayes)

Kimberly placed members in dyads and had each dyad select a prompt from among a list of types of movies (musicals, comedies, etc). Dyad partners then spent about 4 minutes developing a story line for their chosen movie, using the exercise to get to know their partner. Then dyads presented/pitched their movie story lines to the group.

IV. **State of the Commission** (Edward Herring)

Edward reported that the Commission is in very good condition thanks to the hard work of current and recently retired Commissioners.

- Review of Annual Report (**copy included in Retreat Agenda packet**): Edward presented the annual report in person to City Council on September 2
- 24-25 Major Accomplishments: *these were not reviewed*
- Meeting Attendance Policy & Expectations (**copy of City's attendance policy included in Retreat Agenda packet**): Edward acknowledged that the Commission has not been consistent previously at enforcing this policy, but asks the current group to work diligently to meet these expectations

Max noted that a copy of our own Policy for All-Virtual Public Meetings and Remote Participation was included in the Retreat Agenda packet. This policy must be vote-adopted by the Commission every year. *This was not taken up at the Retreat but deferred to an upcoming meeting.*

V. **Discussion & Review: Status of Friendship City, Huehuetenango** (Edward Herring)
(**The Retreat Agenda Packet contained the following documents relevant to the history and discussion of our partnership with Huehuetenango**):

- CSCC Checklist: Affiliating with a New Sister City
- Sister City Affiliation Checklist (for Huehuetenango)
- Draft Minutes of the [New City] Committee meeting on August 29, 2025
- Draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) formalizing the Sister City relationship between Charlottesville and Huehuetenango

Edward reviewed the history and background in the selection and adoption of Huehuetenango as our Spanish-speaking Sister City candidate. City Council officially approved "Friendship City" status on July 1, 2021. Since then, a key task for the Commission has been to determine if there is sufficient benefit to both cities to recommend moving from Friendship City to full Sister City status. It is the recommendation of the New City Committee that the Commission vote to seek City Council approval to officially "sister" with Huehuetenango.

Max noted that the Commission's checklist for sistering requires official visits by elected officials of both cities prior to establishing an official Sister City Charter. As this has not already occurred the Commission would have to be willing to waive this provision in order to determine by vote tonight whether or not to ask City Council to approve the sistering with Huehuetenango. Following brief discussion there was a call to vote:

Motion to request City Council approval to advance the status of Huehuetenango from Friendship City to Sister City with Charlottesville: Edward Herring

Motion seconded: Alicen Brown

Motion carried unanimously

If City Council approves this request, and once a Sister City Charter has been signed by both sitting Mayors, Edward will request an additional \$5000 from the City's 2027 budget to support the addition of this Sister City.

Dinner Break

During the dinner break Sal introduced a strategic planning document (refer to Agenda item VI. **Strategic Planning**, below) summarizing the responses to the survey that Edward sent out prior to the Retreat (**document attached**). Commissioners were asked to complete the New Project Ideas section; Sal tallied our responses and will present process recommendations at our next meeting. Due to time constraints, the remainder of the planning work sheet was also deferred to a future meeting.

In the interest of time, Edward proposed eliminating items VII. (Work Sharing Workshop), VIII. (Innovation & Problem Solving session) and X. (Committee Updates) from the Retreat Agenda

Motion to move directly to Sister City Updates: Edward Herring

Motion seconded: John Mason

Motion carried unanimously

VI. **Strategic Planning** (Edward Herring and Sal Moschella)

This agenda item was addressed out of order, during the Dinner Break

- Survey review
- Process recommendations
- CSCC Logo review: *this was not reviewed*
- Technology and training needs: *these were not reviewed*

~~VII. **Workshop: Work Sharing, Collaboration, Succession Planning** (Edward Herring and Kimberly Hayes)~~

~~VIII. **Innovation & Problem Solving Session** (Sal Moschella and Kimberly Hayes)~~

IX. **Sister City Updates**

- Besançon (Elizabeth Smiley)
CHS will welcome a delegation of high school students from the Lycee Pasteur for 5 nights, October 11-16. Alicen Brown is coordinating the itinerary with David Becker (CHS teacher contact for the exchange). Edward has been helping with arrangements for excursions to Monticello and to UVA. Updates on 2026 potential sister city projects to be presented at upcoming meetings.
- Poggio a Caiano (Stella Mattioli)
2026 is the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Cville-Poggio Sister City relationship, therefore it would be ideal to have some kind of exchange or programming to commemorate it; the sitting Mayor of Poggio indicates he still intends to visit Cville for three nights in December, dates tbd.
- Winneba (Kimberly Hayes)
Some progress has been made on reestablishing a working relationship with city officials and community partners in Winneba. Former City Rep Nana Ghartey's assistance in this endeavor will be a key to its ongoing success. To honor Nana's legacy as well as secure his reinvestment in the success of the Commission's work, the Winneba Committee is considering developing a documentary highlighting his royal family lineage in Winneba and his role in the establishment of the Cville-Winneba Sister City partnership.

Max noted that the City of Cville receives a city-related magazine quarterly from Besançon and she wonders if the Commission would be interested in sending magazines to each of our Sister Cities as a way to keep our partners in those communities updated on local cultural, economic, and civic happenings.

X. ~~Committee/Program Updates~~

XI. **Committee Sign-ups**

Edward distributed a list of Officers and current Committees. There was discussion about the process for voting on the Officers. Concerns were expressed about the newest members not having had an opportunity to learn about the various positions in advance in order to determine if they are interested in self-nominating. The decision was made to defer voting on the slate until the October meeting. In the interim, Alicen will create a nomination form for distribution which will include Officer position descriptions.

XII. **Elections/Appointment of Officers**

This item was deferred to the October full Commission meeting, see above

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

- Key Takeaways
- Action Items
- Feedback

Due to time constraints, these items were not included

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting: John Mason

Motion seconded: Alicen Brown

Motion carried

Meeting adjourned at 8 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Smiley, Secretary & Besançon Representative

Next Commission Meeting: Tuesday October 7, 4:30-6:00 pm, CitySpace Conference Room

attachment

DRAFT

Fellow Commissioners,

Please take a moment to share your thoughts. **Please respond by August 25th.**

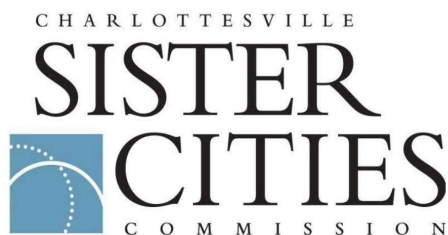
1. What did we do well last year?
2. What should we have done differently?
3. What would you change for the coming year?
4. What new projects would you recommend?
5. How could you participate more fully?
6. Do you have any general comments or suggestions?

Edward Herring, Chairman

Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission

herringe@charlottesville.gov

434 825 3649



**Minutes from the Poggio Committee Meeting
Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission
October 2, 2025
Small Conference Room, CitySpace
4:00 - 5:00 PM**

Attendance:

Stella Mattioli - Poggio City Representative
Juandiego Wade - Mayor
Sal Moschella
Edward Herring
Max Robinson - Ex officio
Terri Dicintio - ex Poggio City Representative

The committee meeting was convened to discuss the likelihood of receiving a delegation led by Poggio Mayor Palandri and the feasibility of sending an official delegation to Poggio in either 2026 or 2027 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of our sorority.

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM.

Mayor Wade spoke of his interest in traveling to Poggio to celebrate the anniversary. He indicated that we may not yet know who will be Mayor next year but he would still be on the council.

The former Poggio City Representative, Terri Dicintio, reviewed the activities of 2017 when a delegation from Poggio visited Charlottesville and she led a delegation of 30 persons to Poggio. Film makers from Poggio participated in the 2017 Film Festival here in Charlottesville and the showing was very successful. Additionally, we hosted a chef exchange (with Tavola Restaurant) which was also very successful.

Edward Herring and Stella Mattioli updated the committee on their Zoom call with Mayor Palandri (October 1st) and his desire to come to Charlottesville in December 2025. They wish to visit NYC, Washington DC and Charlottesville.

We discussed several options for traveling Poggio in either 2026 or 2027:

- a. Month of June - Possibly the best weather of the year.
- b. Month of September - Major three day festival each year - There is even the possibility of linking a visit in 2026 with a stop in Besancon France where we will celebrate our 20th anniversary of friendship. There are convenient intra-European flights that could connect the two cities.

Next Steps:

- a. Obtain dates for Mayor Palandri's visit, with only two months' time remaining.**
- b. The committee (Stella, Sal, Terri) will begin to organize the community to support a visit from Poggio.**
- c. Develop options for a visit to Poggio and return in three (3) months for a meeting with the Mayor and the committee.**

The Committee Meeting adjourned at 4:55 pm.

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**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.
-

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.

Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission
Committee and City Goals for 2025-2026

2025-2026 Committees Goals

Communications (Edward Herring)

Goal: to expand Sister City promotional/publicity materials.

Education (Alicen Brown, Chair)

Goal: to systematize procedures for educational exchanges and projects.

Programs (Sylvia New Strawn, Chair)

Goal: to adopt and implement the proposed IX Market program.

Goal: to adopt and implement the Huehuetenango public library book donations program.

Grants (Kimberly Hayes, Chair)

Goal: to implement the 2025 Grants program.

2025-2026 City Goals

Poggio (Stella Mattioli, City rep)

Goal: to organize and host a Mayoral delegation from Poggio in July.

Besançon (Elizabeth Smilty, City rep)

Goals: to support the projected exchanges outlined on the summary (**attached**); to offer more direct assistance with the Gospel Music Exchange planned for July; to begin the planning process for a possible City/Community delegation trip to Besançon in the fall of 2026.

Winneba (Kimberly Hayes, City rep)

Goal: to organize and complete her first City Rep visit to Winneba in April.

Huehuetenango (Edward Herring, Friendship City rep)

Goal: to organize a mayoral visit to Huehue in October 2025.

Committee Planning/Management Template

Committee Information	
Committee Title:	
Committee Chair Name:	
Committee Secretary Name:	

Committee 2026-2027 Goals: (City representative's visit to their city not considered a project by itself.)	
Objective	Deliverable
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

Committee Members	
	Name
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

Committee Meetings-2026			
1Q Meeting Date	Action Items	Assigned To	Complete
	1a.		<input type="checkbox"/>
	1b.		<input type="checkbox"/>
	1c.		<input type="checkbox"/>
2Q Meeting Date	Action Items	Assigned To	Complete
	2a.		<input type="checkbox"/>
	2b.		<input type="checkbox"/>
	2c.		<input type="checkbox"/>
3Q Meeting Date	Action Items	Assigned To	Complete
	3a.		<input type="checkbox"/>
	3b.		<input type="checkbox"/>
	3c.		<input type="checkbox"/>
4Q Meeting Date	Action Items	Assigned To	Complete
	4a.		<input type="checkbox"/>
	4b.		<input type="checkbox"/>
	4c.		<input type="checkbox"/>

Committee Meetings-20__			
1Q Meeting Date	Action Items	Assigned To	Complete
	1a.		<input type="checkbox"/>
	1b.		<input type="checkbox"/>
	1c.		<input type="checkbox"/>
2Q Meeting Date	Action Items	Assigned To	Complete
	2a.		<input type="checkbox"/>
	2b.		<input type="checkbox"/>

	2c.		<input type="checkbox"/>
3Q Meeting Date	Action Items	Assigned To	Complete
	3a.		<input type="checkbox"/>
	3b.		<input type="checkbox"/>
	3c.		<input type="checkbox"/>
4Q Meeting Date	Action Items	Assigned To	Complete
	4a.		<input type="checkbox"/>
	4b.		<input type="checkbox"/>
	4c.		<input type="checkbox"/>