Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission
MINUTES
Tuesday June 3, 2025
CitySpace Small Conference Room

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

Late arrivals noted: Alicen Brown at 5:37 pm
Alicen requested to participate remotely from her work location at CCS, where she had been held up in other meetings that prevented her from arriving on time

Two community visitors were in attendance:
- Bonita Patton, VP for Community Engagement & Outreach, Brooks Family YMCA
- Melanie Pawlyszyn, an interested community member who had stopped by our info table at the IX Farmers' Market in May

CALL TO ORDER
Meeting opened at 4:36 pm. Edward Herring presided. A quorum was deemed present. Edward welcomed the two visitors

I. **Approval of Minutes** (Edward Herring)
Full Commission meeting - May 6, 2025
Motion to approve minutes as written: Sal Moschella
Motion seconded: Sylvia New Strawn
Motion carried unanimously

II. **Chair's Report** (Edward Herring)
Officer Position Descriptions
Edward has proposed edits to the existing descriptions from our New Member Orientation Handbook. Action item: He will send updated position descriptions to the Commission prior to our July meeting for review and discussion.

Edward announced that effective June 1, Casey Erickson resigned from his unexpired term on the Commission

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

Current balance is $17,441.85

An updated FY 2025-26 Projected Spending Report reflects a reduction in anticipated expenses of $1000 due to some cost-saving for the October Huehuetenango delegation trip. The update also includes an expenditure of $551 for the purchase of CSCC promotional items (pens). Edward will email the updated document to the Commission following the meeting ***(report attached)***

Cherry suggested that we consider allocating more funds for display materials, such as new and replacement dry-mounted posters featuring our Sister Cities

Edward anticipates that we plan for a more in-depth discussion of all the spending items at our annual Retreat this Fall

IV. **Committee & City Reports**

a. **Grants** (Kimberly Hayes)
All 2024 Grant reimbursements have now been closed out. The 2025 Grantee has not yet started her project.

b. **Education** (Edward Herring, for Alicen Brown who had not yet arrived)
Alicen mailed Edward a written report earlier in the week.
Action item: Edward will distribute it to the entire Commission following this meeting

c. **Programs & Event**s (Cherry Stewart, Sylvia New Strawn)
May 10 IX Market info table
received double the number of visitors stopping by relative to the first, April date. The next date is September 13; Claire will be the team leader.

Festival of Cultures, YMCA
Cherry staffed our info table at this event and reported it was a well-attended event, although our table location was not as prominent as she would have liked.

Library Book Drive update
Elias Alonzo is now facilitating the shipment of the 10 boxes to Huehue. Mayor Wade will be asked to write a letter to accompany the boxes which will specify that they are a gift from the citizens of Charlottesville.

Cherry will talk with Alicen about the next CSCC promotional item to purchase with the remaining $441 of the budgeted allocation. **Action item:** Cherry will give a report at the July meeting

d. **Outreach & Communications** (no report)

e. **Huehuetenango, Guatemala** (Edward Herring) **friendship city*
Mayoral Delegation Trip, October 2025
The CSCC facebook page now contains a link for community member applications for the trip. The maximum delegation size will be 15. There are approximately 9 remaining open spaces. Applications will close July 1 after which they will be given consideration and community delegates will be selected. Edward will share the document of his presentation on Huehuetenango to City Council in 2023 with the Commission for information purposes prior to the October trip.

f. **Besançon, France** (Elizabeth Smiley)
Visit to Besancon in May
Elizabeth will draft a brief report on the three days of sister city meetings and activities May 25-28. **Action item** : she will distribute it prior to our July meeting. She is waiting to receive photos taken during her visit by our partners in Besancon that can be uploaded to the Commission's website and social media sites.

g. **Poggio a Caiano, Italy** (no update)

h. **Winneba, Ghana** (Kimberly Hayes)
Kimberly will request a meeting with Mayor Wade to hear about his impressions following his recent visit to Winneba on a Winneba Foundation- sponsored trip.

She continues to focus on a strategy to successfully re-establish a working relationship between the Commission and officials in Winneba. Edward briefly reviewed the developments that led to a breakdown of collaboration between the Commission and former City Rep Nana Ghartey.

V. Recognition of Departing Commissioners

Sylvia New Strawn was thanked for her service on the Commission, which she completes with this meeting.

Claire Denton-Spalding also ends her term with this meeting, which she was unable to attend due to illness.

Edward acknowledged Murray Susen, Student Rep, as he departs (in absentia) from the Commission.

Edward asked the continuing commissioners to send departing Commissioners personal letter of thanks.

Max Robinson reported that Council appointed one new member to the Commission, Lisa Herndon, whose term begins on July 1. She has updated the Commission's Roster on the City's website, and noted that with the departing members, there are now 3 open positions to fill. She reminded the Commission that its Annual Report is due to Council by June 30. **Action item**: Edward will prepare and submit the Annual Report.

VI. **Attendance Discussion**

Edward distributed the draft of a Meeting Attendance Policy that the Commission developed in September 2024 and asked commissioners to review the policy, noting that the policy does not address a number of potential issues impacting member attendance, such as maternity/paternity leave, leave due to an extended illness, and extended time away over the summer for members who have family abroad.

According to Max, Council has scheduled a retreat in August that will include a focus on its existing Meeting Attendance Policy and may revisit requirements to account for such extenuating circumstances that impact attendance. A key change will be to shift the responsibility for enforcing attendance from individual Commission/Board chairs to Council itself.

(Elizabeth left the meeting at 5:42 pm)

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting: Sal Moschella
Motion seconded: Sylvia New Strawn
Motion carried

Meeting adjourned at 5:45 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Smiley,   Secretary & Besançon Representative

Next Commission Meeting: Tuesday, July 8 4:30-6:00 pm, CitySpace Small Conference Room

attachment

*7/8/2025
Motion to approve minutes as written: Cherry Stewart
Motion seconded: Kimberly Hayes
Motion carried unanimously