

Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission
MINUTES
Tuesday October 21, 2025
CitySpace Small Conference Room

Present: Alicen Brown, Kimberly Hayes (participating remotely), S.Lisa Herndon, Edward Herring, John Mason Stella Mattioli (participating remotely), Bonita Patton, Kristen Petros deGuex, Elizabeth Smiley, Cherry Stewart (participating remotely)

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 due to her employer's requirement that she work out of the area this week, participating remotely from New York City)*
- Stella Mattioli *(B.4) unable to attend in person due to child care needs and participating remotely from her home)*
Note: With this meeting, Stella would have exceeded the allowable remote attendance, however she was granted permission to participate remotely again because prior City technical difficulties prevented her from remote participation at a meeting earlier in the year.
- Cherry Stewart *(B.4) unable to attend in person due to competing work obligations and participating remotely from her workplace*

Meeting opened at 4:37 pm. Edward Herring presided. A quorum was deemed present. Late arrivals noted: Alicen Brown 3:39 pm; S.Lisa Herndon 5:47 pm

I. Approval of Minutes

Annual Retreat - September 9, 2025

Motion to approve minutes as written: John Mason

Motion seconded: Sal Moschella

Motion carried unanimously

Poggio a Caiano Commission Meeting - October 2, 2025

Motion to approve minutes as written: Sal Moschella

Motion seconded: Stella Mattioli

Motion carried unanimously by the Committee members

II. Chair's Report (Edward Herring)

a. Delegation visit to Huehuetenango

According to participants the visit was a success. In fact, the itinerary prepared for the delegation was so full that on the final day some activities were suspended to allow for free time. Kimberly, S. Lisa, Cherry, and Kristen were

invited to offer their impressions of the visit. All were impressed with the warm welcome they received and with the enthusiasm of the Guatemala Alliance reps to showcase the city. Several noted the stark differences between our cities in terms of wealth, basic community infrastructure, and access to technology.

b. Request to consider Kemisse City, Ethiopia, as a potential sister city

Edward and S. Lisa held a courtesy meeting with Mr. Maresha Andarge, a representative of the provincial government for the region where Kemisse is located. They held a frank discussion regarding the current cultural and political landscape in Ethiopia. The recommendation following this meeting is that there is not currently an affiliation group in Charlottesville (an SCI requirement) and this is not a good fit, we will not consider any further affiliation with them. Edward will prepare an official response for the Commission to vote on at our November meeting.

c. Meeting format recommendations

Feedback from the survey Edward circulated in August included making changes to our current meeting format. The Commission was invited to consider the idea to re-format one of our monthly meetings each quarter into a work session, during which regular business would be deferred. Following brief discussion and a call for volunteer assistance, Sal and Bonita agreed to meet and draft a proposal to present to the Commission at our November meeting.

III. **Election of Officers and Committee Appointments** (Alicen and Max)

Max read the slate of nominations for Officer positions (these were based on the results of the online form Alicen sent out following our Retreat).

Following discussion and acceptance of nominations, Commissioners cast their votes by paper ballot, which Max collected and tallied. The following slate for 2025-2026 Officers was presented:

Chair- Edward Herring
Vice Chair - Elizabeth Smiley
Treasurer - Sal Moschella
Secretary - S. Lisa Herndon
Communications Officer - Cherry Stewart

Edward reviewed the current standing and special Committees, noting which had empty spots that needed to be filled. Commissioners then indicated which Committees they would like to join; Edward will circulate a final list of Committees following the meeting (**document attached**)

- IV. **Review of CSCC Logo** *this was deferred until a future meeting due to time constraints*
All commissioners were asked to review the proposed logos prior to the November meeting and be prepared to indicate their preferences
- V. **CSCC All-Virtual Public Meetings & Remote Participation Policy** (Max Robinson)
Max reviewed the FOIA guidelines for these. Each board or commission is permitted to have its own policy. The CSCC policy must be vote-approved every year. Commissioners reviewed the policies; no changes or revisions were proposed.
Motion to approve the CSCC policies as written: Alicen Brown
Motion seconded: John Mason
Motion carried unanimously
- VI. **Report: Va & WVA SCI Statewide Meeting** - *deferred until November meeting due to time constraints*
- VII. **Committee Updates & 2026-2027 Goals** - *this was deferred due to time constraints*
- VIII. **Program Updates** - *this was deferred due to time constraints*

Other Business not on the Agenda

Proposed Holiday Event

Edward distributed a proposal (**document attached**) for a holiday reception/event ideally to coincide with the anticipated visit from the Mayor of Poggio in December. He asked the Program Committee to plan and organize the event and acknowledged the shortened timeline; Bonita and S. Lisa will assist the Program Committee with planning and organization.

Motion to approve the proposal to organize holiday event : Alicen Brown
Motion seconded: Kristen Petros deGuex
Motion carried unanimously

Lycée Pasteur/CHS High School Exchange expenses

Alicen requested a call for a vote regarding expenses related to the recent Besançon-Charlottesville high school exchange. The change in the current (October) meeting date prevented the Commission from approving these expenses prior to the high school exchange week; therefore, the expenses have already been incurred.

Motion to retroactively approve the expenses related to the October 11-16 CHS/Lycée Pasteur exchange: Edward Herring
Motion seconded: John Mason
Motion carried unanimously

Officer elections were reviewed again at S. Lisa's request, as she arrived after this item had been taken up. She accepted the nomination to become Secretary for the remainder of the 2025-2026 term.

Max suggested that we consider extending our regular meetings from 90 minutes to a full 2 hours to increase our capacity to get through our typically quite full agenda.

Max reported that she has identified several possible dates for a meeting between Edward and the City IT team to discuss transitioning the Commission website away from WIX to the City's platform. She will discuss these with Edward and schedule the meeting.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) drafted with Huehuetenango and signed by both Mayors during the recent delegation visit will be considered by the City Council at their second meeting in November.

S. Lisa noted that we still need to discuss the Conflict of Interest form and potential logo design she developed and asked that these items be placed on the agenda for an upcoming meeting.

Because the first Tuesday in November is Election Day, the Commission will need to set an alternate date for its meeting. Edward will send out a doodle poll to determine the day and time for our November meeting.

VIII. **Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn: John Mason

Meeting adjourned at 6:18 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Smiley, Secretary and Besançon Representative

Next Commission Meeting:
tbd

attachments