



City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53202

Meeting Minutes - Final SISTER CITIES COMMITTEE

ALDERMAN JOE DAVIS, SR., CHAIR
Al Durka, Leslie Silletti, and Charles Vang

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Wednesday, September 24, 2008

3:00 PM

Room 301-B, City Hall

Meeting convened: 3:26 P.M.

1. Roll call

Present 4 - Davis, Durka, Vang, Cubias

Excused 1 - Blair RN

Also present: Ronald Leonhardt-City Clerk, Amy Hefter-Legislation Reference Bureau and Brenda Wood-Legislative Coordinator-Senior-City Clerk's Office

2. Approval of the minutes of the April 2, 2008 meeting

Mr. Durka moved approval of the minutes, Mr. Vang seconded. There were no objections.

3. Review and approval of the application for Carora, Venezuela (Common Council File #080769)

Ald. Davis asked Ms. Terry MacDonald the Staff Assistant if the application submitted by Peace Action Wisconsin is a complete application?

Ms. MacDonald replied in the affirmative.

Ald. Davis said, back in July of 2006, the Mayor of Carora, Venezuela, Mr. Julio Chavez appeared before this committee and met with Mayor Tom Barrett to talk about a sister city relationship between Carora, Venezuela and the City of Milwaukee.

Ald. Davis asked the requestors for the sister city relationship with Carora, Venezuela to come forward and give a presentation.

Mr. Erik Sperling, member of the Board of Directors for Peace Action Wisconsin and Ms. Babette Grunow appeared on this matter.

Mr. Sperling said his intent for this sister city relationship with Carora, Venezuela is open to all kinds of connections, such as, exchanging of music, art, culture, business ventures, etc.

Ms. Grunow said they are also planning on having educational and healthcare

exchanges.

Mr. Sperling said the Mayor of Carora has established a program that offers free eye surgery for low-income citizens of Milwaukee and other US cities. Carora's government will also pay for the cost of transportation for the U.S. citizens to go to Carora for the eye surgery.

Mr. Sperling said another initiative that the Mayor of Carora has planned is to donate energy saving light bulbs to the City of Milwaukee.

Mr. Durtka asked Mr. Sperling what kind of activities have occurred since he submitted his initial sister city request to the City of Milwaukee in 2006?

Mr. Sperling replied that he has spent a good part of the past two years trying to find a local non-profit organization that has a 501c3 status to sponsor this sister city relationship.

Mr. Sperling said in the past two years there has been numerous educational events with Carora and on several occasions he had hosted visiting diplomats, including Consulate General Martin Zanchez (Chicago) and the Venezuelan ambassador.

Ald. Davis said he met with the Consulate General and other Venezuelan dignitaries here in Milwaukee at the United Community Center regarding this sister city relationship and they have renewed their commitment.

Ald. Davis said at the same meeting the dignitaries said they would like to work with the City of Milwaukee Health Commissioner on their eye surgery initiative.

Mr. Durtka asked if Peace Action Wisconsin is the sponsor of the sister city relationship or is it just the fiscal agent?

Mr. Sperling replied that there are a number of community organizations that are behind this sister city relationship, but Peace Action Wisconsin is the official sponsor because it has a 501c3 status.

Mr. Durtka asked if Peace Action Wisconsin will be the reporting entity?

Mr. Sperling replied, he is a Peace Action Wisconsin board member and he will be the one doing the annual reporting for this sister city relationship.

Mr. Durtka moved and Mr. Vang seconded to approve the Carora, Venezuela application and to forward it on to the Community and Economic Development Committee. There were no objections.

4. Discussion relating to the status of the City of Milwaukee's current sister city relationships

Ald. Davis asked Mr. Ronald Leonhardt to appear on this matter.

Mr. Leonhardt said the City Clerk's Office held an agreement signing ceremony with Galway, Ireland in August 2008.

Mr. Leonhardt indicated that his office received a call from Mr. Miranda regarding an agreement signing ceremony for the sister city relationship with Manisa Turkey. He said a date has not been set yet.

Ald. Davis asked what is the status of the sister city relationship with Nuevitas, Cuba?

Ms. MacDonald indicated that she send a letter to Mr. Raul Galvan the requestor for the sister city relationship with Nuevitas, Cuba in May 2008. She said she also sent an e-mail and contacted Mr. Galvan by phone and left a voice message last week. She said Mr. Galvan replied by phone that he is not interested in submitting an application for a sister city relationship with Milwaukee.

Ald. Davis indicated that he had also spoke with Mr. Galvan and Mr. Galvan said he was unhappy with the City of Milwaukee's current sister city process.

Ald. Davis recommended that the sister city relationship with Nuevitas, Cuba be terminated.

A motion was made by Mr. Vang and seconded by Mr. Durtka to terminate the sister city relationship with Nuevitas, Cuba. There were no objections.

5. Presentation given by Alderman Davis on his visit to uMhlathuze, South Africa

Ald. Davis gave a PowerPoint presentation on his visit to South Africa. (Exhibit 1)

Meeting adjourned: 4:02 P.M.

Terry J. MacDonald
Staff Assistant