



City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53202

Meeting Minutes

SISTER CITIES COMMITTEE

ALD. RUSSELL W. STAMPER, II, CHAIR
Al Durtka, Tiffany Barta, Oscar Tovar and Charles Vang
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Wednesday, September 21, 2016

10:00 AM

Room 301-A, Third Floor, City Hall

1. Call to Order.

Meeting called to order at 10:01 a.m.

Present (5) - Vang, Tovar, Barta, Durtka, Stamper

Mr. Vang joined the committee at 10:14 a.m. during consideration of agenda item 3.

Individuals also present:

2. Review of the Meeting Minutes from August 11, 2016.

Ms. Barta moved approval, seconded by Mr. Durtka, of the meeting minutes from August 11, 2016. There were no objections from those members present.

3. Discussion relating to establishing a sister city relationship or friendly exchange relationship with Daegu, South Korea.

-Review of Letter of Intent

Individuals appearing:

Dean Amhaus, Water Council

Preston Cole, Department of Neighborhood Services

Erick Shambarger, Environmental Collaboration Office

Mr. Amhaus gave an overview. The Water Council would serve as the local nonprofit organization on the Milwaukee side for the sister city relationship with Daegu, South Korea. The Water Council was established in 2009 with collaboration between public, private, and academic sectors to find and link innovative water solutions to global water technology industries. The council is headquartered in Milwaukee, has become the leading water technology cluster in the United States, and has received high attention internationally. The council has had relationships abroad with France, Netherlands, Germany, and Israel. The council has developed a significant consultant relationship with Daegu for the last two years. Daegu officials have visited Milwaukee several times. South Korea has invested hundreds of millions of dollars to develop its water technology sector and make Daegu its water center. Aside from the water economic exchange, a sister city relationship would also allow for cultural exchange. Commissioner Cole and Mayor Tom Barrett are on the council's board of

directors. Daegu will hold a large water conference soon, but he and others on the council are unable to travel and attend it.

Mr. Cole added comments. The mayor of Daegu had recently visited Milwaukee and Mayor Barrett. Resulting from that meeting was a signed accord for water technology exchange. Daegu is seeking the Water Council and the City for wisdom to create the same kind of water technology project that Milwaukee has in Daegu. Daegu had received \$300 million from its president for its water project. Milwaukee should be the world's most water centric city and align partners around the world. Elizabeth Hittman, as staff from the ECO office, has been embedded at the Water Council building.

Members inquired about a larger local committee behind the relationship aside from government and Daegu's equivalent to the Water Council.

Mr. Amhaus replied. The Water Council would take the lead on the relationship, does not have the capacity to extend the relationship to a cultural standpoint, and would welcome additional partners to support the cultural side. The City of Daegu would be the counterpart to the Water Council since its respective water council is in-house as opposed to being an outside nonprofit agency. Government oftentimes leads as opposed to the private sector across the world. Daegu wants to duplicate Milwaukee's global water center and global water business park, which is a TIFF supported by the City. Mayor Barrett has a priority to make Milwaukee a water centric city and to embrace water in the community. There has been entertainment celebrating water, which should occur more. There will be more sister city relationship requests coming based on water exchange.

Mr. Cole replied. Daegu and South Korea want to be a water centric center in Pan-Asia, which there is concern over clean and fresh water. Governments and regional governments are usually responsible for regional water supply systems and water treatment systems. The mayor of Daegu visits Milwaukee annually to encourage partnerships with commercial business operations in water technology.

Mr. Shambarger commented. His office is the City entity supporting the relationship and would work with the Water Council and other nonprofit groups, such as Water Commons, to celebrate water. The City needs to maximize its natural resource in water and make it apparent to visitors. The need for a cultural component is understood and will be worked on.

Mr. Vang joined the committee at 10:14 a.m.

Members said that they support the proposal with the need to include the cultural piece later.

Mr. Durtka made comments. The City needs to share with the international community its water technology activities. The theme for the Holiday Folk Fair is celebrating water. The fair needs the Water Council's assistance. Senegal is in early discussions to build a sister city with possibly Milwaukee due to its interest in water.

Mr. Amhaus said that the Water Council will have its annual water summit in May 2017. The summit generally attracts 350 people and is growing in terms of international visitors.

Mr. Tovar said that a signing ceremony may best occur to coincide with the water summit in Milwaukee, as noted, if the relationship is progressed.

Mr. Durtka moved to extend a sister city relationship application to the Water Council to establish a sister city relationship with Daegu, South Korea. Mr. Tovar seconded. There were no objections.

4. Review and Status of Annual Reports from Local Sponsors

-Galway Ireland

Representatives from Irish Festivals could not attend.

Individual appearing:

Paul Upchurch, VISIT Milwaukee

Ald. Stamper said that Irish Fest is the main component to the relationship with Galway, Milwaukee is a city of festivals, the committee should attend festivals such as Irish Fest better, and staff should help obtain a list of City festivals for members to have.

Mr. Upchurch made remarks. His organization can assist in forwarding a list of City festivals. Irish Fest is the largest of its kind in the country, has existed many years, draws entertainment locally and from Ireland, brings in Ireland dignitaries, and positively impacts the local Irish community and businesses. The fest is an important connection to Ireland and is organized by a festival committee and marketing group that does fundraising.

Mr. Tovar moved acceptance and approval, seconded by Mr. Vang, of the 2016 annual report for the sister city relationship with Galway, Ireland. There were no objections.

-Medan, Indonesia

Individuals appearing:

Fessahaye Mebrahtu, Pan African Community Association

Khay Khong, Pan African Community Association & Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation

Mr. Khong gave an update. The report consists of 2015 and 2016 activities. There was initial little activity since the October 2014 agreement signing due to Indonesian elections. Events and collaboration are summarized in the report. Trade is a focus in benefiting Medan. Milwaukee has the talent and background in manufacturing, water technology, education, and cultural exchange. He works at the Global Water Center and has close connection to the water technology community. He's a board member of PACA, which is the sponsoring organization that assists in refugee resettlements for both Africans and Asians. His day job is a market development director for Asia at the WEDC. He will continue to work closely with the Indonesian consulate office in Chicago as well as its trade center. The local Indonesian community needs to be more active in promoting their culture and had a presence at the Holiday Folk Fair in the 1980s. There is hope that participation in the fair can occur again with the younger Indonesian sect.

Ald. Stamper said that a discussion should occur to hold a get-together event, with entertainment, bringing the sister city relationship communities together to network and socialize. Outreach will be done towards the local sponsoring organizations.

Ms. Barta moved acceptance and approval, seconded by Mr. Durtka, of the 2015 and 2016 annual report for the sister city relationship with Medan, Indonesia. There were

no objections.

-uMhlathuze, South Africa

Individuals appearing:

Fessahaye Mebrahtu, Pan African Community Association

Paulette Bangura, Pan African Community Association

Mr. Mebrahtu gave an update. PACA is again the sponsoring agency. The point person is Magugu Davis, who could not attend this meeting. She will continue to work on this relationship. The report is satisfactory, and he has nothing further to add. Real work behind this relationship and others that PACA is sponsoring is through community groups. The relationship was renewed a few years ago and is in its second term.

Ald. Stamper inquired about the quality of water in uMhlathuze and said that water assistance there should be a focus of the relationship.

Mr. Mebrahtu said that portable water and purified water is a need in uMhlathuze and is lacking there. There was a water pipe project there years ago. There are central points for people to travel to acquire water generally in Africa as water cannot be pulled to every house.

Ms. Bangura said she is in support of the relationship and have been to South Africa and several other African countries.

Mr. Vang moved acceptance and approval of the 2016 annual report for the sister city relationship with uMhlathuze, South Africa. There were no objections.

-Bomet County, Kenya

Individuals appearing:

Fessahaye Mebrahtu, Pan African Community Association

Dr. Alice Kones

David Mugun

Paulette Bangura, Pan African Community Association

Dr. Kones gave an update. Since the agreement signing in November 2015, both cities are still in the planning phase to learn from each other. She is from a small village in Bomet County and knows of the challenge there, especially concerning water. She is trying to fundraise to build a well back in Bomet. She is working with the Rotary of Illinois and will plan to meet the Water Council for collaboration. There is no running water in Bomet, and the water source there is from nearby rivers. People and children, who sometimes miss school, walk with small buckets to get water from the rivers. The rivers are used also for bathing and by livestock. \$15,000 has been collected. A well there costs about \$30,000. There will be a fundraiser on October 22, 2016 organized by the Milwaukee African Women's Association (MILAWA).

Mr. Mugun said that of importance is to also have medical exchange relative to doctors, basic supplies, equipment, relationships with local hospitals in Milwaukee, and fire equipment.

Ms. Bangura added that the fundraiser is an annual one and will focus on supplying sanitary products to eastern and southern Africa. Further information will be forwarded to members.

Ms. Barta said that she can give some contacts on professional medical exchanges through the higher education schools in Milwaukee, such as the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee.

Members made comments. There should be an export of Bomet's agriculture to the United States, such as organic avocado, and an import of water and health technology to Bomet. The committee may assist in fundraising possibly through a get-together event that was mentioned earlier in the committee meeting. The rotary club in Milwaukee and Engineers without Borders, a local collegiate coalition, should be approached on the water needs.

Dr. Kones and Mr. Mugun added comments. Avocado is very cheap at 5 schillings, less than a penny, in Bomet. It can be exported to the United States and remain fresh since exports have been done to Europe and South Africa. She has had initially conversation with the rotary club in Milwaukee. The club had a different area of focus for the year, but she will approach the club again. There is thought to join the rotary club in Milwaukee.

Mr. Durtka moved acceptance and approval of the 2016 annual report for the sister city relationship with Bomet County, Kenya. There were no objections.

Mr. Durka suggested that there be a standard annual reporting format developed in terms of requested information. Areas of focus could include current local sponsor leadership information and progress in areas of education, economic, and cultural exchanges. A standard format will better track the relationships, measure success, and track real activity.

Ald. Stamper concurred and said that the reports given today had different narratives and were all different types of reports.

Mr. Lee said that a standard annual report form or format can be established and brought back for review by the committee.

5. Discussion on Capacity and Hosting a Sister Cities International Annual Conference.

Individuals appearing:

Paul Upchurch, VISIT Milwaukee

Jeff Baryenbruch, VISIT Milwaukee

Mr. Upchurch gave remarks. VISIT Milwaukee has a team whose job is to identify conferences and conventions; solicit the organizers; work to make them happen in Milwaukee; and contract with hotels, vendors, and venues. Milwaukee has the capacity with 5000 hotel rooms downtown, 189,000 square feet of exhibit space, 260,000 square feet of total meeting space in the convention center, and can host differently sized events. Hosting conferences and conventions positively benefits the City with national and international exposure as well as economic activity, such as participants opening offices here. His organization needs to do some research on specific conference needs are such as the number of hotel rooms and space. Contact with the planner and team of the conference would need to occur. Local support is helpful as an initial step and invitation to work towards hosting a conference. Mr. Durtka can make that introduction to SCI. His team will report back to the committee to strategize and determine if hosting an annual conference is doable.

Mr. Durtka said that there was a proposal from Milwaukee to host a SCI annual conference some years ago but ultimately lost out to Minneapolis due to the poor

quality of the proposal and presentation that was done, which was a four-page fax document. Minneapolis had a full production presentation. The selection committee at that time had strong interest to come to Milwaukee as opposed to a typical bigger city. There may be an economic issue going forward with hosting annual conferences outside of SCI's headquarters in Washington D.C. It may be cheaper for the annual conference to stay in Washington D.C. rather than moving resources out of its headquarters to host a conference elsewhere. An annual conference typically has 300 to 500 participants and can be very larger and vibrant. The conference has in the past resulted in major grants given to two sister city relationships, one for the City and one for the County, involving hospital water project. The water issue can be very powerful for this conference.

Ald. Stamper said that the local sponsor to the Tarime District, Tanzania pending sister city relationship will want to connect with VISIT Milwaukee to organize activities for a Tarime delegation who will be visiting Milwaukee for the upcoming sister city signing ceremony.

Mr. Tovar questioned other peer city relationships that VISIT Milwaukee has within the country.

Mr. Upchurch and Baryenbruch replied. VISIT Milwaukee has an important, strong long standing relationship with Pittsburgh and Portland to sponsor events for each other's clients.

6. Discussion on the Sister Cities Committee relative to its goals, purpose, and activities.

-Review of Short Term Goals

Ald. Stamper gave initial remarks. The discussion is ongoing. The committee should narrow goals down to three main goals to accomplish for the short term including making the City's sister city program have a presence. He will have a discussion with clerk staff and the city clerk on possibly creating a position to help the goal of having a presence, do outreach, connect with current relationships on an ongoing basis, and be aware of the activities of current relationships.

Mr. Lee concurred and said that there has been discussion in previous meetings to implement a more active sister city program on the City's end, acquire capacity, and implement goals. The meeting with Ald. Stamper will be about what possible capacity can be acquired.

Mr. Durtka said that alternative options should be looked at with a look at what other cities have done. Some coordinating committees are within city government and others are not, such as in Chicago which provides city funds to an outside organization to coordinate activities. Agencies may best keep sister city efforts going since administrations and government priority changes. This matter was discussed a number of years ago and is a good direction to go into.

Members further commented in favor of adding capacity. Further capacity would support and maintain relationships, bring consistency, make Milwaukee competitive, adds presence, streamlines communication, connect with relationships, and make the program more active. Perhaps a budget and funds should be acquired. Adding capacity should be an ongoing discussion for the committee going forward.

7. Update on establishing a Sister City Relationship with Tarime District, Tanzania.

Ald. Stamper said that the next step to establish the relationship is a signing ceremony that will occur on Monday, November 7, 2016 at 2 p.m. in the Common Council Chambers, City Hall. The event will include food, dancing, music, and networking. Members are encouraged to attend.

Mr. Durtka said that a firetruck was donated to Morogoro, Tanzania in the past as part of that sister city relationship which has expired. The challenge with the donation was the transport of the truck and missing essential equipment upon delivery.

Mr. Tovar said that other countries has approached his office to donate garbage trucks, which many are repurposed in the Department of Public Works.

8. Agenda Items for the Next Meeting.

Individual appearing:

Joanna Gibelev, Polish American Congress - Wisconsin Division

Ms. Gibelev made brief remarks. She is still completing the sister city relationship application to establish a sister city relationship with Lublin, Poland and will submit that once the application has sufficient substance. She had requested to pull the application review from today's meeting agenda. Many important and historic Polish events will be commencing soon. Members are invited to the Polish Independence and Veterans Day event at the Polish Community Center in Franklin, Wisconsin in early November.

9. Set Next Meeting Date and Time.

Ald. Stamper said that the next meeting, if needed, would occur in November 2016 after the City's budget process.

10. Adjournment.

Meeting adjourned at 11:16 a.m.

Chris Lee, Staff Assistant