



City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53202

Meeting Minutes SISTER CITIES COMMITTEE

ALDERMAN JOE DAVIS, SR., CHAIR
Al Durka, Eric Gass, Leslie Silletti, and Charles Vang
Staff Assistant, Chris Lee, 286-2232, Fax: 286-3456,
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Legislative Liaison: Amy Hefter, 286-2290,
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Wednesday, December 14, 2011

1:30 PM

Room 301-A, City Hall

Meeting convened at 1:36 p.m.

1. **Roll call.**

Present 5 - Davis, Silletti, Durka, Vang, Gass

Individuals also present:

Jim Owczarski, Deputy City Clerk

Amy Hefter, Legislative Reference Bureau

George Chen

Dr. Pradeep Rohatgi, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

2. **Approval of the previous minutes of September 29, 2010 and March 24, 2011.**

Mr. Vang moved approval of the previous meeting minutes of September 29, 2010 and March 24, 2011. There were no objections.

3. **Presentation on the City of Kanpur, India relative to establishing a friendly exchange leading to a sister city relationship with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, given by Dr. Pradeep K. Rohatgi.**

Dr. Rohatgi gave background information on the possibility of having a sister city relationship with Kanpur, India. In 2009 during a visit to Kanpur, the Mayor, District Magistrate, and Director of the Indian Institute of Technology in Kanpur expressed a desire to form a sister city relationship with Milwaukee. In December 2009, the committee approved submitting an application. The application was forwarded to Michael Lovell at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee at the time, but the application got lost and was not returned to Dr. Rohatgi. With Michael Lovell now serving as the new chancellor to the university, the application can be completed successfully. Chancellor Lovell is committed to forming the sister city relationship and signing an agreement.

Dr. Rohatgi added that a sister city relationship would benefit both cities economically and culturally. There is a need to send students from Kanpur to study in Milwaukee and form startup companies. Businesses from Milwaukee can visit Kanpur to find markets for their products. Kanpur is a great market for water related equipment. Also, cultural exchanges in dancing and music are desired.

Dr. Rohatgi said that four students have come to Milwaukee to attend the university and that six university faculty members graduated from the Indian Institute of Technology from Kanpur. He added that he has met Mayor Tom Barrett, who is in support of a sister city relationship.

Ald. Davis said that the committee can take action to formally extend an application opportunity for UWM to submit an application as the local sponsor.

Mr. Durtka said that the relationship would be a great opportunity and would benefit all parties involved. He added that the relationship has the support from the university and the Indian community.

Mr. Gass said that he is a faculty member from the School of Public Health at the university. He added that the school looks for and welcomes international students for their PHD programs and other areas.

Mr. Durtka moved to extend an application opportunity for the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, at Dr. Rohatgi's direction, to submit an formal application for a sister city relationship with Kanpur, India to the committee. There were no objections.

4. Discussion with George Chen on the City of Shiyan, China relative to establishing a friendly exchange leading to a sister city relationship.

Mr. Vang gave a few opening comments. He said that he met and discussed with Mr. Chen about the sister city relationship process and the requirement for Mr. Chen to find a local sponsor.

Mr. Chen said that the City of Shiyan in China contacted him to be a liaison and find a similar city for sister relationship in the United States. He added that Milwaukee would be a great city to establish a sister city relationship with Shiyan.

Mr. Chen proceeded to give information on the City of Shiyan. The city has a population of 3.5 million people and contains five counties. Transportation is convenient in the city with 28 trains in and out of the city, one expressway, and four smaller highways under construction. The city was built on Wudang Mountain, a mountain known for its appealing landscape and ancient buildings. The city was founded in 1965 with about 600 people. Three main characteristics of the city are Wudang Mountain, a reservoir, and commercial automobile production. Other features of the city include martial arts, a national park, untouched wilderness, rice wine, dinosaur fossils, and four colleges.

Ald. Davis said for Mr. Chen to consider contacting Dr. Hermann Viets at the Milwaukee School of Engineering. Ald. Davis added that Dr. Viets may have an interest to have a sister relationship with Shiyan from an engineering perspective.

Mr. Chen further shared cultural and economic information on Shiyan. Shiyan hosts an international wushu championship event, which is a martial arts celebration and competition. The city has the largest commercial vehicle base industry in China. Also, the city is engaged in rice wine production and organic farming.

Mr. Durtka said that a local sponsor is required for a sister city relationship. Mr. Chen replied that he has contacted the Organization of Chinese Americans and Linda Wong from the University of Wisconsin Madison.

Ald. Davis encouraged Mr. Chen to move forward to seek a local sponsor. He added

that once a local sponsor is found, the committee can invite Mr. Chen and representatives of the local sponsor back to committee.

Ms. Silletti said that there is an existing robust, friendly relationship with another Chinese city named Ningbo.

Mr. Vang asked if there was a limit on the number of sister city relationships a city can have within a country. Ald. Davis replied that in a situation where there is an existing relationship with a city, a relationship with a new city in the same country would need permission from the city with the existing relationship.

Mr. Durtka asked if Shiyang has formed sister city relationships with other cities. Mr. Chen replied that Shiyang has two sister relationships with Russia and Romania.

Mr. Vang moved to hold to the call of the Chair the discussion on the City of Shiyang, China relative to establishing a friendly exchange leading to a sister city relationship. There were no objections.

5. Review and approval of an application to renew a sister city relationship.

A copy of an application to renew a sister city relationship, prepared by Mr. Lee, was provided to the committee.

Ms. Silletti suggested that a statement be added to the renewal application to state that submittance of an application may not necessarily result in acceptance to renew the sister city relationship.

Ald. Davis said that there will be a cover letter sent along with a renewal application that would address Ms. Silletti's concern.

Mr. Durtka moved approval of the application to renew a sister city relationship. There were no objections.

6. Report on the status of Sister City relationships.

Ms. Hefter gave a summary on the Report on the Status of Sister City Relationships. The report was compiled in response to a request from the previous meeting. There are five sister city relationships with one expiring on August 3, 2012, two expiring in 2013, and one expiring in 2014. It was moved in the last meeting to terminate the sister city relationship with Manisa, Turkey due to a change in political environment in Manisa. All local sponsors were contacted to submit their annual reports, and only the sponsor for Carora, Venezuela responded.

Ms. Silletti inquired as to the number of relationships out of compliance with the code. Ms. Hefter responded that local sponsors are annually required to submit reports and that only Carora, Venezuela is in compliance for responding. Ms. Hefter added that the committee has the purview to terminate a relationship for lack of compliance.

Mr. Durtka asked if there is an established due date for reports on an annual basis. Ms. Hefter said that the code is silent on such a date.

Ald. Davis said that a motion to establish a due date for an annual report for the calendar year of a sister city relationship could be an item for a Community and Economic Development Committee meeting.

Mr. Owczarski appeared at the table. He said that introduction of legislation to address this issue is appropriate and can be introduced at the December 20, 2011 Common Council meeting.

Ald. Davis said to consider that an annual report be submitted thirty days prior to the annual year subsequent to the date of the official signing of the agreement of a particular sister city relationship.

Ms. Silletti said that it was unsettling to see many relationships out of compliance. She added that some options or a recourse for compliance and legitimacy on the program be discussed at a future meeting.

Mr. Durtka moved acceptance of the Report on the Status of Sister City Relationships. There were no objections.

7. Approval of the 2010 Annual Report and Activities.

Mr. Owczarski, on behalf of Ms. Hefter, provided to committee members an amended page 2, regarding accomplishments in 2010 of the committee, of the report.

Mr. Gass moved acceptance of the amendment.

Mr. Gass moved approval of the 2010 annual report and activities as amended. There were no objections.

8. Review and approval of resolution to terminate the Sister City relationship with Manisa, Turkey.

Ms. Hefter presented a draft of a resolution to terminate the Sister City relationship with Manisa, Turkey to the members.

Ald. Davis said that there were some problems with the ongoing nonprofit organizations and the relationship with Manisa, Turkey. He added that once approved, the resolution will be referred to the Community and Economic Development Committee.

Mr. Durtka moved approval of the resolution to terminate the Sister City relationship with Manisa, Turkey. There were no objections.

9. New business for future discussions.

Mr. Durtka said that there is interest from the mayor of Yoruba in southern Sudan in Africa to establish a sister city relationship with Milwaukee. He added that a discussion on Yoruba will be brought forward at a later time.

10. Set next meeting date and time.

No date and time was set for the next meeting.

**Meeting adjourned at 2:38 p.m.
Chris Lee, Staff Assistant**