



MEMORANDUM

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU

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To: Honorable Members, Sister Cities Committee
From: Amy E. Hefter – Legislative Fiscal Analyst, ext. 2290
Date: August 23, 2011
Subject: Revised - Status of Sister City Relationships

At the most recent meeting of the Sister Cities Committee, March 24, 2011, the Legislative Reference Bureau was assigned the task of reporting on the activities of the City's sister cities.

Chapter 335 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances (MCO) sets forth provisions governing City of Milwaukee sister city relationships. This chapter became effective November 10, 2006. One current sister city relationship, the City's relationship with Galway (Ireland), predates the adoption of ch. 335. This relationship was renewed under the policies set forth in ch. 335 on March 18, 2008.

The City of Milwaukee has sister city relationships with the following 5 cities: Carora (Venezuela), Galway (Ireland), Manisa (Turkey), Morogoro (Tanzania), and uMhlathuze (South Africa). Per s. 335-3-10, MCO, the total number of sister city relationships should not exceed 10. Please see the table on page 2, titled "Sister City Relationships" for more detailed information on each current sister city relationship.

Section 335-3-6, MCO, establishes that sister city relationships shall expire after 5 years unless extended for another 5 years by council resolution. The City's relationship with Morogoro will expire August 3, 2012. Two of the sister city relationships will expire in 2013, and one will expire in 2014. Section 335-7, MCO, sets forth a renewal policy. A sister city relationship may be renewed by the sponsoring entity. The ordinance specifies that the renewal application must be filed at least 6 months prior to the expiration of the agreement. The sponsoring entity shall submit a renewal application to the city clerk on a form prepared by the Sister Cities Committee. Therefore a renewal application for Morogoro must be submitted by the sponsoring entity, Hope in Tanzania Foundation, by February 3, 2012, 6 months prior to the expiration of the relationship. Please note that the Sister Cities Committee will need to prepare a form to use for renewals prior to that time.

According to s. 335-3-7, MCO, the sponsoring entities are required to submit annual reports to the committee. At the request of the committee, all sponsoring organizations were contacted numerous times via electronic and U. S. Postal Service mail by Staff Assistant Joanna Polanco, who was formerly assigned to the Sister Cities Committee. To date, only Peace Action WI, sponsoring entity for the sister city relationship with Carora has provided a report of its activities. A copy the Carora-Milwaukee sister city report is attached to this memo. No other sponsoring entity has provided a report of activities.

Under s. 335-9, MCO, the common council may terminate a sister city relationship whenever it finds the applicant has failed to make sufficient progress toward attaining the goals of the sister city relationship. A relationship may also be terminated if an applicant has failed to

comply with the standards established by Sister Cities International, the common council or the Sister Cities committee. The following 7 sister city relationships have been terminated under ch. 335: Mulhouse (France), Nuevitas (Cuba), Omsk (Siberia), Parma (Italy), Queenstown (South Africa), Schwerin (Germany), and Ticuantepe (Nicaragua).

Please note at the last meeting of the Sister Cities Committee, Esperanza Unida, Inc., as the sponsoring entity for the relationship with Manisa, has requested that the City of Milwaukee terminate this sister city relationship. A resolution has been drafted terminating this relationship but as of this date has not been introduced.

Sister City Relationships						
Sister City	File Number Establishing Relationship	File Number Renewing Relationship	Council Final Action	Agreement Signed	Relationship Expiration	Local Sponsoring Organization
Carora, Venezuela	080769		10/7/2008	3/24/2009	3/24/2014	The Peace Education Project of Peace Action Wisconsin
Galway, Ireland*	010680		12/21/2001			
		071505	3/18/2008	8/15/2008	8/15/2013	Irish Festivals, Inc.
Manisa, Turkey**	071506		4/9/2008	Unsigned due to a change in political leadership in Turkey.		Esperanza Unida, Inc.
Morogoro, Tanzania	070043		5/8/2007	8/3/2007	8/3/2012	Hope in Tanzania Foundation
uMhlathuze, South Africa***	071584		4/9/2008	5/1/2008	5/1/2013	African American Chamber of Commerce
<p>*This relationship was established prior to the creation of Chapter 335 Sister Cities, which was adopted October 24, 2011 and became effective November 10, 2006. **Esperanza Unida, Inc. requested that this relationship be terminated at the last meeting of the Sister Cities Committee, March 24, 2011. ***Original sponsoring entity was Metro Milwaukee Association of Commerce.</p>						

I hope this information proves helpful. Please contact me with any questions.

November 4, 2010

Ms. Joanna Polanco
Staff Assistant to the Sister Cities Committee
200 E. Wells St. Room 205
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Sister City Committee:

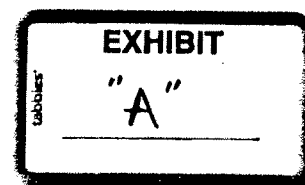
On March 24th, 2009, the Mayor of Carora, Edgar Carrasco, visited with Mayor Tom Barrett in Milwaukee's City Hall. At this meeting, the Sister City relationship between Milwaukee and Carora, Venezuela, became official. Since then, the Milwaukee-Carora Sister Cities Committee (MCSCC) has been utilizing and promoting the Sister City relationship in a variety of ways. In accordance with Sister City International's mission statement and goals, citizens of Milwaukee have engaged in countless activities and laid the groundwork for many others, with the intention of promoting peace, education, and people-to-people connections between our two great cities and nations.

In Milwaukee, MCSCC has hosted and co-sponsored a number of educational events related to Carora and Venezuela. These events are always free and open to the public, and promoted by Milwaukee-Carora Sister City volunteers. We have included a list of some notable events.

Documentaries Desde el Sur is an annual, week-long film festival at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee that is now in its fourth year. The festival offers a variety of films, many of which are focused directly on Venezuela and its culture, social system, etc. Attendance throughout the week has risen each year and usually reaches about 300 people, who leave with a greater grasp of the reality of life in our Sister City. Aside from being an enjoyable event, MCSCC takes this opportunity to reach members of the community and update individuals on upcoming events and opportunities.

Charles Hardy, a former priest from Wyoming who spent eight years living in a cardboard shack in a dangerous, poverty-stricken "barrio" (poor neighborhood) of Venezuela as part of his religious mission, was invited to come to Milwaukee by our local Sister Cities organization to share his story which he has compiled in a memoir entitled *Cowboy in Caracas*. The book is a unique blend of culture and history, as seen through the eyes of a man committed to working with some of the poorest and most marginalized people in the world. Mr. Hardy's perspective is humorous and optimistic, although many of his experiences were anything but so. His visit was greatly contributed to an understanding of Venezuelan culture for all the Milwaukeeans in attendance.

Another event organized by the Milwaukee Carora Sister Cities Committee was a "report back," in which several Milwaukeeans presented their observations to the public on their stay in Carora during a major electoral process. The speakers gave a highly educational multimedia presentation, and the audience. The speakers not only shared their firsthand experiences with life in Carora before, during, and after the elections, but also attempted to transmit a variety of



unique Venezuelan perspectives on the matter that they gathered throughout the time they spent immersed in the culture.

MCSCC was also proud to host Dr. Mark Weisbrot, an economist and co-director of the Center for Economic Policy and Research who has served (and continues to serve) as an advisor to a number of Latin America nations, including Venezuela. Mr. Weisbrot gave the audience an expert analysis of the history and reality of Venezuela's politics, economics, and culture, and also shed light on many questions about daily life for Venezuelans, their government's foreign policy (including prospects for improving relations with the United States). He is scheduled to visit Milwaukee again this coming spring, and will surely have much to share in light of Venezuela's recent economic recession, power outages, and Venezuela's recent parliamentary elections.

We believe that art is also a fruitful and intimate avenue for stimulating cultural understanding and people-to-people exchange. Carora is a city known for art of all kinds: painting, poetry, music, philosophy, among others. When a Caroran travels to other parts of Venezuela, the question is almost automatically asked: So what kind of artist are you? Recently, a Milwaukee musician, supported by MCSCC, had the exciting opportunity to visit Carora, with the goal of connecting with talented Caroran musicians. Mike Helbick established contact with a nationally famous band from Carora named El Pacto, and was invited as a privileged guest to take part in the production of a music video that premiered on national television just days later. El Pacto's accessible, complex, and uniquely Venezuelan style has prompted MCSCC to begin work on bringing them to Milwaukee (and likely also help them play in other U.S. cities).

Mr. Helbick also was given the opportunity to play music with another Caroran group, Fusioncayado. A blend of traditional Venezuelan styles and modern rock, this band includes a seasoned artist who has played concerts in the United States as well promising, young musicians. In Fusioncayado's recording studio, Mike was able to perform with the band and record an original song with traditional Venezuelan influence. Fusioncayado would also like to perform in the United States and present their music and culture to American citizens. We look forward to doing everything possible to include these and other musical acts in facilitating an exchange of musical acts between Milwaukee and Carora.

The Milwaukee-Carora Sister Cities Committee has a number of other exciting educational and cultural projects in the works, as well. One such project is the facilitation of a delegation from Milwaukee to Carora. The delegation would have the opportunity to visit and experience many exciting things that Carora has to offer: friendly citizens of all ages who are always thrilled to receive North American visitors, modern and traditional musical and dance performances, cultural landmarks, local cuisine, and a few nights in the breathtaking mountains that surround Carora, among many other activities. MCSCC applied for and received a grant from a generous private donor towards this delegation, which will be used in part for sponsoring individuals of low income who want to participate. We are extremely excited for the opportunity to offer Milwaukeeans this trip to our sister city, Carora, which will be one that participants will always remember and will greatly advance people-to-people ties, friendship, and understanding between our two cities and peoples.

MCSCC has also been researching and working on other projects. We working to establish a "sister church" relationship between parishes in Milwaukee and Carora, under the auspices of the Sister City pact. Sister churches generally send delegations to visit the respective churches, undertake projects together, and offer aid (tools, human resources, etc.). Currently, we are considering a number of bilingual churches in Milwaukee for the project, as well as considering a selection from a number of Caroran churches, as well. We feel that this "sister church" relationship will help create an atmosphere in which community development in both cities can be strengthened.

The Spanish language is an important language in Milwaukee and the world: in our streets, our schools, and our business community. That is why MCSCC is seeking to create a Spanish language school in Carora. This would give Milwaukeeans the opportunity to immerse themselves in Venezuelan culture and the Spanish language while receiving one-on-one class time with a Caroran tutor. In this way, we can not only promote important people-to-people connections between our cities, but we can provide the opportunity to acquire the lifelong skill of bilingualism--an important skill in many professions. Jesus Rojas, a Caroran English teacher and long-time advocate of the Sister Cities relationship, has already received an invitation from MCSCC and Alderman Nik Kovac to come to Milwaukee and discuss plans for the school. We are working on the logistics for his visit so he can play an integral part in this process.

The Milwaukee-Carora Sister Cities Committee is proud of our mission to promoting peace, education, and people-to-people connections between Milwaukee and Carora. We are pleased with work we have done thus far, and look forward to working diligently on our upcoming projects. We thank the City of Milwaukee for its support of both our local organization and Sister Cities International.

Respectfully,

Volunteers of the Milwaukee-Carora Sister Cities Committee