



# 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,  
clee@milwaukee.gov  
Legislative Liaison: Amy Hefter, 286-2290,  
ahefte@milwaukee.gov

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Thursday, February 13, 2014

1:00 PM Common Council Chambers Anteroom, 3rd Fl., City Hall

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Meeting convened at 1:14 p.m.

**Present** 4 - Davis, Silletti, Durka, Gass

**Excused** 1 - Vang

**1. Approval of the Previous Minutes of September 18, 2012.**

*Mr. Durka moved approval, seconded by Mr. Gass, of the minutes of September 18, 2012. There were no objections.*

**2. Review of the Renewal Application for a Sister City Relationship with Carora, Venezuela.**

*Individuals appearing:*

*Mike Helbick, Milwaukee Carora Sister Cities Committee President*

*Erik Sperling, Peace Action Wisconsin*

*Mikaela Klebe*

*David Thomas*

*Omar Barberena*

*Kathleen Raynier*

*Mr. Helbick gave a PowerPoint presentation on Carora, Venezuela. Topics included the history, geography, demographics, government, agriculture, culture, music, and arts of Carora. Also presented were information regarding sister city activities with Carora, including a recent delegation visit from Milwaukee to Carora in January 2014. The visit was led by the Milwaukee Carora Sister Cities Committee and Peace Action Wisconsin.*

*Mr. Barberena said that delegates from Milwaukee were able to engage with the government of Carora in their recent visit there. They were able to meet with Carora's Supreme Court justices in a panel like setting learning about the court processes and issues faced there.*

*Ms. Raynier said that Carora was very hospitable and helpful during the trip, especially with treating some individuals who became ill there. She added that guitar playing is very popular in Carora.*

*Details of the presentation can be found within CCFN 131540 or CCFN 131429.*

*Ald. Davis said that Peace Action Wisconsin came to seek renewal of its sister city*

*relationship with Carora, Venezuela from the committee. The relationship will be expired soon if not already expired. If the committee recommends approval of the renewal of the relationship, the matter would require a resolution to be adopted by the Community and Economic Development Committee and Common Council. Once adopted by the Common Council, the relationship would be extended another five years.*

*From the presentation, Mr. Durtka said that he did not get a good sense of the exchanges made under the sister city relationship and it seemed that few delegates from Carora traveled to Milwaukee. He questioned the connections between both parties, the original signing of the relationship agreement, and the agricultural connection referenced in the presentation.*

*Mr. Helbick responded. The original agreement was signed in March 2009. Coffee is the main agricultural focal point currently that his organization is working on with the Venezuelan Consulate in Boston. Coffee beans are easily moved between both countries. In the past, Venezuela banned the exporting of its beans due to a lack of bean production; however, bean production has increased there. In addition, cultivators in Venezuela have expressed interest to learn more about fish farming, livestock, and other processes from Milwaukee. His organization can assist with these matters. Regarding visitation to Milwaukee from Venezuela, it is more difficult for Venezuelans to come to the United States. Difficulty in obtaining visas, having less income, and not being able to travel freely are some reasons why there has not been much visitation from Venezuelans. The short term exchanges between both cities would be the exchange of goods and technological advances.*

*Mr. Sperling added comments. Coffee is the main agricultural product, and there is also good cheese from Venezuela. There are numerous opportunities for cultural exchanges in the arts, music, and poetry. There are many interested Venezuelan artists and poets who would like to come to Milwaukee.*

*Ald. Davis said that the Venezuela Consulate in the past has told him of the difficulties of getting visas in Venezuela to come here. Sometimes, state departments would prohibit travel. He is glad to see that exchanges are coming along.*

*Ms. Silletti said that Mr. Helbick and his team should take advantage and use the committee and City of Milwaukee as a resource to promote and network their sister city events. Information about their events should be provided to staff and Ald. Davis.*

*Mr. Barberena stated that another trip to Carora is planned for October 2014.*

*Mr. Durtka moved renewal, seconded by Mr. Gass, of the sister city relationship for Carora, Venezuela. There were no objections.*

*Ald. Davis said that there may be the possibility that another agreement would need to be signed by both mayors of both cities. He added that Mr. Helbick should contact the Venezuela Consulate regarding the agreement signing, if necessary.*

### **3. Review of the Sister Cities Committee 2011, 2012, and 2013 Annual Reports and Activities.**

*Ms. Silletti moved to hold, seconded by Mr. Durtka, this item to the next meeting. There were no objections.*

### **4. Review and Approval of 2012 and 2013 Annual Reports of Sister Cities Relationships.**

*Ms. Silletti moved to hold, seconded by Mr. Durtka, this item to the next meeting. There were no objections.*

**5. Discussion regarding Sister Cities Relationships.**

*Ms. Silletti moved to hold, seconded by Mr. Durtka, this item to the next meeting. There were no objections.*

**6. Presentation on Medan City, Indonesia Relative to Establishing a Friendly Exchange Leading to a Sister City Relationship.**

*Individuals appearing:*

*Andriana Supandy, Consul General (Indonesian Consulate General)*

*Alberd Pardede, Consul for Economic Affairs (Indonesian Consulate General)*

*Lis Widyastuti, Vice Consul for Economic Affairs (Indonesian Consulate General)*

*Hafiz Prasetya, Staff of Economic Affairs (Indonesian Consulate General)*

*Ald. Davis gave opening remarks. Consul General (CG) Supandy represents multiple states in the United States Midwest region. The CG is focused on the State of Wisconsin and has approached the City of Milwaukee to establish economic and cultural cooperation and partnerships. The CG has visited Milwaukee numerous times. A presentation will be given to introduce to members the Indonesian city being proposed for a sister city relationship and help members to decide whether or not to move forward with an application.*

*Ms. Silletti inquired as to the difference between engaging in a friendly exchange and a sister city relationship?*

*Ald. Davis said that a friendly exchange would involve no application and the committee would approve for only a friendly exchange; whereas, a sister city relationship would involve a formal application process established by ordinance and the involvement of two nonprofit organizations as the parties to the relationship. Milwaukee is a member of Sister Cities International with relationships that may be inactive, but the intent is to reactivate those inactive relationships again. The CG intends to give a presentation to get the opportunity to submit a formal application to establish a sister city relationship with Milwaukee.*

*CG Supandy gave a PowerPoint presentation on the City of Medan in North Sumatra, Indonesia with an overview on Medan's history, geography, demography, infrastructure, economy, airports, sea ports, industrial parks, agriculture, fishery, foreign consulates, culture, tourism, education, and examples of possible areas of cooperation.*

*Details of the PowerPoint presentation can be found within CCFN 131540.*

*Ald. Davis said that possible areas of economic opportunities or cooperation from Milwaukee could include the City of Milwaukee Health Department concerning health, Port of Milwaukee concerning ports, and the Water Council concerning freshwater. The University of Wisconsin Milwaukee (UWM) could be a source of cooperation concerning education. The CG has approached two entities regarding socio cultural cooperation with the Hmong Chamber of Commerce being one of those entities.*

*Mr. Pardede said that the purpose of the presentation today is to represent, introduce, and highlight the City of Medan. The CG office needs more information on the City of Milwaukee. More information will be given to the committee regarding*

Medan after further discussion between the CG office and the City of Medan. The CG office would like to hear from the committee possible local nonprofit organizations and areas of mutual interest.

Mr. Gass said that he would be interested to hear more about Medan's universities. There could be formal opportunities to establish international student exchanges, at a Masters or PHD level, with UWM concerning public health. He is a professor at UWM in the School of Public Health and has students who have traveled globally.

Ald. Davis asked the possibility of the Mayor of Medan visiting Milwaukee in the near future?

Mr. Pardede replied that Medan will be having national elections soon. The CG office will be in contact with the Mayor of Medan and will wait to hear if the mayor will visit Milwaukee. The CG will host a business forum in Milwaukee, and the Mayor of Medan will likely attend the forum. The CG office would like to still pursue a sister city relationship even if the Mayor of Medan cannot visit Milwaukee.

Ald. Davis said that further questions from committee members can be forwarded to staff to forward to the CG office. He questioned the CG's timeline to establish a sister city relationship?

CG Supandy responded that the Sister City process in Medan would require the signing of letters of intent from both sides, discussion about those areas of cooperation that are doable and beneficial, and the signing of a memorandum of understanding. He is hopeful that that Medan delegates will visit Milwaukee in June 2014 for the business forum. He is also hopeful that cooperation can be established with support of the committee by June 2014.

Mr. Pardede added that the City of Medan is currently registering for the Sister Cities program.

Ald. Davis said that the matter should be held in committee with another meeting on the matter in mid March. He will have staff respond back to the CG office regarding the formal application process.

**7. Presentation on Bomet, Kenya Relative to Establishing a Friendly Exchange Leading to a Sister City Relationship.**

*Individuals appearing:*

*Alice Kones*

*David Mugun*

*Fessahaye Mebrahtu, Pan African Community Association Executive Director*

*Magugu Davis, Pan African Community Association*

*Ms. Kones gave a PowerPoint presentation on an overview of Boment, Kenya and benefits from a sister city relationship. Benefits would include exchanges concerning culture, economy, business, exports, imports, tourism, research, and goodwill.*

*Details of the PowerPoint presentation can be found within CCFN 131540.*

*Mr. Durtka inquired as to the trade relationship, trade figures, economics, exports, and agricultural exchanges that would result from a sister city relationship?*

*Ms. Kones replied that she was not fully prepared for the meeting. She did not have trade data and more specifics on what the exact relationship would be. She will*

come next time with that information. Tea and coffee are major agricultural exports from Kenya to the United States.

Mr. Mugun said that tea is a major product of Bomet. A desire of Bomet is to establish a direct exchange of tea with the elimination of the middle man or broker.

Mr. Durtka asked if there was any party in Bomet who was interested in a sister city relationship with Milwaukee?

Ms. Kones responded that a representative of Bomet visited the chancellor of UW Milwaukee in the past to discuss water issues. Also, the governor of Bomet came to Milwaukee in the past to advocate a direct relationship for tea exchange or trade. The governor of Bomet would be supportive of a sister city relationship and would be willing to visit Milwaukee about a collaboration.

Ms. Davis added that PACA would like to represent all of Africa sister city relationships, including one with Bomet.

Mr. Durtka said that the whole concept of sister cities is based on small, individually based relationships and groups. Such relationships are between governments and not individuals. He asked what is the counterpart to PACA on Bomet's end?

Ms. Kones stated that there is a Bomet development trust that would ensure success of a sister city relationship. She understood that a sister city relationship should be ran by NGOs benefiting communities, and governments oversees a relationship.

Mr. Mebrahtu said that the presentation today was an introduction of the interest in Bomet.

Mr. Gass said that the matter should be kept open with a follow up visit. There needs to be a more formal proposal submitted from PACA and the Bomet development trust.

## **8. Discussion with the Pan-African Community Association regarding Coordination Responsibility of African Sister Cities.**

*Individuals appearing:*

*Fessahaye Mebrahtu, Pan African Community Association Executive Director*

*O. Peter Akubeze, Pan African Community Association Chair*

*Magugu Davis, Pan African Community Association*

Mr. Mebrahtu gave opening remarks and said that his organization, the Pan African Community Association (PACA), would like to be a conduit for local African communities in the City for establishing sister city relationships for all of Africa.

Mr. Mebrahtu proceeded to give a PowerPoint presentation on PACA's purpose, mission, history, founding members, values, goals, advocacy, partnerships, various services, sister city initiative, and relationships with local African communities and associations. Services are primarily focused on aiding immigrants and refugees in the Greater Milwaukee area. Services also include youth leadership, employment, community gardens, skills training, health promotion, cultural celebrations, and retreats.

Details of the PowerPoint presentation can be found within CCFN 131540.

Ald. Davis said that PACA is requesting to be the local non governmental

organization (NGO) here for sister city relationships for all African countries and communities. Coordinators who are going to establish a sister city relationship would come to PACA to be the nonprofit organization. There is no current NGOs for the expired relationships in Tanzania and South Africa. PACA would like to be the NGO and continue those relationships. PACA wanted for members to understand its structure regarding the establishment and maintenance of sister city relationships within Africa.

Ald. Davis left the committee at 2:45 p.m.

Ms. Silletti asked if there has been conversations between PACA and the current organizations sponsoring the expired sister city relationships in Africa ?

Mr. Mebrahtu replied that PACA has not had any conversations with those organizations. He added that PACA has established relationships with many local African communities and associations. PACA has the capacity to drive sister city relationships within Africa.

Mr. Durtka said that PACA's proposal, although not impossible, is an unusual one both locally and nationally and should be further evaluated. This would change in saying one organization is covering a whole continent. There may be other African based organizations that may also want to be conduits for particular sister city relationships in Africa.

**9. New Business for Future Discussions.**

Ms. Silletti moved to hold, seconded by Mr. Durtka, this item to the next meeting. There were no objections.

**10. Set Next Meeting Date and Time.**

Ms. Silletti moved to hold, seconded by Mr. Durtka, this item to the next meeting. There were no objections.

**Meeting adjourned at 3:11 p.m.**

**Chris Lee, Staff Assistant**