



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
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Thursday, April 17, 2014

9:00 AM

Room 301-B, Third Floor, City Hall

Meeting convened at 9:09 a.m.

Present 4 - Davis, Durka, Vang, Gass

Excused 1 - Silletti

1. Approval of the Previous Minutes of February 13, 2014.

Mr. Durka moved approval, seconded by Mr. Vang, of the minutes of February 13, 2014 without objection.

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

Ald. Davis gave opening remarks. The Consul General (CG) of Indonesia has visited the committee three times and would like to establish a sister city relationship with the City of Medan by June 4, 2014, when an Indonesian business forum will take place in Milwaukee. The business forum is a part of the Milwaukee World Trade Association through the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce. Mr. Khay Khong and Ms. Leni Siker will present on Medan, and the Pan African Community Association (PACA) will spearhead the relationship.

Mr. Khong appeared and said that he is a liaison and represents PACA, which will be the local nongovernmental organization (NGO) in Milwaukee. PACA's missions are to help refugees resettle successfully in the community, promote African cultures, and provide various programs to assist communities. He has been with PACA for three years and works for a manufacturing company in Muskego, Wisconsin.

Ms. Siker appeared and said that she is a friend of the CG, born and raised in Jakarta, Indonesia, and is supportive in the efforts to establish a sister city relationship with Medan, which is the third largest city in Indonesia.

Mr. Khong proceeded to give an overview of the City of Medan. As the capital city of the island of Sumatra, it is a booming major port city and one of six economic corridors of Indonesia. It has in common with Milwaukee a fresh water lake. In terms of industry the city has resources such as palm oil, fishery, coffee, oil refineries, machinery, and major educational centers. Medan already has established twenty sister city relationships. Medan can benefit from Milwaukee's Water Council research and manufacturing technology. Milwaukee can benefit from Indonesian exports.

Ms. Siker added that PACA is the current NGO applying for the relationship since no other sponsor has come forward. Ideally, an Indonesian or Asian based NGO should be the sponsor and perhaps the application can be amended if such a NGO comes forward. The business forum will be an opportunity to reach out to such an NGO, and the Mayor of Medan will attend the forum.

Mr. Vang said that he has seen, from a visit to Sumatra last year, many raw resources that can benefit Milwaukee.

Ald. Davis said that the CG is frustrated that an NGO has not come forward despite offerings to numerous entities here. The CG is comfortable and supportive with PACA volunteering as the NGO with Mr. Khong leading the effort. The Medan Chamber of Commerce is the NGO on the other side. The structure of the relationship can be questioned, but members should not be too concerned with the local sponsor not being an Indonesian based NGO since some of the City's other sister city relationships have local sponsors that are not ethnically related to the sister city, such as the sister city relationship with Carora, Venezuela. If an application is allowed for submittal to committee, there should be a special meeting scheduled once an application is received.

Mr. Dutrka said that the application process can go forward, but the coordinating body, structure, and NGO behind the relationship should be reviewed closely. There should be an avoidance of putting all efforts under just one umbrella, especially if that body folds. Mr. Khong can be the main representative behind the matter.

Mr. Durtka moved to proceed with the application process, extend a sister city relationship application for submittal to the Pan African Community Association with Khay Khong as the agent under PACA, and possibly discuss consideration of another NGO to be the local sponsor for the relationship if one comes forward. Mr. Gass seconded. There were no objections.

3. Review of the Renewal Application for a Sister City Relationship with Galway, Ireland.

Individuals appearing:

President Michael Murphy

Donna Brady, Irish Festivals, Inc.

Michael Brady, City of Milwaukee Department of Employee Relations

Pres. Murphy gave opening remarks. The sister city relationship with Galway originated from a contingent of Galway business and government representatives visiting Milwaukee and Irish Fest to promote their community. The relationship grew from that point to this day where a contingent of Galway delegates still visit Milwaukee and Irish Fest yearly to discuss ways to mutually benefit from each other. Tourism is a major issue for Galway. He takes this relationship and the sister city program seriously as it helps with communication around the world. He is looking forward in also establishing a sister city relationship with Croatia in the near future.

Mrs. Brady gave remarks. Irish Fest is in its 34th year. It's grown tremendously from a very small festival due to Galway's involvement. The festival occurs every year with the mission to promote Irish and Celtic culture. The president of Ireland had visited Milwaukee and the festival during the festival's 25th anniversary.

Mrs. Brady proceeded to give a presentation about Irish Festivals Inc., Irish Fest activities and participants, important Irish officials or delegates who have visited Milwaukee, values of Galway and Milwaukee, the importance of Irish Fest, and the

festival's impact on the City.

The presentation was entered into the record by the committee, and details of the presentation can be found within CCFNs 131540 and 131640.

Pres. Murphy added that the sister city relationship helped play a small role in the resolution of conflict in Northern Ireland during the late 1990s by fostering communication between David Trimble and the representatives of the Sinn Fein when they visited Milwaukee and spoke in City Hall.

Ald. Davis said that despite cultural promotion, which has been impressive, there needed to be more economic promotion regarding the relationship with Galway. The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation can be a great partner for Irish Festivals for economic promotion and investment. A state trade export grant, funded from the Department of Commerce, can be taken advantage of by Irish Festivals. The grant can help reimburse travel costs for trade delegations. He is looking forward to economic exchanges of this relationship. If approved by the committee, the renewal will go before the Community and Economic Development Committee and the Common Council. Annual reports will have to be submitted yearly.

Mrs. Brady provided to members an economic impact analysis of Irish Fest. The analysis was done through the partnership of Marquette University and the University of Wisconsin Parkside surveying 700 people in the festival.

The economic impact analysis was entered into the record by the committee, and details of the analysis can be found within CCFNs 131540 and 131640.

Mr. Durtka moved approval of the renewal of the sister city relationship with Galway, Ireland. Mr. Gass seconded. There were no objections.

4. Review of the Renewal Application with a Change in Sponsoring Agency for a Sister City Relationship with uMhlathuze, South Africa.

Individuals appearing:

Fessahaye Mebrahtu, Pan African Community Association (PACA)

Magugu Davis, Pan African Community Association (PACA)

Ald. Davis said that PACA is interested in being the local sponsor and to renew the sister city relationship with uMhlathuze, South Africa. PACA has found a partner in uMhlathuze to work with for the relationship. This is an existing relationship, but the previous two NGOs (African American Chamber of Commerce and the Zululand Chamber of Commerce) have not interacted despite the submittal of previous annual reports.

Ms. Davis gave a presentation regarding the renewal proposal, history of the how the relationship originated in 2008, organizations and participants of the original relationship, original signing of the agreement, information regarding PACA and the new partner Healing Outreach People Development (HOPE) in uMhlathuze, and activities that were accomplished from the result of the relationship.

The presentation was entered into the record by the committee, and details of the presentation can be found within CCFNs 131540 and 140008.

Mr. Mebrahtu said that PACA formally requests to renew and continue the sister city relationship with uMhlathuze.

Mr. Durtka said that annual reporting of the relationship to the committee is very important.

Mr. Durtka moved approval of the renewal of the sister city relationship with uMhlathuze, South Africa with the Pan African Community Association as the new local sponsor coordinating activities of the relationship. Mr. Vang seconded. There were no objections.

Ald. Davis added that the recommendation of the committee will be referred to the Community and Economic Development Committee and the Common Council. If adopted by the Council, PACA should return to the committee to further discuss both NGOs' involvement on moving the relationship forward.

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

Individuals appearing:

Fessahaye Mebrahtu, Pan African Community Association (PACA)

Alice Kones, University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee student

O. Peter Akubeze, Pan African Community Association (PACA)

Ms. Kones gave a presentation on Bomet County, Kenya regarding geography, government, weather, economy, resources, tourist attractions, financial institutions, industries, agricultural products, culture, art, education, health, sports, trade and investment relations between Kenya and the United States, environmental issues, infrastructure issues, and mutually economic and socio cultural opportunities between Bomet County and Milwaukee.

The presentation was entered into the record by the committee, and details of the presentation can be found within CCFNs 131540 and 140063.

Committee members inquired about Kenyan government support and if there will be a local dedicated group or committee to move forward such a relationship. Members also questioned higher education, lead testing of structures and vehicles, and the languages spoken in the Bomet community?

Ms. Kones responded. The Kenyan Embassy and governor of Bomet County are supportive. Bomet County lost its university due to the redividing of county lines, but will have a new one soon. Lead is not being tested. Improvements are needed in the Bomet community in the areas of environment, health, sanitation, and infrastructure. English is spoken as a communication language early in school. Swahili is the national language, and each tribe has its own tribal language. She will work on finding a NGO in Bomet.

Mr. Mebrahtu said that PACA is willing to take the initiative and will have two Kenyans in the organization in place to assist Ms. Kones. Technical schools like Milwaukee Area Technical College will play a crucial role.

Mr. Akubeze said that, as a former British colony, a degree in Kenya is the same as a degree in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Durtka said that a friendly exchange should move forward and the Common Council should define a friendly relationship process in the ordinance. A friendly exchange is the first step for both ends to explore, learn more about each other, and gain support. A sister city relationship is a more formal agreement where the mayors of both ends will have to sign an agreement.

Ald. Davis said Ms. Kones and PACA should reach out to Sister Cities International (SSI) and SSI regions in Africa for assistance as well as the Kenyan embassy in Washington D.C. diplomatically. He is glad to hear about decentralization in Kenya and the desire to have environmental sustainability there. It is important to identify the NGO from the Bomet community that PACA will be working with since a friendly exchange or a sister city relationship is between NGOs.

Mr. Durtka moved approval for a friendly exchange with Bomet County, Kenya and to further establish criteria in the City ordinance regarding a friendly exchange and sister city relationship.

Meeting recessed at 10:49 a.m.

Mr. Vang left the meeting at 10:49 a.m.

Meeting reconvened at 10:58 a.m.

6. Discussion with the Pan-African Community Association regarding Coordination Responsibility of African Sister Cities.

Individual appearing:

Fessahaye Mebrahtu, Pan African Community Association (PACA)

Mr. Mebrahtu gave a presentation regarding PACA's African Diaspora Development Institute (ADDI), which is a business arm of PACA providing services beyond the nonprofit scope aiming at cultural promotion, economic, and human resource development within and out of the Milwaukee metro area. A sister city initiative under ADDI will implement the mission and vision of ADDI as being a medium to engage, utilize, and connect African communities, African Diaspora professionals, and the native homeland cities in Africa. The ADDI program director will be the sister city coordinator and act as the liaison between Milwaukee and an African target city. PACA will work with different African communities that will have its own coordinator to work with the ADDI program director to maintain a sister city relationships with those communities' target African cities.

The presentation was entered into the record by the committee, and details of the presentation can be found within CCFN 131540.

Mr. Durtka said that PACA does not need formal approval from the committee to make itself available to assist, coordinate, or sponsor sister city relationships in Africa.

Mr. Mebrahtu said that the presentation today was to educate the committee of PACA's infrastructure and capabilities.

Ald. Davis said that ADDI can be a resource but should not be mandatory for establishing sister city relationships in Africa since there may be other NGOs that may want to work separately from PACA. ADDI is a great resource but should not substitute others from becoming an organized committee coordinating a sister city relationship in Africa. The matter should be held and perhaps PACA can return in a year to report on the progress and development of ADDI.

7. Review and Approval of Annual Reports of Sister City Relationships from Local Sponsors.

Members were asked if they had any questions of the annual reports, and none responded. No further discussion was made.

Mr. Durtka moved approval, seconded by Mr. Gass, of the 2012, 2013, and 2014 annual reports regarding Carora, Venezuela and the 2012 and 2013 annual reports regarding Galway, Ireland without objection. Mr. Vang was excused.

8. Review and Approval of Annual Reports and Activities of the Sister Cities Committee.

Members were asked if they would like to make any changes to the reports or suggestions to improve future reports. There were no responses to the matter. No further discussion was made regarding the reports.

Mr. Gass moved approval, seconded by Mr. Durtka, of the 2011, 2012, and 2013 annual reports and activities of the Sister Cities Committee without objection. Mr. Vang was excused.

9. New Business for Future Discussions.

Mr. Durka announced that there may be interest to establish a sister city relationship in the Philippines. Also, there will be a Sister Cities International national conference in San Jose, California at the end of July 2014.

10. Set Next Meeting Date and Time.

Ald. Davis said that there should be a special meeting of the committee sometime in May to address the sister city relationship application, once received, regarding Medan, Indonesia and also possibly revisiting the friendly exchange leading to a sister city relationship with Bomet, Kenya. Mr. Lee will coordinate with members regarding the next meeting date and time.

Meeting adjourned at 11:22 a.m.

Chris Lee, Staff Assistant