



City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53202

Meeting Minutes

SISTER CITIES COMMITTEE

ALD. RUSSELL W. STAMPER, II, CHAIR

Al Durtka, Kirsten Johnson, Oscar Tovar, and Bruce Spann

Staff Assistant, Chris Lee, 286-2232, Fax: 286-3456,

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Thursday, July 14, 2022

10:00 AM

Virtual Meeting

This will be a virtual meeting conducted via GoToMeeting. Should you wish to join this meeting from your phone, tablet, or computer you may go to <https://meet.goto.com/243139677>. You can also dial in using your phone United States: +1 (646) 749-3122 and Access Code: 243-139-677.

1. Call to order.

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m.

2. Roll call.

Present (4) - Stamper, Durtka, Tovar, Spann

Excused (1) - Bhattacharyya

Also present:

Gunner Rassch, LRB

James Owczarski, City Clerk

Alexis Laverdiere, Environmental Collaboration Office

Christine Thompson-Mosore, Mosorec International Foundation Inc.

Joseph Spolowicz, St. Michael's Ukrainian Catholic Church

Nevenka Lutzow Bralic, Federation of Croatian Societies, Inc. of Milwaukee

Isaac, Ghana-Milwaukee Association, Inc.

David Misky, DCD and RACM

Rayhainio Boynes, The Creative Corridor

Ola Olapo, Toki Engineers

Deborah Moore, Events and Outreach Coordinator (City Clerk's Office)

3. Review and approval of the previous meeting minutes from April 13, 2022.

The meeting minutes from April 13, 2022 were approved without objection.

4. Update on sister city relationships.

A. Irpin, Ukraine

Mr. Spolowicz gave an update. The war between Russia and Ukraine was still active. His church has raised and sent about \$150,000 to reliable charitable organizations to Ukraine in support. Military and medical equipment and supplies were also sent. He will personally sponsoring a family (son and mother) from Ukraine. The mayor of Irpin had met with Mayor Johnson recently in Milwaukee.

Chair Stamper said that there would be legislation to permit Milwaukee Police Department to send some items to Ukraine.

Member Tovar said that police items would be unused items from retired officers but he was unsure about weapons.

Member Spann inquired about previous donations given to Boris Nayflish and other ways people can provide support to Ukrainian families.

Mr. Spolowicz replied that monetary donations and sponsorship of families were needed, Ukrainians were not considered as refugees, any financial assistance to them (such as through the International Institute of Wisconsin) would be through humanitarian aid programs, and the funds that Mr. Nayflish was acquiring would be used towards rebuilding Irpin and not for aiding families in Milwaukee.

Ms. Lutzow Bralic added that Croatian Park was used to host a fundraiser for Irpin on Sunday.

B. Tema, Ghana

Isaac said that Tema officials were waiting to acquire a date from Mayor Johnson before moving forward with acquiring VISAs and traveling to Milwaukee for a signing ceremony.

Clerk Owczarski said that the City Clerk's Office would help arrange a signing ceremony at Milwaukee City Hall.

Members and Mr. Lee said it would be best for Tema officials to provide a prospective date range of travel and that the City would accommodate accordingly with setting a signing ceremony date, solidifying Mayor Johnson's availability, and providing VISA support letters to the Tema delegation.

Mr. Lee added that an agreement draft should be reviewed and approved by the Tema side, he had already sent the agreement draft and signing ceremony instructions to Isaac, and that he would resend the agreement draft and instructions to Isaac again.

C. Daegu Metropolitan City, South Korea

Ms. Laverdiere said that a letter of withdrawal as the local sponsor to the relationship was submitted by The Water Council, The Water Council would not renew the relationship (which was expiring) and did not have the capacity and commitment to continue the relationship.

Mr. Lee said that the committee may consider termination of the sister city relationship with Daegu at the next meeting as an agenda item.

Member Durtka inquired about The Water Council or the Environmental Collaboration

Office's capacity to engage in sister city relationships with other cities to take advantage of the City's water industry strengths.

Ms. Laverdiere replied that should would follow-up.

D. Tarime District, Tanzania

Ms. Thompson Mosore said that the pandemic had delayed or altered some activities and events with Tarime, activities with youths in Tarime would be postponed until the fall due to the census tracking that was taking place in Tarime presently, and she would like to collaborate with local Milwaukee schools towards education exchanges with Tarime.

Member Durtka said for Ms. Thompson Mosore to collaborate or have dialogue with the Tema sister city group or other Tanzanian groups, who were also engaging in educational exchanges with their respective cities, if possible.

E. Other

Mr. Lee said that the City was limited to 10 sister city relationships per City ordinance, there were 6 active sister city relationships presently, and the other sister cities that did not give updates were with Zadar (Croatia), Galway (Ireland), and Bomet County (Kenya).

5. Discussion or review of sister city programming, promotion, capacity, resources, funding, collaborations, or infrastructure.

A. Collaborations

i. General Mitchell International Airport

Member Tovar said that the County could not attend the meeting, they were still interested to attend in the future to explore installing a sister cities display at the airport to help promote the sister cities and international travel, and there was no commitment made yet.

Ms. Thompson Mosore added that all sister city relationship sponsoring organizations should be included in this discussion.

B. Dedicated personnel

Mr. Lee said commented. The committee was interested to acquire a dedicated position to administer sister cities programming, promotion, and support possibly through an internship program. UW-Milwaukee (Earn and Learn Program) and Marquette University (Trinity Fellowship Program) had presented to the committee in the past regarding their programs. UWM's program would be a work study program for undergraduate students, be only for the academic year, cost \$10 to \$14.50 per hour, cost \$1500 per semester, and require 8 to 12 hours of work per week. Marquette University's program would be for graduate students for a period of 21 months, costs \$1600 per month and \$33,600 overall, and require 18 hours of work per week during the school year and 40 hours during the summer. The committee should discuss further on what it wants to do next.

Member Tovar left the committee at 10:40 a.m.

Ms. Thompson Mosore inquired about the ability of foreign students to engage in a university internship or work study program and the ability to supervise an intern.

Chair Stamper inquired about how to pay the costs.

Member Durtka said that his organization did successful internships with Marquette University's program, paid with their own budget, had the ability to supervise them, there would be an application and selection process, perhaps the committee should consider a mentorship program, he was unsure of the ability of foreign students to participate and would have to defer to the program administrator's requirements, and for the committee and City to continue exploring ways (outside and within the City budget) to acquire the necessary funds to pay for costs.

C. Committee membership

Mr. Lee said that the committee may consider altering or adding additional committee membership to help assist and bring value to the sister cities, changing the membership would require legislative change to the City ordinance, and perhaps other entities that could be represented could be VISIT Milwaukee, Port Milwaukee, and Department of City Development.

Mr. Misky said that DCD can attend meetings and offer assistance outside of being a committee member and that it may be better to add non-City entities as members as opposed to more City entities.

Ms. Thompson Mosore said that a representative of one of the sister city relationship sponsors should be added as a member to offer their day-to-day boots to the ground experience and knowledge to the committee.

Members discussed being hesitant to change the City ordinance, focusing on acquiring a dedicated position first, perhaps creating a subcommittee consisting of all the local sponsoring organizations, having the subcommittee appoint a person to represent them as a member on the full committee, and simultaneously pursuing a dedicated position and additional committee membership.

D. Sister Cities Fund

Mr. Lee said that there was a sister cities special purpose account that was created to be used for sister city purposes.

Clerk Owczarski added that the account was intended to be used for sister city functions and that monetary donations for humanitarian reasons, such as the case with Irpin (Ukraine), was directed to go through humanitarian organizations rather than through the City and the account.

Ms. Thompson Mosore asked about the ability to send money and use money for sister city purposes.

Clerk Owczarski replied that people can make payment to the City of Milwaukee, include a memo, can specify the purpose, and that disbursement of the money would be at the direction of the Sister Cities Committee.

E. Other

There was no other discussion.

6. Discussion or review on establishing sister city relationships.

A. Lagos, Nigeria

Member Spann said that he and Mr. Olapo saw potential to establish a sister city relationship with Lagos with the acquisition of high speed rail train cars bought by the Mayor of Lagos from Talgo in Milwaukee, the deal was struck not too long ago, both he and Mr. Olapo were engineers and involved in local transit, there was a large Nigerian community in Milwaukee, and a letter of intent would be forthcoming.

Mr. Olapo said that a 501-3(c) was being formed, a letter of intent was forthcoming, and the process may be delayed a little to 2023 due to government elections taking place in Nigeria presently.

B. British Virgin Islands

Mr. Boynes said that he made a presentation last time, that he had support and opportunity to establish a relationship based on Afro-Caribbean culture, that he had submitted a letter of intent, and his firm had worked with and hired Tanzanians.

Mr. Lee said that he was not in receipt of a letter of intent.

This item was reconsidered after receipt of a letter of intent later in the meeting.

Mr. Lee read the letter of intent referencing The Creative Corridor as the local nonprofit organization.

Member Spann moved approval of the letter of intent and to extend an application to establish a sister city relationship to The Creative Corridor. Member Durtka seconded. There was no objection.

Mr. Lee said he will send the application to Mr. Boynes.

C. Other

There was no other discussion.

7. Discussion on sister city related events or activities.

A. Meet-and-greet

Ms. Thompson Mosore said that she had stepped in to help coordinate the meet-and-greet and would like the committee's input on what they wanted.

Ms. Moore said that she was the new Events and Outreach Coordinator for the City Clerk's Office, was an aldermanic legislative aide previously, and would help with this event as well.

Chair Stamper said for both Ms. Thompson Mosore and Moore to work together to coordinate first a small meet-and-greet event (prior to a big one) and report back to the

committee.

Ms. Lutzow Bralic said that Croatian Park could be used to host a meet-and-greet and offered 30 acres of park and had soccer fields.

B. Holiday Folk Fair

Member Durtka said that the International Institute of Wisconsin was in its initial planning for the fair, the fair would occur November 18 to the 20th, the fair would be in-person only, and sister cities' presence would be welcomed.

Chair Stamper said for Ms. Moore to assist again in setting up a booth at the fair and to work with Mr. Lee to plan.

Ms. Lutzow Bralic inquired about the theme of the fair.

Member Durtka replied that the theme was underdevelopment and would be announced in two weeks.

C. Sister Cities International Conference

Member Durtka said that the conference occurred in New Mexico, was largely virtual, was typical of past years with elections of a new board of director and chair, there would be two major events in the future: US-Mexico Mayor Summit on October 22, 2022 in San Diego and African Summit on February 23, 2023 in Cape Town, Milwaukee's presence would be desired at these events, both events would be hybrid, more information would be forwarded, and another event led by Ronda Pierce bringing together Tanzania sister cities would be held on July 29th that Milwaukee should participate in.

Member Spann said that he would participate and represent the committee at the African Summit and that he had to step away from being the SCI country representative for South Africa due to not being able to fulfill the demands of that role.

D. Other

There was no other discussion.

8. Public comments.

There were no public comments.

9. Announcements.

Ms. Lutzow Bralic announced and invited everyone to Croatian Fest, which was free, on Saturday, July 16th at Croatian Park and said that an invitation would be sent to the committee.

Member Durtka announced an art exhibit showing of the largest private South African art collection by William Kentridge currently on display at the Warehouse Art Museum at 1635 W. St. Paul Ave. from 10 am to 4 pm weekdays.

10. Next steps.

A. Agenda items for the next meeting

To be determined.

B. Set next meeting date and time

To be determined.

11. Adjournment.

Meeting adjourned at 11:42 a.m.

*Chris Lee, Staff Assistant
Council Records Section
City Clerk's Office*