



City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202

Meeting Minutes

SISTER CITIES COMMITTEE

ALD. KHALIF J. RAINEY, CHAIR

Al Durtka, Sanjib Bhattacharyya, Oscar Tovar, and Bruce Spann

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

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Thursday, April 29, 2021

10:00 AM

Virtual

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1. **Call to order.**

Meeting convened on 10:01 a.m.

2. **Roll call.**

Present 4 - Durtka, Tovar, Rainey, Spann

Excused 1 - Bhattacharyya

3. **Review and approval of the previous meeting minutes from November 23, 2020.**

Meeting minutes from November 23, 2020 were approved without objection.

4. **Review of annual reports.**

A. *Irpın, Ukraine (due 2/1)*

*Appearing:
Boris Nayflish*

Mr. Lee said that the local NGO contact was unable to appear and present their annual report due to medical reasons, Mr. Nayflish was present, and Mr. Nayflish was part of the local team.

Mr. Nayflish commented on the annual report. The virus pandemic caused challenges and halted travel of Irpın officials coming to Milwaukee in 2020. Despite the pandemic there was connection made between UW-Milwaukee and Irpın universities on possible exchange in education and business. Also, there exists much interest from the

business community in Irpin to engage with Milwaukee. If travel restrictions would ease, activities and plans would pick up for 2021 and Irpin officials would resume coming to Milwaukee.

Member Durtka inquired about a MoU between the universities and said that such a MoU could serve as a good model for others.

Chair Rainey inquired about the business community in Irpin wanting engagement.

Mr. Nayflish replied that the MoU can be shared, the component of the university in Irpin engaged with the MoU dealt with housing, the business community in Irpin was the IT industry, the IT industry in Irpin was growing, and those companies could offer public infrastructure patents and technology that would be beneficial to Milwaukee.

Member Tovar moved approval of the 2021 annual report for the sister city relationship with Irpin, Ukraine. There was no objection.

B. Galway, Ireland (due 3/16)

Appearing:

Molly Modlinski, CelticMKe and Irish Fest

Ms. Modlinski commented on the annual report. The relationship is centered on Irish Fest each year and instruction on Galway music at their school. Much activities were derailed by the pandemic. Irish Fest and Galway music instruction for 2020 became virtual in nature. The virtual festival featured Galway natives and performances. There was no travel between the cities. Communication between the cities remained despite the pandemic. Galway's 2020 European City of Culture celebration was rescheduled to 2023, and they plan to go to Galway to be a cohost for that celebration.

Member Tovar inquired about Irish Fest for 2021.

Ms. Modlinski replied that Irish Fest for 2021 would be in-person from August 20 to 22 and that she was unsure what international travel would be like.

Member Durtka moved approval of the 2021 annual report for the sister city relationship with Galway, Ireland. There was no objection.

5. Review of the renewal of the sister city relationship with Bomet County, Kenya.

Mr. Lee said that the committee had approved the renewal application at its last meeting contingent upon Mosore International Foundation (MIF) being the local nonprofit sponsor, MIF had withdrawn being a local sponsor, and the renewal was brought back to the committee for review and approval of a new local sponsor.

Appearing:

David Mugun

Dr. Alice Kones

Reine-Marie Assana, MILAWA

Mr. Murgor

Dr. Tomett

Yulita Mitei Cheruiyot

Mary Barougo

Mr. Mugun said that the new local sponsor would be the Milwaukee African Women's Association Inc. (MILAWA).

Ms. Assana said that she was the president of MILAWA, MILAWA was involved with providing sanitary pads to Bomet, and MILAWA has invested interest in the relationship.

Member Durtka inquired about the status of MILAWA as a nonprofit organization in Wisconsin.

Ms. Assana said that they were in the process of registering with the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institution to restore their status and registration and that changes in leadership recently caused oversight in the registration.

Mr. Murgor and Ms. Barougo added that Bomet welcomes Milwaukee to go to Bomet, Bomet is open to cooperation, and Bomet continues to want to establish a relationship with Milwaukee.

Member Durtka moved tentative approval of the renewal application to extend the sister city relationship with Bomet County (Kenya) with MILAWA as the local nonprofit sponsoring organization contingent upon MILAWA having proper filing status with Wisconsin and further moved to hold the renewal application for final approval at a subsequent meeting. There was no objection.

6. Review and approval terminating the sister city relationship with Medan, Indonesia.

Mr. Lee said that the Hmong Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce had withdrawn being the local sponsor to the relationship at the last committee meeting due to inactivity and the absence of contacts behind the relationship from both cities and that the committee wanted to entertain terminating the relationship should those issues remain.

Member Durtka and Spann said that the relationship was a classic example of one managed by individuals rather than an organization, that relationships would cease once those individuals were gone, and that going forward relationships need to be backed by viable organizations and not by individuals.

Member Durtka moved approval to terminate the sister city relationship with Medan, Indonesia. There was no objection.

Mr. Lee added that the termination would proceed to the City's Community and Economic Development Committee and Common Council for approval.

7. Presentation from the Dept. of Public Works regarding a Sister Cities memorial project.

*Appearing:
Anthony Gayfield, Dept. of Public Works (DPW)*

Mr. Gayfield commented. He is the Parking Services Supervisor in DPW. There were efforts to repurpose and activate a space in the MacArthur Square plaza into a Sister Cities memorial. The space had declined in use due to safety issues. The idea would be for the space to be a gathering place for local organizations and display the sister cities. Some funds have been put together. The project could be small or big depending on interest from the committee.

Member Tovar said the project would be great for exposure and that Mr. Gayfield had reached out to him.

Chair Rainey asked about the next steps.

Mr. Gayfield replied. They have a landscaper and were moving forward with making designs. He would have to reconnect with his cohort. Artists would be acquired to create pieces for the sister cities. He would have a formal presentation within 90 days.

Member Durtka said more information is needed and that the project concept should expand to be an international space with sister cities being a component of the space.

Member Tovar moved to hold review of the project for further presentation. There was no objection.

8. Review and approval of the 2020 Sister Cities Committee annual report.

Mr. Lee gave an overview. The annual report is required by City ordinance. The report contains information regarding the committee, the sister city relationships, and activities of the committee for 2020. By the end of 2020 there were six active sister city relationships (Daegu, Galway, Irpin, Medan, Tarime, Zadar). There was one new sister city relationship that was still pending a signed agreement (Tema). One relationship had expired and was still pending its renewal (Bomet). All annual reports from the relationships were submitted and approved by the committee. The committee held two meetings for 2020 and had welcomed Chair Rainey as its new chair.

Member Spann moved approval of the 2020 Sister Cities Committee annual report. There was no objection.

9. Updates or announcements.

A. Status of sister city relationships

Mr. Lee gave an update. The termination of the sister city relationship with Medan would bring the total of active relationships in good standing to 5 (Daegu Metropolitan City, Galway, Irpin, Tarime District, and Zadar). Pending relationships include the renewal of Bomet County (expired) and the new relationship with Tema, Ghana (pending sister city agreement signing ceremony). The sister city relationship with Tarime District (Tanzania) expires November 7, 2021, a renewal application to extend the relationship would be forthcoming in the near future if submitted, and renewal application information was sent to the local NGO.

B. Sister city related events

There was no discussion.

C. Other

There was no discussion.

10. Agenda items for the next meeting.

Member Spann said that he would like to see City officials travel to other sister city relationships (which was lacking) and inquired about non-City personnel representing the City, including himself.

Mr. Lee said that member Spann could represent himself as a member of the Sister Cities Committee if he travels, the City ordinances prohibit using City funds for sister city related travel, that the City ordinances would have to be changed to allow for using City funds for such travel, and that the City budget would have to allocate funds for such purposes.

Next agenda items to include review of renewal application for the sister city relationship with Bomet County (Kenya), review of DPW Sister Cities memorial project, possibly review of a renewal application for the sister city relationship with Tarime District (Tanzania), and discussion on the role of the City on sister city related travel.

11. Set next meeting date and time.

To be determined.

12. Adjournment.

Meeting adjourned at 10:52 a.m.

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