



City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53202

Meeting Minutes

SISTER CITIES COMMITTEE

ALD. RUSSELL W. STAMPER, II, CHAIR
Al Durtka, Tiffany Barta, Oscar Tovar and Charles Vang
Staff Assistant, Chris Lee, 286-2232, Fax: 286-3456,
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Thursday, June 16, 2016

10:00 AM

Zeidler Municipal Bldg, Room 102 (Fishbowl)
841 N. Broadway, Milwaukee, WI 53202

1. Call to Order.

Meeting called to order at 10:03 a.m.

Present (5) - Vang, Tovar, Barta, Durtka, Stamper

Individuals also present:

LaWanda Fletcher, Legislative Reference Bureau
Samuel Dawson, International Institute of Wisconsin

2. Review of the Meeting Minutes from May 19, 2016.

Mr. Durtka moved approval, seconded by Mr. Tovar, of the meeting minutes from May 19, 2016. There was no objection.

3. Proposal to establish a sister city relationship with Tarime, Tanzania.

-Review of application

Individuals appearing:

Christine Thompson-Mosore, Mosorec International Foundation
Jason Fields, former Wisconsin State Representative and Assembly Member

Members reviewed and discussed the sister city relationship application submitted by Ms. Thompson-Mosore on behalf of her foundation.

Ald. Stamper said the application satisfied the application requirements with respects to local sponsoring nonprofit organization, committee of people, similarities between cities, economic and cultural benefits, community support, and government support. There are major opportunities in urban agriculture and solar energy. Perhaps a cultural event can occur in the City to bring public awareness and promotion to the relationship.

Mr. Durtka gave comments. The application is thorough. Realistic goals and priorities need to be developed. Initial focus should be on easily achievable tasks that can happen immediately to get the relationship going. Further achievements would come and be built upon the relationship as it gains synergy. Focus should be

on culture, education, and health as mentioned in the application. A sister city relationship in its first years is a period of cities getting to know one another. There is opportunity in the City's Holiday Folk Fair in November for the foundation to be involved to introduce Tarime culture and natives.

Ald. Stamper inquired about Tarime government support, representation, and the sister cities program involvement in the National League of Cities.

Ms. Thompson-Mosore replied. The president of Tanzania has a preference that government representation comes first from those officials who are already based in the United States, primarily officials in the United Nations office in New York City or the Tanzanian Embassy in Washington D.C. Officials in Tarime may be able to come to Milwaukee based on financial feasibility, and they are on board with a sister city relationship. There is no Tanzanian consulate office in Chicago.

Mr. Durtka responded that there was close connection initially between Sister Cities International (SCI) and the National League of Cities but not anymore. There is movement to possibly reconnect the two.

Ms. Barta said that youth participation, such as through a youth council, in sister city relationships would be a great piece. She questioned about priority initiatives described in the application.

Ms. Thompson-Mosore responded. Initial priorities would include cultural, health, and educational activities. These areas would be inclusive of everyone young and old. There would be local promotion to increase awareness in Tanzanian culture through local events and festivities. Tanzanian delegates who visit Milwaukee would also be introduced to American culture. Understanding of each other's culture is important. Business activities would be included but would not be an initial priority as it may not be as inclusive as compared to the other priority areas. The foundation has a goal to have ambassadors, and the youth can be a part of that. Youths can also assist the relationship through social media.

Mr. Fields said that the addition of this relationship is a step to make Milwaukee more international. Of importance is cultural awareness and education, which will lead to business opportunities.

Mr. Durtka moved approval of the sister city relationship application for Tarime District, Tanzania. Furthermore, Mr. Durtka moved to recommend approval of the sister city relationship to the Community and Economic Development Committee and Common Council. Mr. Vang seconded. There was no objection.

Ald. Stamper remarked on the sister city relationship process. A resolution to establish the sister city relationship will be reviewed and adopted at the June 22, 2016 Community and Economic Development Committee meeting and July 6, 2016 Common Council meeting followed by the mayor of Milwaukee signing the resolution. Lastly, a signing ceremony at City Hall will be scheduled for the signing of a sister city agreement between the mayors from both municipalities when both mayors are able to appear together.

The sister city application for Tarime District, Tanzania can be found within Common Council File Number 160176.

-Review of draft resolution

Members reviewed the draft resolution.

Mr. Tovar moved approval, seconded by Ms. Barta, of the draft resolution establishing a sister city relationship with Tarime District, Tanzania. There was no objection.

4. Discussion on the Sister Cities Committee relative to its goals, purpose, and activities.

Meeting recessed at 10:24 a.m.

Meeting reconvened at 10:25 a.m.

Members reviewed each other's written statements, which can be found within Common Council File Number 151716.

Ald. Stamper commented. Members' written statements referenced enhancing the committee, making relationships more global, utilizing local assets to leverage assets from other cities, promoting peace, and youth inclusion. The committee should focus on a few goals to capitalize on for growth. There are grants opportunities from SCI for business promotion and relationship building. A budget can possibly be created based on recommendations and additional operations in the program. Perhaps capacity or a department can be created for the City's sister city program. The goal should be to make the City into an international hub. Water is the City's main asset and should be leveraged.

Mr. Dawson said that he is the International Programs Coordinator at the International Institute of Wisconsin and has observed Chicago prioritizing to be a global city on a mayoral level. There are state department programs, city programs, and outside agency programs there that consistently engage international audiences.

Ald. Stamper said that Mr. Dawson should appear at a future committee meeting to provide information to help the City and committee grow its sister city program and relationships.

Mr. Vang said that the City needs to do more to set goals to enhance the sister city program. Capacity should be added to the committee or program, perhaps with funding from the City's budget.

Mr. Tovar inquired about the acquisition of grant funds from SCI for the City's sister city relationships.

Mr. Durtka replied that some SCI grant funds were acquired to assist in the sister city relationship with uMhlathuze, South Africa in the past for a health center. There are very few national grants available now. Focus should be on acquiring available grants locally.

Mr. Tovar made comments. There should be capitalization on using local corporate headquarters and partnerships, such as Johnson Controls, to participate in sister city relationships. Youth involvement can occur through exchanges and internships locally and on an international level. There was a recent Jeju, South Korea delegation visit to the City through the Water Council, and Jeju is interested in establishing a sister city relationship.

Ald. Stamper said that members should each find a possible sister city to establish.

Mr. Durka remarked. Emphasis should be made that sister city relationships are joint partnerships and not a single effort on one side or the other. The City's mindset

should change from being an ethnic city to an international city with a global environment in terms of its offerings and dealings. Engagement in young people should really be on young professionals as opposed to youths since the international community does not see youths being limited to just teenagers.

Ms. Barta said that the City's sister city relationships, committee, and program need to be better publicized to the public for them to see the value and benefits of such relationships and program. Also, the committee should build upon existing aspects and work to sustain them.

Mr. Vang inquired about whether the committee or a different entity should handle international matters and sister city relationships involving the City?

Mr. Durtka replied. SCI would have a more active role in the City's international and sister city relationship matters. Volunteers are the key to making sister city relationships successful.

Mr. Durtka said that there was a proposal from the City to host an annual SCI conference about four years ago. That proposal was very poor, was merely a 4-page faxed document, and had no one in appearance during its presentation. VISIT Milwaukee was involved in the proposal. That annual conference bid was given to Minneapolis reluctantly even though the desire was for Milwaukee to host. There was much representation present at Minneapolis' proposal presentation. There is interest in smaller cities like Milwaukee, as opposed to the typical big cities, to host a SCI conference due to the City's more congenial, cooperative, and accessible business environment. The City should bid to host a future SCI annual conference but will have to improve its proposal and presentation efforts significantly. About 500 people from around the world attend SCI's annual conferences. Hosting an SCI annual conference would greatly assist towards the promotion and publicizing of the City's sister city program and relationships.

Mr. Tovar said that Paul Upchurch from VISIT Milwaukee should meet with the committee at a future meeting to discuss the possibility of bidding to host a future SCI annual conference. VISIT Milwaukee acts on the City's behalf regarding tourism.

Ald. Stamper made final remarks. Clerk staff shall put together a list of recommendations from members' comments today regarding the goals and objectives of the committee. Current ordinance states that no city funds shall be used for travel expenses by city officials in connection with any sister city or friendly exchange relationship, the mayor's office shall have oversight responsibility for the sister city program, and the total number of sister city relationships adopted should not exceed 10. The city ordinance may be modified to accomplish the committee's goals going forward. Additionally, acquiring city and grant funding are possibilities to help the committee accomplish its goals.

5. Adjournment.

*Meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m.
Chris Lee, Staff Assistant*