



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 Bruce Spann
Staff Assistant, Chris Lee, 286-2232, Fax: 286-3456,
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Legislative Liaison, Aaron Cadle, 286-8666,
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Thursday, January 10, 2019

10:00 AM

Room 301-B, 3rd Floor, City Hall

1. Call to order.

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

2. Roll call.

Present 5 - Durtka, Tovar, Stamper, Barta, Spann

3. Review and approval of the previous meeting minutes from October 3, 2018.

Member Durtka moved approval, seconded by member Tovar, of the meeting minutes from October 3, 2018. There was no objection.

4. Review and approval of the renewal application for the sister city relationship with Galway, Ireland (expires 5/23/19).

*Individual appearing:
Paige Prichard, Irish Festivals Inc. & Celtic MKE*

Ms. Prichard commented. The relationship is based on the yearly Irish festival that is held every year. This year's festival will showcase the City of Galway. Many delegates from Galway will be present. A goal is to bring in other United States Galway sister cities to attend the fest. The main contact in Galway for the relationship is Keith Finnegan of Galway Bay Radio. Last year's fest was attended by Mayor Tom Barrett and featured We Banjo 3, the official ambassadors to the world for Irish music and culture. There was also a Milwaukee City Hall reception last year with Galway delegates prior to the festival.

Members questioned sister city activities in other areas outside of the festival, the luncheon, Irish-based companies in Milwaukee, partnership with the Water Council, and the 2019 festival.

Ms. Prichard replied. There have been other activities. There is an Irish music archival program, which involves digitizing Irish sheet music in partnership with an Irish college, with possibilities for bringing in interns. The University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee Celtic Studies program hosts an Irish immersion weekend, and Irish Fest has been supportive of the university's language program. There is interest to work

with the Galway's 2020 water preservation initiative, and she can check back with her board to possibly contact the Water Council to become involve with the water effort. The luncheon was centered on promoting tourism to Ireland and helped Irish Fest obtain a grant to assist Irish travelers to come to Milwaukee and other cities in the United States. There are a few Irish-based companies in Milwaukee that relate to construction and theater. The festival for 2019 will be from August 15th to the 18th.

Member Barta said that there were students from Alverno College that had gone to Galway and she is interested for more information about the internship possibilities within the relationship.

Member Oscar moved approval of the renewal application to extend the sister city relationship with Galway, Ireland. There was no objection.

Ald. Stamper commented. An update on the festival should be given later this year to the committee. He is interested to set up a sister city booth at the festival and possibly have the committee meet Mr. Finnegan. With the committee's approval, the next step is for the matter to go before the City's Community and Economic Development Committee and Common Council for review and approval via resolution.

5. Review and approval of a change of local sponsorship for the sister city relationship with Medan, Indonesia.

Individuals appearing:

*Ger Thao, Hmong Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce (HWCC)
Benevolentia Wandana*

Mr. Thao said that other representatives could not appear today and they would better provide information regarding the change of local sponsor.

Ms. Wandana said that she and Khay Khong look forward to working with HWCC as the local sponsor going forward.

Member Tovar said that HWCC is a credible local nonprofit organization.

Member Dutka moved approval of the Hmong Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce as the new local nonprofit sponsor for the sister city relationship with Medan, Indonesia. There was no objection.

6. Status update on sister city relationships.

Mr. Lee gave an update. The committee should consider and be mindful of sister city relationships expiring this year, lacking 2018 annual report submittals, or lacking a local nonprofit sponsor. Those expiring in 2019 are Galway, Ireland (5/23/19); Medan, Indonesia (10/30/19); and uMhlathuze, South Africa (5/23/19). Those without a local nonprofit sponsor prior to the meeting are Bomet County (Kenya), Medan (Indonesia), and uMhlathuze (South Africa). Those lacking 2018 annual reports are Bomet County (Kenya), uMhlathuze (South Africa), and Zadar (Croatia). Representatives are present to address the status of the relationship with Bomet County (Kenya). The representatives behind the Zadar (Croatia) relationship are not present and had communicated that their 2018 annual report would be forthcoming.

Individuals appearing:

Christine Thompson Mosore, Mosorec International Foundation

*Sam Belton, City Net Jazz Café
Benevolentia Wandana
Arlisia McHenry, City Clerk's Office*

Ms. Thompson Mosore gave an update on the sister city relationship with Tarime District, Tanzania. A main activity of the relationship has been installing a water well at the school in the township of Tarime. She has met representatives of charitable organizations that aid with water projects in Africa, such as Waterboys and Hoops2o. She has made an application to Waterboys for funding. There was a recent delegation trip to Tanzania in December last year. Member Spann, Mr. Belton, herself, sorority members, and other community members were part of the delegation trip. A purpose of the trip was to carry out the program Hope, Food, and Education. Various supplies and items were donated to over 300 children and community people in Tarime including soccer balls, clothing, bottled water, and a Christmas holiday meal. There was a holiday celebration at the school in Tarime that featured a cultural performance and a rap by Mr. Belton. Many Tarime youths were engaged as interpreters. The delegation visited various places, such as the national cultural museum and the Serengeti, the local sponsor in Tarime, government officials, a coffee farm, and crossed over to Kenya. The delegation was mentioned in the Tanzanian Daily News. The next trip to Tanzania is June 2019, and a goal is to sponsor young people to go.

Member Spann commented. Waterboys has focused on Tanzania and provided 48 wells there. NFL Philadelphia Eagles player Chris Long founded Waterboys. NBA Milwaukee Bucks player Malcolm Brogdon also has helped established Hoops2o as a subsidiary charitable organization under Waterboys. An answer is expected soon on the application made to Waterboys. He and others are interested in joining Mr. Long on a trip to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro in the near future, and the committee is invited. The committee is invited to offer support to the foundation to seek assistance for the water well.

Ald. Stamper said for staff to prepare a letter from the committee in support of the Tarime water well project that was proposed to Waterboys and Hoops2o, and perhaps the Common Council president can also provide a letter of support.

Mr. Belton commented. He is involved in the coffee industry, is working with the coffee farmers in Tanzania, has imported coffee from there, has a local shop at 306 E. Wisconsin Avenue, and is raising funds for the school in Tarime. The YMCA and Boys and Girls Club are possible ways to involve youths as part of the relationship, and he has done training for youths at these organizations.

Ms. McHenry said that the Milwaukee Youth Council can be a possible source of involvement as part of the relationship.

Members questioned about showing support and bringing mutual exchange to Milwaukee.

Ms. Thompson Mosore responded. There is difficulty for Tanzanians to acquire VISAs to come to the United States. Perhaps creating and enhancing a school exchange program is a way to legitimize and make travel to the United States easier.

Ms. Wandana concurred that many countries have the VISA issue and that written letters of support from governments, government officials, or the committee can make individuals obtain VISAs easier to Milwaukee.

Individuals appearing:

*Dr. Alice Kones
David Mugun
Samuel Jackoyo, Kenyans in Milwaukee*

Dr. Kones, Mr. Mugun, and Mr. Jackoyo gave an update on the sister city relationship with Bomet County, Kenya. The loss of the previous local nonprofit sponsor Pan-African Community Association (PACA) and the political changes in Bomet County have caused great difficulty to progress the relationship and generate an annual report. The relationship has to basically start over to create new relationships with the new governor in Bomet County and to replicate the efforts that were done within PACA. Through collaboration with the Rotary Club in Illinois, a water well was drilled in the township of Bomet but still needs resources to test and filter the water accordingly. The well water is not sanitary and drinkable. There was the distribution of 300 pads to school girls in Bomet. There are possibilities to import avocados from Bomet farms. A Marquette University student did travel to experience Bomet during a trip, and a goal is to expand or create student exchange with support between the cities. Kenyans in Milwaukee is a volunteer group behind the relationship, has yet to attain nonprofit status, and is working towards acquiring nonprofit status. The VISA issue also applies to Bomet citizens traveling to the United States. They will continue to find a solution to acquire a local nonprofit sponsor.

Member Spann said that he can forward information regarding resources for the water well, such as Engineers of Our Borders and Waterboys.

Individuals appearing:

*Joseph Spolowicz, St. Michael's Ukrainian Catholic Church
Boris Nayflish, Griffon Brands, Inc.*

Mr. Spolowicz and Nayflish gave an update on the sister city relationship with Irpin, Ukraine. The biggest activity thus far was a Ukrainian Independence Day celebration concert event last August at Alverno College. The event had about 100 attendees, had a performance by an Irpin singer, was well received, helped fundraise for church repairs, and celebrated culture. The church has hosted Irpin delegates, officials, and a student. Anastasiia Popsui is now the acting mayor of Irpin in place of Mayor Volodymyr Karpliuk, who had resigned. A delegation of journalists from the City of Kiev also came to Milwaukee in November. There was a recent delegation trip to Irpin. Although Mayor Tom Barrett could not go, a Milwaukee city flag was given to present to the City of Irpin. Another delegation trip to Irpin is planned for this June. There are goals for tangible economic growth and student exchanges between the two cities.

7. Discussion on sister city related events or activities.

a. 2018 Holiday Folk Fair recap (11/16 to 11/18/18)

Individual appearing:

Arlisia McHenry, City Clerk's Office

Member Durtka commented. Last year's event was the 75th anniversary. Over time he has seen transitions in cultures and participants at the event. There are ongoing efforts to bring new communities to participate in the event and make connections. The VISA travel issue has played a role in preventing some culture communities to participate. He recently took a group of performers to Japan.

Ms. McHenry commented. The booth exhibit was successful again, better, told a story to visitors, and had an engaging photo cutout board. There were display materials of sister cities, especially those of Irpin (Ukraine). Student day was great. There was a stamp this year to stamp student passports. Volunteers included committee members, City staff, local sister city representatives, and the Youth Council. More local sponsor organizations should be involved and contribute more to display materials for this year's booth at the fair.

b. Meet and Greet

Individuals appearing:

Arlisia McHenry, City Clerk's Office

Paige Prichard, Irish Festivals Inc. & Celtic MKE

Christine Thompson Mosore, Mosorec International Foundation

Benevolentia Wandana

Members and participants discussed that the event should be pushed back to February 28th with doors open at 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Celtic MKE center in Wauwatosa, have a potluck with food from each sister city, be an open house, have different music from the sister cities, have alcohol if possible, and hold possible booth exhibits.

Ms. Prichard and Ald. Stamper said that they can look into acquiring the necessary licenses, if any, to hold the event.

Member Durtka said that activities should be limited for this first event to be effective and that activities can expand for future events.

Ald. Stamper said that there should be a balance of the event to be a small gathering for committee members, all local sponsor representatives and their communities, and as well as for having selected guests for networking.

c. Other

There was no other discussion.

8. Discussion on new job position and study.

Ald. Stamper commented. The committee was given an initial study of a City position by the Dept. of Employee Relations in past meetings. He will continue to look into possibilities and will follow-up with the committee on developing a position within the City, outside the City, or encompassing a collaboration between the City and an outside source.

9. Review and approval of 2018 Sister City Committee Annual Report.

Mr. Lee gave an overview. The report describes the activities of the committee, a summary of the committee meetings, a listing of current sister city relationships, status of relationships, and highlights of the committee for 2018.

Member Durtka moved approval, seconded by member Barta, of the 2018 Sister Cities Committee Annual Report. There was no objection.

10. Announcements or updates.

There were no announcements or updates.

11. Agenda items for the next meeting.

To be determined.

12. Set next meeting date and time.

To be determined.

13. Adjournment.

Meeting adjourned at 11:57 a.m.

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