



City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53202

Meeting Minutes

SISTER CITIES COMMITTEE

ALD. RUSSELL W. STAMPER, II, CHAIR

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

**Staff Assistant, Chris Lee, 286-2232, Fax: 286-3456,
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Thursday, September 26, 2019

1:30 PM

Room 301-B, Third Floor, City Hall

1. Call to order.

Meeting called to order at 1:34 p.m.

2. Roll call.

*Present 4 - Stamper, Durtka, Tovar, Spann
Excused 1 - Bhattacharyya*

3. Review and approval of the previous meeting minutes.

Meeting minutes from June 18, 2019 was approved without objection.

4. Review and approval of the application to establish a sister city relationship with Tema, Ghana.

Individuals appearing:

Ald. Ashanti Hamilton, Common Council President

James Starke, 1st Aldermanic District

Martin Oduro, Ghana Milwaukee Association

Esther Oduro, Ghana Milwaukee Association

Dennis Annan, Ghana Milwaukee Association

Pastor Ebenezer, Africans in Milwaukee Association

Almarie Acosta-Cepeda, International Institute of Wisconsin Intern

Pres. Hamilton said that he had visited Tema, there are potential opportunities for mutual benefit between the two cities, the two cities are similar to each other being both industrial cities, there is a prominent Ghanaian community in Milwaukee in support, he initiated the proposal for a sister city relationship, Tema is excited to establish a relationship, timing is important, Ghana is an emerging nation, and his name Ashanti is a main tribe in Ghana.

Mr. Oduro, Annan, and Starke gave a PowerPoint presentation.

The Ghanaian flag components of red, gold, green, and black star represent the blood of the people, gold as a rich resource in the nation, the nation's abundance forestry,

and the people of the nation that fought for independence. Ghana is about the size of the state of Oregon with 25 million people and is located by the Gulf of Guinea and the South Atlantic Ocean. Tema is about half the size of Milwaukee with about 300,000 people, is the busiest and one of the best performing industrial port city for the nation and other landlocked neighboring African nations, considered the heart of development for the nation and center of the world, plays a significant role in import and export trade, and brings much revenue for the nation. Tema and Ghana offers much raw materials and agricultural products for export. Cocoa, coffee, oil, gold, tuna, and diamonds are examples.

The government structure for Ghana and Tema is similar to the United States with democratic 4-year election cycles, Tema Metro Assembly as an equivalent to the Milwaukee Common Council, and a mayor. The main organization to manage the relationship in Tema would be the International Partnership division of Tema's government. The division has existing sister city relationships with other U.S. cities like Norfolk (Virginia) and San Diego (California), has experience to support a relationship with Milwaukee, and has the infrastructure for continuity.

Main exchange opportunities and interests for Tema include acquiring technological and automation advancement knowledge for its port that is being updated, motorcycles, beer products, city planning and development knowledge, tech products, clean water knowledge, and public infrastructure knowledge. Exchange opportunities for Milwaukee from Tema include raw materials, agricultural products, and cultural activities.

Mutual exchange opportunities between both cities include ongoing higher education student program exchanges between universities, nursing exchange such as the successful program occurring in Norfolk (Virginia), and medical practice exchange for hospitals and doctors.

Ghana is in the mist of celebrating its 400th anniversary year of independence and their Year of Return calling for Ghanaians worldwide to return to Ghana to celebrate. The local Ghanaian community through various groups will continue to hold events and can participate in City sponsored events or events sponsored by other organizations, such as African World Fest and Black Arts Fest, to support the relationship and African culture as a whole. Current activities include travel assistance from and to Tema and local dance performances.

Members questioned GMA's membership requirements based on ethnicity and Tema's other sister relationships.

Mr. Oduro replied. Any person can be a GMA member regardless of ethnicity, their by-laws erroneously stated that members must be Ghanaian, Tema's sister city relationship with Norfolk has a successful nursing program exchange, and they will continue to acquire information about those other relationships to learn, incorporate successes, and expand from them.

Member Spann said that he will likely travel to Ghana and Tema soon, would like to meet with the relevant contacts there who are involved with the proposed relationship, and that there is opportunity to import tea and coffee from Tema to Milwaukee local businesses.

Member Durtka said that he would like for the local Ghanaian community to focus on uniquely celebrating Ghanaian culture as opposed to African culture as a whole going

forward, such as at the upcoming Holiday International Folk Fair.

Member Durtka moved approval of the application to establish a sister city relationship with Tema, Ghana, as submitted by the Ghana Milwaukee Association. There was no objection.

Mr. Lee said that the next step would be for a resolution file on the matter to go through the City's Community and Economic Development Committee and Common Council approval process.

5. Review and approval of annual reports.

a. Tarime District, Tanzania

Mr. Lee said that the 2019 annual report was due August 13th, no report was received, and the local sponsor representative could not attend today's meeting.

Member Tovar moved to hold to the call of the chair review of the 2019 annual report for the sister city relationship with Tarime District, Tanzania. There was no objection.

b. Bomet County, Kenya

Mr. Lee said that the 2019 annual report was due August 29th, no report was received, and the local sponsor representative could not attend today's meeting.

Member Tovar moved to hold to the call of the chair review of the 2019 annual report for the sister city relationship with Bomet County, Kenya. There was no objection.

6. Review and approval of continuing or terminating the sister city relationship with uMhlathuze, South Africa.

Mr. Lee said that the sister city relationship has been inactive for some time, has no main local contact point person, has no local nonprofit sponsor, and had expired May 23, 2019.

Member Tovar moved termination, seconded by member Durtka, of the sister city relationship with uMhlathuze, South Africa. There was no objection.

Mr. Lee said that the next step is for a resolution file for termination of the relationship to go through the Community and Economic Development Committee and Common Council approval process.

7. Discussion on adding a position for the sister city program.

Ald. Stamper said that he would like to discuss with other alderpersons on adding resources or a new position to the sister cities program in the City's 2020 budget; however, due to the difficult budget, adding a new position or resources may not be feasible and the route of fundraising may have to be the pathway to add resources or capacity to the program.

8. Discussion on sister city related events.

a. Meet and greet

Ald. Stamper said that scheduling a date with buy-in from all participants has been challenging, and Arlisia will continue to plan the event.

Mr. Lee said that Arlisia could not attend today's meeting but wanted to convey the importance for her to work offline and acquire buy-in and participation from all sister city local sponsoring organizations in order to make this event possible and successful.

b. Holiday Folk Fair

Ald. Stamper said that past participation at the fair with a sister cities exhibit booth has been successful and that the City should continue to participate again at the upcoming fair.

Mr. Lee said that Arlisia could not attend today's meeting but wanted to convey the importance for her to work offline and acquire buy-in and participation from all sister city local sponsoring organizations in order to make the booth possible and successful again for this year.

c. Other

There was no other discussion.

9. Sister city status updates.

a. Local sponsoring organizations

Joseph Spolowicz, St. Michael's Ukrainian Catholic Church, appeared and gave an update on sister city activities with Irpin, Ukraine. The City of Irpin recently invited Milwaukee City officials to their Day of Irpin event in Irpin from September 21-22, 2019. He and his sister recently traveled to Irpin to partake in that event and presented gifts from Milwaukee City Clerk's Office to Irpin city officials. He brought back gifts from the City of Irpin to the Sister Cities Committee on behalf of the City of Milwaukee. The gifts include a history book of Irpin, an ornament glass block, a cardholder, and commemorative stamps. He enjoyed the greenspace, environment, and family atmosphere of Irpin during his stay there. There has been frustration on the side of Irpin with the lack of direct involvement and delegation visit of Milwaukee city officials to Irpin despite delegation visits of Irpin officials to Milwaukee. They would like to see City of Milwaukee representation or assistance improve and increase for this relationship. He and his church cannot represent the City of Milwaukee in an official capacity without further City involvement and assistance, such as funding.

Ald. Stamper said that adding a dedicated new position to administer and manage the City's sister city program is crucial to better provide assistance to the sister cities and local sponsoring organizations.

Member Spann questioned the impact of the current Ukraine and United State relations given President Trump's current dilemma involving Ukraine.

Mr. Spolowicz replied. The discussion of adding capacity to the sister city program has not resulted in anything tangible for over a year now. The U.S. presidential issue involving Ukraine does not present any dangers between the countries. There is an active war between Russia and Eastern Ukraine. There is some transition in the

mayor of Irpin. The next major event in Irpin is their independence celebration.

Mike Mitchell and Molly Modlinski, Irish Festivals Inc. and CelticMKE, appeared and gave an update. Irish Fest was held recently with a delegation of officials from Galway, which occurs annually during the fest. There is the same sentiment to have Milwaukee city officials also travel to visit Galway. Their organization annually travels to Galway. They are still open to have their center be a venue for the meet and greet event.

b. Committee staff

Mr. Lee gave an update on the status of sister city relationships. Current sister city relationships (8) are Bomet County (Kenya), Daegu Metropolitan City (South Korea), Galway (Ireland), Irpin (Ukraine), Medan (Indonesia), Tarime District (Tanzania), uMhlathuze (South Africa), and Zadar (Croatia). The relationship with Medan was recently renewed for another 5 years. Anticipated for termination is the relationship with uMhlathuze. Anticipated as a new relationship is Tema, Ghana. 2019 annual reports have been or will be due for the relationships with Tarime District, Bomet County, and Zadar.

c. Other

Anne Leplae, Alliance Francaise, appeared and commented. Her organization is interested in proposing a friendly exchange relationship with the province of Quebec in Canada. There is a historical connection with the birth place of the first mayor of Milwaukee, Solomon Laurent Juneau, being that of Repentigny, Quebec.

Members and Mr. Lee said that a sister city or friendly exchange relationship would need to be a state-to-state or city-to-city relationship. Both parties to a relationship have to be equivalent to each other in jurisdiction, size, and government.

Ms. Leplae said that she will explore finding an appropriate city in Quebec to establish a friendly exchange relationship with.

10. Announcements.

There were no announcements.

11. Agenda items for the next meeting.

To be determined.

12. Set next meeting date and time.

To be determined possibly for early November.

13. Adjournment.

Meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

*Chris Lee, Staff Assistant
Council Records Section*

City Clerk's Office