



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*

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Wednesday, September 22, 2021

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://global.gotomeeting.com/join/877931373>. You can also dial in using your phone United States: +1 (408) 650-3123 and Access Code: 877-931-373.

1. Call to order.

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

2. Roll call.

Present 5 - Durtka, Tovar, Rainey, Spann, Bhattacharyya

3. Review and approval of the previous meeting minutes from April 29, 2021.

The meeting minutes from April 19, 2021 were approved without objection.

4. Review and approval of sister city relationship renewal applications.

a. Bomet County, Kenya (exp. 11/23/20)

*Appearing:
David Mugun*

Mr. Lee said that the renewal application to extend the sister city relationship with Bomet County was held at the last meeting due to the local sponsoring organization, Milwaukee African Women's Association, not having proper status in Wisconsin. The organization has since then properly regain status and registration in Wisconsin.

Mr. Mugun said that there is desire to continue and build the relationship between the cities.

Member Durtka moved approval of the renewal application to extend the sister city relationship with Bomet County, Kenya. There was no objection.

b. *Tarime District, Tanzania (exp. 11/7/21)*

Appearing:

Christine Thompson Mosore, Mosorec International Foundation, Inc.

Ms. Thompson Mosore gave a presentation as follows:

Her foundation manages the relationship from both sides with offices in both cities. Her brother heads the chapter in Tarime. Activities for 2021 in Tarime have included providing education for girls, school supplies, electricity with a recently installed generator, musical instruments, musical training and activities, employment of youths and young adults via jobs and construction, providing girls and women with housing, fundraising to assist with medical expenses of a woman, and celebration of the Milwaukee Bucks. Still in the works were phase 3 for the generator, expansion of classrooms at the school, and the cultural center in Tarime. In Milwaukee activities have included an awareness event focused on fighting human trafficking and participation with the Sister Cities International African Region-Tanzania subcommittee. With the passing of President H.E. Dr. John Pombe Joseph Magufuli, Tanzania elected its first woman president, H.E. Samia Sululu Hassan.

Member Bhattacharyya inquired about the local health system and pandemic support in Tarime.

Ms. Thompson Mosore replied. The government in Tarime and Tanzania are taking the same precautions against COVID-19, including vaccinating the people there. Her foundation has assisted with providing soap for hand washing, water, and funds to purchase masks and other supplies impacting over 600 students. There is collaboration with school leaders and the government in Tarime.

Member Spann moved approval of the renewal application to extend the sister city relationship with Tarime District, Tanzania. There was no objection.

5. Review and approval of sister city relationship annual reports.

a. *Daegu Metropolitan City, South Korea (exp. 5/6/21)*

Appearing:

Elizabeth Hittman, Environmental Collaboration Office

Ms. Hittman gave an overview. The local sponsor was the Water Council. The relationship was built on collaboration and exchange on freshwater research, innovation, education, and business development. Both cities have strived to be water centric cities and have sent delegates to each other's water related conferences and summits in the past, especially prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has prevented travel to each other cities. The relationship was still being maintained. Daegu featured their sister cities on their website, and they featured Milwaukee as a water city in July. Milwaukee was home to the UW-Milwaukee School of Freshwater Science and the Alliance for Water Stewardship. There was interest to continue the collaboration on water related business.

Member Durtka said that he was concerned with the lack of progress beyond attendance at conferences, that the relationship seemed nebulous, that he wanted to see more activity, and that he did not see a written report.

Ms. Hittman replied. The relationship was based on water industry and not culture. The origin of the relationship began with Preston Cole, a previous commissioner of the City's Department of Public Works and board member of the Water Council, traveling to Daegu.

Mr. Lee said that members were sent and were in possession of the written annual report well in advance.

Member Durtka moved to hold the annual report for the sister city relationship with Daegu Metropolitan City, South Korea for further information on progress and activities. There was no objection.

b. Tarime District, Tanzania (exp. 8/13/21)

The annual report was considered along with item 4, b. regarding the sister cities renewal application.

Member Spann moved approval of the annual report for the sister city relationship with Tarime District, Tanzania. There was no objection.

6. Discussion on the role of City officials on sister city related travel, representation, and activities.

*Appearing:
James Owczarski, City Clerk*

Mr. Lee said that members' had inquired about allowing others to represent the City or City officials in the absence of City officials and the ability of City officials to travel for sister city related business.

Mr. Owczarski commented. Diplomacy and City representation protocols were complicated and fell out of his purview. There would be little issue to allow representatives on behalf of the City and officials to speak at conferences or attend gatherings for diplomatic reasons. Beyond diplomatic reasons, representation of the City or its officials would surpass the committee or anyone else. Former Ald. Joe Davis previously traveled to South Africa and had been recognized as a honorary consul to South Africa. The City's ordinances prohibit the use of City funds for sister city related travel and would need to be changed to permit travel. A City budget appropriation via a budget amendment would be the pathway to acquire resources for sister city travel or programming. The City's budgetary environment has been difficult and limited.

Member Spann commented. Officials from foreign nations have come to Milwaukee, but Milwaukee officials have not traveled to foreign nations. Tarime and Tanzania was a main interest of his. He was interested to represent the City in lieu of City officials when traveling abroad at his own expense. An example would be to present a City proclamation.

Mr. Owczarski added comments. Oftentimes the efforts, gift giving, and travel by foreign cities or the sister cities have been great but have been lacking or insufficient from Milwaukee. The Morogoro, Tanzania sister city signing in Morogoro was an example where the gifts were great from Morogoro while the gifts from Milwaukee were poor. The Common Council could pass legislation to recognize member Spann or

anyone else to represent the City. The Sister Cities Committee chair Ald. Rainey would best sponsor such legislation.

7. Update on the status of sister city relationships.

a. Medan, Indonesia termination

Mr. Lee said that the sister city relationship with Medan, Indonesia was officially terminated on June 3, 2021 through the termination actions by the committee and Common Council.

b. Tema, Ghana signing ceremony

Appearing:

Martin Oduro, Ghana-Milwaukee Association Inc.

Mr. Oduro gave an update. No progress yet has been made to arrange a sister city agreement signing ceremony due to travel restrictions. The relationship was stilled desired. They are working with the new ambassador for the United States.

c. Other

There was no other discussion.

8. Review or update on sister city related events or activities.

a. Sister Cities International annual conference

Member Durtka gave a recap. The SCI annual conference occurred on July 15-16, 2021. The conference was virtual and focused on four panels: economic, education, sports and diplomacy, and humanitarian. He hosted two panels, including the humanitarian panel. He was a part of the global awareness team, focus on Japan sister cities, and the roundtable on specific issues. There were other roundtables on other countries, such as two on Tanzania on September 24 and October 29, 2021. These roundtable groups would collaborate with various sister city relationships pertaining to that country and would discuss about activities, issues, successes, and solutions.

Chair Rainey inquired about establishing a sister city relationship with Japan.

Member Durtka said that he is hopeful for establishing a relationship with Japan and that there exists a state-to-state sister city relationship between Japan and Wisconsin.

Member Spann said that he was recruited and would be involved with SCI's sports initiative and NBA Africa, would get the Milwaukee Bucks involved, and would be engaged in upcoming SCI and Africa-related meetings and conferences (such as Cape Town in 2023 and upcoming Washington D.C. meetings), and was hopeful to meet or arrange to meet African ambassadors, embassies, or officials such as the US ambassador for Tanzania Elsie Kanza.

Ms. Thompson Mosore added that she was aware Ambassador Kanza and that the ambassador should have arrived to her post by now.

Chair Rainey added that Congresswoman Gwen Moore's office could possibly assist member Spann to connect with the embassy.

b. Holiday Folk Fair

Member Durtka said that the fair would be virtual again due to the pandemic, would be in its 78th year, would showcase special programs, could feature one segment on Milwaukee sister cities and activities, and would be held November 19-21, 2021.

c. Meet-and-greet

Mr. Lee commented. The committee and sister city local sponsoring organizations had proposed to hold a meet-and-greet to socialize, connect with each other, network, and promote themselves to officials and other sectors. The pandemic and departure of Arlisia McHenry as an events programmer in the City Clerk's Office had prevented further planning and coordination for the meet-and-greet.

Ms. Thompson Mosore said that the meet-and-greet could be a virtual one, getting food from different vendors could be achieved safely, the event was an important one, and planning was a matter of collaboration.

Member Durtka said that there were two ideas to either hold a smaller scale private event for the local sister city communities to connect with each other or a larger scale event open to the public for awareness and promotion.

Member Tovar said that he would like to see the event be a worthy one, one that is in-person, and be planned for 2022.

d. Other

There was no other discussion.

9. Announcements.

There were no announcements.

10. Agenda items for the next meeting.

Members and Ms. Thompson Mosore discussed the following: lack of support, capacity, resources, and infrastructure for sister city programming; need to do more marketing, awareness, and creating a social media presence; acquiring dedicated capacity and funding; need for a dedicated coordinator position to do programming and implement the goals of the committee; Milwaukee being an ethnic city but not an international city; dedicating public space to feature international/sister cities (possibly at MacArthur Square); installing a sister cities display at the airport; adding new members to the committee such as the Milwaukee County Executive's office; identifying and aligning resources; doing capacity building research; Milwaukee having great assets such as water, airport, sports, and other aspects; being more proactive to produce exchanges; setting objectives; proposing a budget amendment to allocate funds from the City; that the current infrastructure limited the City's ability to assist the sister cities; and that sister cities promotion and programming went beyond what the committee can do.

Members said to discuss sister cities programming and infrastructure issues, ideas for improvement, and budget allocation at the next meeting.

11. Set next meeting date and time.

A special meeting to be set the week of October 4, 2021 prior to the deadline (October 21, 2021) to submit a budget amendment as part of the City's 2022 budget approval process.

12. Adjournment.

Meeting adjourned at 11:33 a.m.

*Chris Lee, Staff Assistant
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