

Sister City Relationships Advisory Commission

DATE: Wednesday, March 16, 2016
TIME: 4:00 PM
PLACE: City Hall – Conference Room A, 50 W. 13th St., Dubuque

MINUTES

Present: Commissioners Sheila Castenada (via phone), Bob Felderman, Jeff Jochum, Dick Landis (via phone), Phyllis Lee (left at 5:09 p.m.), Louise Thurn, Dik Van Iten, Annalee Ward; Council Members Joyce Connors and Kevin Lynch.

1. **Oath of Office:** Administered to Commissioner Louise Thurn for her reappointment to a term through February 1, 2019.
2. **Election of Officers:** Chairperson / Vice Chairperson: Motion by Ward to appoint Commissioner Jeff Jochum as Chairperson. Seconded by Felderman. Motion carried 10-0. Motion by Felderman to appoint Council Member Kevin Lynch as Vice Chairperson. Seconded by Thurn. Motion carried 8-0 with Lynch abstaining due to his position as a Council representative on the Commission. Vice Chair-Elect Lynch continued with the meeting.
3. **Approval of Minutes from the January 20, 2016:** Motion by Van Iten to approve as submitted. Seconded by Thurn. Motion carried 10-0.
4. **Financial Report** – Firnstahl reported a balance of \$5,115.08. Sister City International dues of \$756 are yet to be expended, which will leave a balance of \$4,350.08. Firnstahl reported that some money was spent on office signage and Dubuque-area photos to have on hand as possible gifts for delegations. Dubuque picture/history books, note cards, and posters were offered as ideas for additional gifts.
5. **Recap of 3/12/16 Sister Cities International State meeting at the Des Moines Botanical Center:** Landis and Firnstahl reported on the meeting with SCI state representative Ann Geiger and SCI Board President John Debeet of Muscatine as well as several representatives from other Iowa towns with Sister City programs. Of note was Des Moines' bid for the June 2018 SCI National Conference, educational exchanges being offered around the state, and discussion of 501(c)(3) status. Minutes from the meeting are forthcoming from Ms. Geiger.
6. **Iowa Sister States: Response to questions about relationship with Strpse, Kosovo** (Continued from 1/20/16). Lynch and Castaneda felt this to be a good opportunity and a challenge to step up, that other cities have relationships in unsettled areas of the world, and Iowa Sister States needs a response from Dubuque. The remainder of the Commission was skeptical and cited concerns over the unrest in the region, what talents and resources Dubuque could offer, the National Guard's roll in urging the relationship, and what roll the new Des Moines Kosovo Consulate might provide. Landis stated that a visit to Dubuque could mimic that of the ICMA Fellows visits. Motion by Jochum to issue an invitation to representative(s) of Strpse to visit Dubuque to entertain talks about a formal relationship. Seconded by Van Iten. Thurn noted that the visit would have to be at Strpse's expense. [And pending approval of some on-site expenses paid by the Commission similar to other delegation visits]. Felderman will contact Kim Heidemann at Iowa Sister States about how and who to contact in Strpse to extend the invitation. Motion carried 9-1 with Lynch voting nay.
Coe College Scholarship announcement was distributed as informational only.

7. **Sister City Commission Structure / Models Discussion** (Continued from 1/20/16): Motion by Van Iten to transition to a 501(c)(3) structure to include a permanent City Council representative and approval of the City Council for the transition. Seconded by Connors. Felderman, Van Iten and Landis will continue on the subcommittee, and Firnstahl assist with meeting schedules and will ask Assistant City Manager Cindy Steinhauser to assist in discussions for identifying a parent agency. Motion carried 10-0.
8. **Dornbirn, Austria:** No report at this time.
9. **Handan, China:**
 - a. Landis reported that he is following up with Dr. Wee of NICC on education exchanges discussed last year. There is much state-wide activity with educational institutions such as international student packages with the Des Moines Community College and Drake University. Ward commented informal information regarding relationships with Handan and the University of Dubuque.
 - b. Future of Photo Exhibit: Photos remain in storage at the Federal Building but are ready to go on exhibit at any time. The possibility of a work group was discussed for tracking the history and travel of the photos. Thurn reported that she has been working with several public and parochial schools for additional exhibits or presentations but added that most teachers do not have the room to exhibit the photos. She will continue to monitor possibilities. Jochum will follow up with a contact in Keokuk for a redux of the exhibit from 2014-2015. Felderman and Thurn suggested contacting institutions such as local hospitals for additional exhibition.
10. **Pyatigorsk, Russia:**
 - a. Recap of Open World Delegation visit March 7-11, 2016: Jochum reported on the recent visit organized by the Chamber of Commerce and the dinner hosted by the Commission. Jochum described the connection with one of the Russian facilitator from a previous visit to Pyatigorsk in the late 1980's. He will explore obtaining additional contacts in Pyatigorsk to assist the Commission in its communications.
 - b. Status of Request by Pyatigorsk for Dubuque Artwork: Contact names that Jochum is hoping to obtain will assist in keeping this item active.
 - c. Follow up on correspondence from Andrea Becker and Sasha (Postponed from 1/20/16). Landis will continue to correspond and connect them with the Open World program.
11. **Pen Pal Student Artifact Exchanges** – Thurn reported that the program is currently dormant but she continues to explore options.
12. **Francophone/Francophile Cities Network Update:** Firnstahl reported that he and Assistant City Manager Teri Goodmann continue correspondence with the Network and are collaborating with the Convention and Visitors Bureau on Dubuque's membership in the Network. He will keep the Commission posted.
13. **Library Display Status:** Landis reported that the display is up and going with information about and gifts from all three Sister Cities. He solicited ideas and themes from the Commission. The display runs through May.

Commissioner Lee left the meeting at 5:09 p.m.

14. **Items from Commission:** Felderman reiterated contacting the Iowa Sister States on the Strpse invitation noting cross representation and an official presence. He added that military flights might be economical.

15. **Items from Staff:** Firnstahl reminded the Commission of the two remaining member vacancies and to refer potential members to the City Clerk's Office.
16. **Next Meeting:** Wednesday, May 19, at 4:00 p.m. Firnstahl will send notice by e-mail for confirmation of calendars.
17. **Adjournment:** Motion by Thurn to adjourn at 5:15 p.m. Seconded by Ward. Motion carried 9-0.

Submitted by Kevin S. Firnstahl, CMC, City Clerk