

Sister City Relationships Advisory Commission

DATE: Wednesday, July 20, 2016
TIME: 4:00 PM
PLACE: City Hall – Conference Room A, 50 W. 13th St., Dubuque

Minutes

Present: Bob Felderman, Jeff Jochum, Dick Landis, Phyllis Lee, Rachel McDermott, Pat McNamara, Louise Thurn, Dik Van Iten

Excused: Sheila Castaneda, Joyce Connors, Kevin Lynch, Annalee Ward

1. Approval of Minutes from May 18, 2016: Motion by Lee to approve the minutes as submitted. Seconded by Thurn. Motion carried 8-0.
2. Financial Report – Firnstahl reported the beginning Fiscal Year 2017 budget of \$5,680. Sister Cities International membership of \$765 will come due in May 2017 leaving a working balance of \$4,915. The forfeited balance for Fiscal Year 2016 was \$1,493.68.
3. Sister City Commission Restructuring: Firnstahl distributed a draft of the memo from the Commission to the City Council describing and requesting a transition to a non-profit status. The commission discussed edits to the letter. Firnstahl will distribute the final version prior to presentation the City Manager and then to City Council. The commission was open to presentation to the Council before the commission's September meeting.
4. Iowa Sister States – Strpse, Kosovo: The commission continued discussion on the invitation by Iowa Sister States to adopt Strpse, Kosovo, as an official Sister City. The commission believes that while all of the commission's questions have been answered by Iowa Sister States, it still wants to see what relationships develop from the new Kosovo Consulate in Des Moines that would generate a future, face-to-face meeting with Kosovo or Strpse representatives. Commissioner Felderman will relay this to Kim Heidemann of Iowa Sister States. Commissioners discussed the religious, cultural and military issues taking place at Kosovo's street level and the need to learn more. The prospect of this issue transferring to the commission following the proposed restructuring was also considered.
5. Dornbirn, Austria: No update at this time. Firnstahl will check in with Dornbirn Public Information Officer Ralf Hammerle.
6. Handan, China:
 - a. Update: Landis distributed a hard copy report and briefed the commission on his trip with Mayor Buol for the 2016 U.S./China Climate and Smart/Low-Carbon Cities Summit in Beijing, China. He noted that three representatives of our Sister City Handan traveled to Beijing to visit with him and Mayor Buol and discussed the future of exchanges with Dubuque's educational institutions; the need for communication among them; and the impediments to exchanges such as budget, distance and cultural differences.
 - b. Framing of Artifacts – Firnstahl reported on the installation of the two, framed, silk scrolls given to Dubuque by Handan, China. The City Manager approved hanging them in the first-floor stairwell of City Hall. Commissioner Landis will prepare a translation that will be framed to match for placement on the adjacent wall. It was suggested that a photo of the completed installation be forwarded to our representatives in Handan.

- c. Photo Exhibit – Direction: The commission discussed ideas for future displays of the Handan photo collection. Commissioners Thurn and Van Iten will follow up on potential exhibits at local hospitals and senior care facilities. Discussion was given to the type of display equipment or hangers that might be needed to display them.
7. Pyatigorsk, Russia Update:
 - a. Correspondence regarding 236th Anniversary Celebration Invitation: Firnstahl will draft a response from Mayor Buol with regrets. Chairperson Jochum will time his correspondence to Darya Babicheva with the Mayor's letter in order to establish a line of consistent communication.
 - b. Status of Request by Pyatigorsk for Dubuque Artwork: Firnstahl reported that he has not yet received any site details for the possible installation of Dubuque artwork in the park that Pyatigorsk is planning around their sister cities. Jochum may address this in his correspondence to Ms. Babicheva. Commissioner Felderman referenced an upcoming exhibit at the Dubuque Museum of Art by the Dubuque Camera Club of local subjects.
 8. Pen Pal Student Exchanges: Thurn reported that the exchange remains a work in progress and that she has plans for a conversation with a teacher.
 9. Francophone/Francophile Cities Network Update – Firnstahl reported that he has submitted the city profile form and 10 photos provided by the Convention and Visitors Bureau to the contact for the Francophone/Francophile Cities Network. The profile is expected to be uploaded soon and a link will be sent to the commission. Firnstahl added that this is part of a network of North American Cities with French heritage that Dubuque was invited to join. He asked that if any commissioners learn of information related to Dubuque's French heritage to please pass it along. Felderman noted that the subdivisions in the Queen/Prince Streets area have French names.
 10. Library Display Status: Firnstahl informed the commission that the display can come down anytime. Landis will follow up.
 11. Items from Commission: Chairperson Jochum reported on accepting the International Sister Cities Day proclamation presented by the Mayor at the July 5, 2016 Council meeting. Commissioner Lee was also present at the meeting.
 12. Items from Staff - Member recruitment: Firnstahl reminded the commission that a vacancy still exists on the commission for a term ending 2/1/19. If anyone knows of a potential candidate, please refer them to the City Clerk's Office for application. Commissioner McDermott mentioned Rachel Boeke who visited the May 2016 commission meeting. Firnstahl will follow up.
 13. Next Meeting: The September 21, 2016 is problematic for several commissioners. Firnstahl will poll the commission for a more convenient date.
 14. Adjournment: Motion by Lee to adjourn at 5:07 p.m. Seconded by Thurn. Motion carried 8-0.

Submitted by Kevin S. Firnstahl, City Clerk