

Sister City Relationships Advisory Commission

DATE: Wednesday, December 11, 2013
TIME: 4:00 PM
PLACE: City Hall Annex– Conference Room I, 1300 Main Street, Dubuque

Minutes

Present: Sheila Castaneda, Joyce Connors, Larissa Filimonenko, Jeff Jochum, Dick Landis (via phone), Phyllis Lee, Kevin Lynch, Pat McNamara (entered at 4:01 p.m.), Betty Phillips, Nancy Rhomberg, Louise Thurn, Annalee Ward.

Excused: Bob Felderman

1. Approval of Minutes from the October 2, 2013 meeting: Motion by Phillips. Second by Lee. Motion carried 11-0.
2. Handan, China
 - a. October Delegation Visit and Iowa Sister States 30th Anniversary Follow Up and Next Steps: Landis reviewed visit of the larger delegation that visited for the Sister States anniversary through Muscatine, Cedar Rapids and Des Moines. Chairperson Landis and Commissioners Lee and Thurn attended some of the Des Moines events noting that the delegation was very impressed with the large scale of activities and how eager they were to see and do as much as possible. The nine members of the delegation that visited Dubuque were impressed with the tours of John Deere Dubuque Works and Mi-T-M. The City's Engineering Department also provided an overview presentation of the Bee Branch Watershed Flood Mitigation project. The Commission has since received several thank-you notes from Li Zhiqiang and Gao Hongzhi indicating follow up work with John Deere's China office and Mi-T-M as well as initiation of exchanges with the University of Dubuque and NICC through the Handan Bureau of Education.

Landis, Lynch and Firnstahl provided information on a meeting with Dr. Wee of NICC, City Manager Van Milligen, Rick Dickinson and Mark Seckman of GDDC, Council Member Kevin Lynch, and City Clerk Kevin Firnstahl about further engaging the educational institutions and contacting the Dubuque Community School District and the Holy Family Catholic Schools. Commissioner Ward reported that University of Dubuque contact Mark Ward is working on clarifying the Handan point person.

Thurn reported that she has been in contact with Li Zhiqiang about establishing a pen pal/e-pal exchange with Dubuque middle school and sixth grade students with their Chinese counterparts. Thurn reported that a teacher from Washington Junior High is confirmed. The program is in the initial stages.

- b. Photo Exhibit: Lynch reported that the Handan photo display at the Roshek Building has been removed for the holiday decoration and will be replaced after the holidays.
- c. Chamber of Commerce Trip: Firnstahl provided information on the Chamber's China trip in October 2014 with an information session planned for February 2014. There is preliminary information about an excursion to Hebei Province.

3. Dornbirn, Austria
 - a. Correspondence from Mayor Andrea Kaufmann: Lynch reviewed the letter received by Mayor Buol.
 - b. Potential May 2014 visit: Currently, a delegation from Dornbirn is still expected for May 2014. Firnstahl will communicate with Ralf Hammerle in Dornbirn about their plans and what topics and places they are interested in.

Thurn reported that the pen pal exchange with Dornbirn and Bryant School is in its second year with new teachers and a batch of artifacts being sent to Dornbirn shortly.

4. Pyatigorsk, Russia
 - a. Follow Up: Landis reported on speaking with a Sister States representative from Stavropol, Russia, who indicated continued interested in working with Dubuque. Jochum reported on meeting with a council member in September and is working on finding a consistent contact person for Pyatigorsk. Commissioners Jochum and Filimonenko will draft and translate a letter from Mayor Buol to his counterpart in Pyatigorsk.
 - b. Correspondence re: Exchanges with Senior High School: Firnstahl will respond to Mike Wulfekule at Dubuque Senior High School regarding his interest in communicating with Pyatigorsk as part of his World History class. Once Commissioner Jochum has established a contact person in Pyatigorsk, he will connect Mr. Wulfekule.
5. Correspondence re: Cameroon, West Africa: Landis reported on talking with Mr. Innocente Chia who contacted the Commission about possibly establishing a relationship with his homeland of Cameroon, Africa. The Commission agreed that more information is needed. Landis will arrange a meeting with Mr. Chia and advise other Commissioners of the date, time and location. Firnstahl will research any guidelines from Sister Cities' International. Landis suggested on inviting Kim Heidemann, Executive Director of Iowa Sister States, to the Commission's next meeting where this could be discussed.
6. Bylaws Amendment: Firnstahl reviewed corrected wording under the Membership and Amendments sections. Motion by Phillips to approve and accept the amended Bylaws. Second by Ward. Motion carried 12-0.
7. Library Archive and Display – Landis reported that the new Handan display was installed in time for the delegation's visit and will continue through January 2014. He suggested that the next display, scheduled for April/May be reserved for Dornbirn artifacts to coincide with their possible visit.
8. Sister Cities International 2014 Conference: Firnstahl provided information on the conference stating that travel to this conference can be considered by Commissioners as budget/approval allows. Handan and Dubuque have submitted award applications for longest Chinese-American Sister City relationship and Exemplary Citizen (Dick Landis). These awards will be presented at the 2014 Conference in Washington, DC.
9. Next Meeting: Firnstahl will contact Kim Heidemann of Iowa Sister States for potential dates in February that work with her schedule and then contact the Commission.
10. Adjournment: Motion by Lee to adjourn at 5:00 p.m. Second by Rhomberg. Motion carried 12-0.