GREATER DES MOINES SISTER CITIES COMMISSION
400 Robert D. Ray Drive
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NEXT MEETING MAY 14, 2019, AT 5:00 PM
MACRAE CONFERENCE ROOM – RICHARD A. CLARK MUNICIPAL SERVICE CENTER

MINUTES
April 9, 2019

Members Present: Shelley Bain, Darlene Blake, Heidi Hendrickson, Doug Lewis, Roger Nowadzky, Edgar Ortiz, Peggy Patrick, Ginny Renda, Vidal Spaine, Sherill Whisenand, Hollie (Askey) Zajicek, Eleanor Zeff, Li Zhao Mandelbaum

Members Absent: Kerry Bowen, Bill Sherman

Staff Present: Joyce Warburton

On Tuesday, April 9, 2019, Chairperson Mr. Nowadzky called the meeting of the Greater Des Moines Sister Cities Commission to order at 5:06 PM in the MacRae Conference Room, Richard A. Clark Municipal Services Center, 1551 East Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway.

MINUTES
Ms. Whisenand moved to approve the March 12, 2019 minutes as presented. Ms. Bain seconded the motion. Motion carried.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBER
Mr. Nowadzky welcomed the newest member to the Commission, Ms. Heidi Hendrickson, who was appointed to the Commission by the City of Cumming effective April 8, 2019. Ms. Hendrickson will replace Mr. Becker as their primary representative, and Mr. Becker will become their alternate representative.

FINANCIAL REPORT
Financial report for July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019 was distributed indicating March 2019 expenses of $60.30 to American Marking for name badges for use on Kofu, Japan delegation trip; $2,944 for airline tickets for Ms. Nowadzky and Mr. Lewis to Kofu, Japan April 3-7, 2019. Ms. Whisenand moved to approve the financial report. Ms. Renda seconded the motion. Motion carried.

COMMISSION CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT
Mr. Nowadzky expressed congratulations to Ms. Zajicek on her recent nuptials.

Mr. Nowadzky thanked Committee Chairs for submitting their reports in a timely manner.

He indicated he would be meeting with Committee Chairs, and City Chairs in particular, to assist with meeting each of their individual missions.

COMMISSION VICE CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT
Ms. Patrick shared the following written report.
I don’t have too much to report on this month as the last few weeks have been devoted to helping prepare for the Kofu trip. The delegation landed safely and have been enjoying the festivities. Ryo has joined them now for the final day of Kofu’s celebration activities. And they are enjoying the cherry blossoms.

FRIENDS OF GREATER DES MOINES SISTER CITIES
Sam Reno, a past Commission member, has been added to the Friends Board. We are excited to have his vast experience in fundraising and look forward to his vision and leadership. The Board will be meeting again during the month of April.

NON-TRAVEL EXCHANGES
We ran out of time at last month’s meeting to discuss the non-travel exchanges. Rather than trying to set aside time during a meeting for that, please include a proposal in May’s City Chair reports on two proposed non-travel exchanges to be carried out before the end of the 2019-2020 fiscal year.

Present a detailed description of each project, including any costs involved, number of persons it will take to complete, any expertise needed, proposed date(s), length of time to complete, and any other relevant information.

Please keep in mind that these exchanges are for the purpose of strengthening our communications and sister city relationships.

Ms. Patrick added that since submittal of her written report, the Friends Board received their IRS determination letter approving their non-profit status.

COMMITTEE REPORTS
Stavropol Committee
Mr. Spaine shared the following written report.

Tatiana responded to my email message on a variety of topics relating to our sister relationship (please see below for her responses). Make sure to click on the links (two links) provided by her for updates on different projects taking place in Stavropol.

From: Шмыркова Татьяна Николаевна [mailto:TN.Shmyrkova@stavadm.ru]
Sent: Friday, March 22, 2019 9:07 AM
To: Spaine, Vidal <vidal.spaine@dmschools.org>
Subject: RE: Updates

Dear Vidal,
Thank you for the proposals for the further cooperation between sister cities Stavropol and Des Moines.

In accordance with your request we inform you that information about Stavropol, as well as the development of friendly relations with the cities of the countries of near and far abroad is available on the official website of the Stavropol city administration (https://cmaeropoli.ru). The site contains daily news materials, events and ongoing urban projects. Investment and business projects can be found on the website http://investinstav.ru.

We support your desire to continue cooperation in the humanitarian and cultural spheres. For the sending creative works of Stavropol students for the exposition of Iowa Fair, please, define the theme and also the requirements for pictures.

In the city of Stavropol in September of this year, it is also planned to hold an International art exhibition of sister cities students in the frame of the Day of Stavropol. We offer to send the creative works of students of Des Moines to participate in the exhibition.

Regarding the interaction of educational institutions - we have identified educational institutions of the city of Stavropol to establish partnerships with Des Moines schools, the information was sent on 16 December 2018. In this regard, please, provide the contact information of schools of Des Moines for further development of cooperation in the field of education.

Dates of the Day of Stavropol will be determined later, we will let you know additionally.

Here is the link for photos of Stavropol
DOWNLOAD LINK
ССЫЛКА ДЛЯ СКАЧИВАНИЯ: dropmefiles.com/ue5Oy

Tatiana Vasilenko
Head of international and interregional relations department
Stavropol city administration

Mr. Spaine asked that Commissioners take the time to follow the weblinks highlighted in Ms. Vasilenko’s message above.

With regard to the request for current photos of Des Moines that they could put on their social media page, Ms. Warburton provided Mr. Spaine with a number of photos, and he will also be reaching out to the Greater Des Moines Partnership to obtain photos.

**Shijiazhuang Committee**
Ms. Zhao Mandelbaum provided the following written report.

Shijiazhuang vocational school and the Shijiazhuang Foreign Affairs office are very excited and supportive of the Grand View University delegation. I’m meeting the VP of student activities, the professor and the student that are interested in visiting Shijiazhuang on 4/17 on their campus. I will report back to the Commission as soon as we have a tentative schedule.

Shijiazhuang Foreign Affairs office also invited us to attend a major conference, which is called Langfang International Trade Fair. It is always held on May 18th of every year. Please see this link for detail information: http://mobile.chinagoabroad.com/en/knowledge/show/id/27260.
They would like us to put together a small business and trade delegation to participant and even have a booth at the fair. Shijiazhuang is covering all local hotels, travel \textit{while in China} and food; therefore, the cost will be minimal (only round trip international ticket and some incidentals). Given the short notice, I have reached out to a couple of companies and ABI. I have not gotten a definite “yes” at this point. And if by 4/18, we are not able to have 5 companies committed, we will not attend this Fair. But, regardless, we should send them information, videos, images and anything that represents Greater Des Moines to them to be showcased at this Fair.

An invitation letter from Shijiazhuang Foreign Affairs office is attached.

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\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{invitation_letter.png}
\end{center}

Update: Ms. Zhao Mandelbaum has yet to hear back from the local businesses which have interest in China that she has extended this invitation. She is now hopeful that is she is able to get 3 companies to commit, then we will attend this Fair.
**Saint-Etienne Committee**

Ms. Zeff provided the following written report.

The Committee has composed a letter to St. Etienne that would re-affirm our Sister City connections and open new opportunities for ongoing relations. It would be accompanied by a revised copy of the PowerPoint presented at the February DMSCC meeting. The letter is ready and has been approved and will be sent this month. We are hoping to reestablish ties so that we can send a delegation, or at least an official representative, in 2020, perhaps in May.

The Committee is assisting the Johnston High School French teachers, Karie Gray and Tamara Andrews, with the April 10-18 visit by 25 students and 2 teachers from St Etienne. The Committee contacted Annique Kiel, Executive Director of Global Engagement and International Programs at Drake University, who is arranging a student tour of the university and lunch on campus on April 12. The Committee will meet with the students during their visit to present them City of Des Moines pins; they will also receive t-shirts from Alliance Française of Central Iowa. They were unable to fit in a visit with the Mayor during their visit due to time and transportation issues.

Dr. Ashley Sandor Sidon, Briggs Endowed Professor of Cello at Drake University, has written a letter to Conservatoire Massanet offering to visit the conservatoire to present a recital and work with their students for a few days in the summer 2019, at no cost to the conservatoire. This is an exciting first step on what could become a regular exchange of musicians between the two cities. We are also working on connecting the Opera companies of the two cities.

Ms. Zeff also reported that Susan Voss, President of the Des Moines Metro Opera, is interested in connecting with St. Etienne’s opera company (Opera Saint-Etienne) and is actively working to do that.

**Kofu Committee**

Mr. Lewis provided the following written report.

Chairman Roger Nowadzky, Kofu Co-Chair Doug Lewis, Theresa Lewis and Ryota Yamamoto will represent Des Moines at the Kofu 500th anniversary celebration April 5th and 6th at the invitation of the Kofu City Government. Mr. Nowadzky has prepared a city proclamation and we will be exchanging official gifts.

The Des Moines Kofu committee met Wednesday, March 27th at the Franklin Library. Roger, Ginny Renda, Mr. and Mrs. Takehara Ota, Chie Schiller, and Doug Lewis were present.

We discussed plans for the upcoming trip, including gifts and a planned orientation on Friday, March 29th at the Central Library.

Chie reported on the JASI 30th Anniversary plans. The event will be Saturday, October 12, 2019 at Grandview Student Center. There will be a VIP invitation. They will involve Iowa Sister States, Sister Cities in Iowa, and City and State leadership. There will be a luncheon and panel discussion. Carol Grant is facilitator for panel discussion. Doug is co-facilitator. There will be speeches at the reception.

They are bringing a Kimono specialist from Kofu and a small group Theater Nohgaku production in English. They are raising the $7,000 for the group. Admission will be charged for the anniversary celebration. The price has not been set yet. Donations can be made on
the Japan America Society of Iowa (JASI) website at https://www.japaniowa.org/. There will be a table available for Sister Cities information.

Kofu Bacon Festival
Mr. Lewis proposed organizing a group tour at the time of the Kofu Bacon fest in November 2019. If anyone is interested please contact him.

Other exchanges like Chef exchange and Musicians were mentioned.

Mr. Lewis also expressed thanks to all who helped make the April 3-7, 2019 delegation trip to Kofu happen. All of the cities that are sister cities with Kofu were in attendance. Unfortunately, Mayor Pro Tem Bill Gray was unable to join the delegation due to a family medical emergency. Mr. Lewis will present a full report at the May Commission meeting.

Pristina Committee
Ms. Bain shared the following written report.

The Pristina relationship remains in the early stages. We hope to create a Pristina Committee after the Des Moines delegation visits Pristina and finds a sister city-type person to work with. The visit is expected to take place in June, dependent upon the availability of both Mayor Frank Cownie and Mayor Shpend Ahmeti. Peggy Patrick is recruiting delegates from the Greater Des Moines Partnership and Roger Nowadzky is coordinating the date selection.

Several Commission members attended the Farewell Reception for outgoing Consul General Xhavit Gashi at Camp Dodge on April 4. The new Consul General will arrive in several weeks.

It should also be noted that Maj. Gen. Timothy Orr, who is a significant player in the Iowa-Kosovo relationship, will retire May 1 as the Iowa National Guard's adjutant general. From the Register article announcing his retirement: “But one of his most memorable accomplishments was on an international stage when, in 2011, he instituted the State Partnership Program, creating a partnership between the Iowa National Guard and the Kosovo Security Force. Because of this, the first foreign consulate took up a place in Des Moines, youth exchange programs were created, and Iowans developed relationships with a community on the other side of the world.”

We submitted 2 posts for the DM Sister Cities Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/DM-Sister-Cities-128817197146504/). They were Kosovo Independence Day (February 17) and Kosovo Constitution Day (April 9).

For more information on Kosovo activity in Des Moines, check out the Consulate’s Facebook page, https://www.facebook.com/kosovoinIA/.

Ms. Bain will be convening a Kosovo Committee in the near future.

Italy Committee
Ms. Renda shared the following written report.

Paolo Bartesaghi is in his hometown of Lecco, Italy, and he has been talking with people there about the Greater Des Moines Sister Cities Commission. He says that they are expressing a great deal of interest in establishing a relationship with Des Moines. Lecco has relationships with several other cities, but I don’t think any of them are in the USA. This city may not be a good fit with Des Moines because it is much smaller and the main industry is
tourism. Mr. Bartesaghi should be returning to Des Moines around the middle of April, and I will find out more about this city (which is in Northern Italy) in the Lake Como area.

I spoke to Mayor Cownie last week, and he has not heard from the Mayor of Florence, Italy. He expects to see the Mayor of Florence at a conference he is attending in June. Mayor Cownie plans to hand deliver a letter to the Mayor of Florence.

**Education Committee**

Mr. Spaine shared the following written report.

I will be meeting with Ms. Olivia Howe, DMPS International Baccalaureate Development Coordinator, to address the need for school partnerships with DMPS and the need for DMPS teachers to collaborate with our committee chairs in facilitating the success of these partnerships. I also plan to extend an invitation to Ms. Howe to attend one of our monthly meetings. I will present the result of my discussions with Ms. Howe at our meeting on Tuesday, April 9.

Update: Mr. Spaine met with Ms. Howe and has agreed to take what was discussed during this meeting to Mr. Matt Smith, Associate Superintendent with Des Moines Public Schools, for his approval. Ms. Howe made the suggestion to pair all of our Sister Cities with Des Moines’ International Baccalaureate (IB) schools: Five (5) Elementary Schools, Four (4) Middle Schools, and Four (4) High Schools. She proposed Walnut Street School and Hoover High School for Shijiazhuang; Hubbell Elementary and Merrill Middle School for Kofu; Park Avenue Elementary and Brody Middle School for Stavropol; Stowe Elementary and Goodrell Middle School for St. Etienne; and Moore Elementary and Meredith Middle School for Pristina. Ms. Howe is focusing on these particular schools as each has their own IB Coordinator, whom she oversees. Once Ms. Howe meets with those schools’ coordinators, she will then provide Mr. Spaine with those names so that the Commission can begin communicating directly with each. Ms. Howe asked that we ascertain if any of our sister cities have IB schools. If there are, then it will be easier to connect Des Moines schools with those.

It is anticipated that Ms. Howe will also be working with Ms. Amy Abler, who works with teachers and students related to Kofu school exchanges.

Mr. Spaine indicated the reason Ms. Howe was brought on board was because we want to go in the direction of all of the Baccalaureate schools as they have a coordinator in each of the school indicated above. The goal will be to establish lines of communication to begin with, and travel to each might come further down the road. Mr. Spaine will invite Ms. Howe to the May 14th Commission meeting to give her an opportunity to share her ideas that are non-travel types of exchanges.

**Request for Scholarship Fund**

Only one (1) application for Scholarship funds to assist with financing their individual school exchange trips to Kofu, Japan in 2019 was received prior to the April 5, 2019 deadline. Ms. Whisenand moved that funds for a $100 scholarship be requested from the Friends of Greater Des Moines Sister Cities for Arlene Neppl, a student attending East High School in Des Moines and that Ms. Zhao Mandelbaum take this recommendation to the Friends Board. Ms. Bain seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**OLD BUSINESS**

No Old Business was discussed

**NEW BUSINESS**

No New Business was discussed.
ADJOURNMENT
Motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Whisenand and seconded by Ms. Blake. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 5:51 PM.

NEXT MEETING
The next meeting will be May 14, 2019 at 5:00 PM in the MacRae Conference Room, Richard A. Clark Municipal Service Center, 1551 East Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway.