NEXT MEETING SEPTEMBER 10, 2019, AT 5:00 PM  
MACRAE CONFERENCE ROOM – RICHARD A. CLARK MUNICIPAL SERVICE CENTER

MINUTES  
August 13, 2019

Members Present: Tom Becker, Madeline Goebel, Jake Grothoff, Joseph Nolte, Roger Nowadzky, Edgar Ortiz, Peggy Patrick, Ginny Renda, Vidal Spaine, Sherill Whisenand, Hollie Zajicek, Eleanor Zeff, and Li Zhao Mandelbaum

Members Absent: Kerry Bowen, Alex Duong, Doug Lewis, Kelli Todd

Staff Present: Alex Hassel

On Tuesday, August 13, 2019, Chairperson Mr. Nowadzky called the meeting of the Greater Des Moines Sister Cities Commission to order at 5:02 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 July 9, 2019 minutes as presented. Ms. Renda seconded the motion. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORT
Financial report for July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020 was distributed indicating a July expense of $18.76 for publication of the June 11, 2019 Sister Cities Commission minutes in the Business Record. The budget for Fiscal Year July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019 is still being closed out.

Ms. Whisenand made a motion to approve payment of the Sister Cities International (SCI) 2019-2020 annual dues of $1,030 as invoiced. Motion was seconded by Zhao Mandelbaum. Motion carried.

Commission Chairperson’s Report
Mr. Nowadzky shared the following written report.

July started the City’s and the Greater Des Moines Sister Cities Commission’s new fiscal year. Our first Commission event of the year was the July 14th community Bastille Day celebration held at the Ding Darling shelter near the Des Moines Marina. This was the 4th year in a row that the Commission co-hosted the event with our friends, Alliance Française of Central Iowa. As in the past, the event was well attended and so much fun with a pot luck dinner, music, singing, a French lawn bowling tournament, and a little wine sipping with chit chat and camaraderie. Thanks goes out again to Alliance Française, and also the Commission’s Saint Etienne City Committee. The shelter has already been reserved for next year’s 5th annual celebration, Tuesday evening, July 14th.
Since the Commission Chairperson’s last report, much of my activity has been following-up on the Pristina delegation trip. Please see the Pristina Committee report for those details of subsequent meetings with the Kosovo Chief of the Mission in the Consulate. They involved drafting a preliminary Des Moines-Pristina action plan. One meeting, pursuant to that action plan, involved police department collaboration, and a planned follow-up to the follow-up meeting to involve a discussion between Des Moines metro police departments who also have Kosovo sister cities.

In addition to discussions with the Kosovo Consulate, there was communication with the Chicago Consulate of the People’s Republic of China. In this regard, the Chair of the Commission’s Shijiazhuang Committee, Li Zhao Mandelbaum, and I had the opportunity to have a face-to-face meeting with Deputy Consul General Liming Huang, Consul Qing Liu, and Longyun Gan, and Vice Consul of the People’s Republic of China at the Deputy Consul General’s request. Previously that day, those individuals from the Chinese Consulate met with Mayor Cownie. The history and long-standing connection between Iowa and China was emphasized and the regional and local friendship between Hebei Province and Iowa and between Shijiazhuang and Des Moines was highlighted, despite tensions at the national level. Des Moines and Shijiazhuang will be celebrating their 35th anniversary as sister cities in 2020.

The start of the new fiscal year also put focus back on updating the Commission’s internal operating structure and procedures for greater operational efficiency and effectiveness. One of the missing component parts to the Commission’s operation was some sort of orientation for new Commissioners. In the past, some appointees to the Commission were not clear as to what the function of the Commission was and what role Commissioners served. As the composition of the Commission changed to a larger body of new appointees, a need for some orientation beyond receiving an outdated manual became apparent. Part of that purpose was served by interviewing candidates who applied to the Commission for open seats and giving them relevant basic information about the Commission.

Vice Chairperson Patrick and I then put together a New Commissioner Orientation program and met with the most recent appointees to the Commission. The presentation was the next step in an educational process so new Commissioners could more rapidly acclimate, understand, and contribute to the Commission. The program was a first step in something formal. The topics covered were not exhaustive, and the presentation was kept to a manageable time frame. It is our goal to refine and build on this product.

It is part of the strategic plan this year to continue to address operational aspects of the Commission in addition to the substantive sister cities outreach and programs.

Commission Vice Chairperson’s Report
Ms. Patrick shared the following written report.

Des Moines Arts Festival. The 2019 Des Moines Arts Festival occurred on June 28-30. As part of the outreach, non-profit section of the Festival, we were required to provide an activity for children. We decided on a corner pig bookmark since this is the Chinese Year of the Pig, and included a couple of Chinese decorations in the booth and a handout explaining a little about Chinese New Year and how children in China celebrate. Many hours of preparation by Commission members went into creating a successful outcome. An additional 32+ hours were incurred setting up, taking down, and staffing the booth.

Thank you to the following Commissioners who assisted in preparation and/or staffing the booth:
Special thanks go out to Zach Sommers of the Friends organization for creating a contribution form for the Festival; Joyce Warburton for printing all of the materials used for the activity and the marketing table; and Wenyan Wu, volunteer, for helping with marketing preparation and the table activity at the Festival.

It was determined early on that the Commission did not have enough members to adequately staff the booth as the Festival required. In an effort to develop and/or increase relationships with like-minded non-profit organizations, invitations were extended to several non-profits to participate. In exchange for staffing the activities table, they were offered some limited marketing options.

The Commission’s appreciation goes out to the following organizations who participated, and we look forward to working with them again in the future:

- Des Moines Downtown Chamber
- Japan America Society of Iowa
- Friendship Force
- Children & Families of Iowa
- Iowa Department of Human Rights

Their participation allowed the Commission to dedicate one Commissioner at each session to focus on marketing. A marketing manual was created to assist the Commissioners in answering questions and providing information about the Commission and its sister cities.

The bookmark was a big success, not only with the kids, but also the parents! It appeared that everyone staffing the booth also enjoyed the activity and interacting with the kids.

The bookmark bases were folded prior to the Festival, and the kids chose colors for all the pieces, and attached the snout, ears and googly eyes.

The kids were also given the Chinese New Year handout and tootsie roll candies.

Supplies were purchased to make up to 1000 bookmarks. Cutting and folding was done for 700. We gave out just under 400 bookmarks. Unfortunately, the heat wave – especially on Saturday – very much interfered, with total weekend attendance estimated by the Arts Festival staff at 135,000.

Our marketing materials included the 1) Commission brochure Bridging Communities, 2) Friends contribution form, 3) volunteer application form, 4) signup sheet for more information and/or to receive our newsletter, and 5) a bookmark containing Commission contact information and a list of our current sister cities.

Two people inquired through the signup form for more information and to join the newsletter mailing list. As of the writing of this report, no other communications have been received as a result of our marketing efforts at the Festival.
Committee Reports
Pristina Committee
Mr. Nowadzky shared the following written report related to the June 23-28, 2019 trip to Pristina, Kosovo:

As reported in July’s Committee report, the Commission in June sent our first return delegation to Pristina, Kosovo, since the signing of our sister city agreement in November 2018. Attached is the delegation’s report and itinerary made a part of this August’s Pristina Committee Report by reference.

The purpose of the delegation was to meet again with Pristina’s mayor and administration to create an action plan for programs, projects and delegations pursuant to the sister city agreement. Attached is a draft of that action plan and also made a part of this Report by reference. To facilitate the cooperative efforts of Des Moines and Pristina, Artan Duraku the Chief of the Mission of the Kosovo Consulate in Des Moines returned to Pristina to assist in the Des Moines delegation’s meetings with Pristina municipal officials and Kosovo national officials.

Upon return to Des Moines, the Kosovo Consulate Chief of the Mission met in July with the Commission’s Chairperson and Vice Chairperson to review the action plan and to discuss specific steps in implementing the plan. The following week we met again in the Consulate office, this time with Des Moines Police Lieutenant Larry Davey. We discussed community policing and ways of fostering cooperation between the police departments in Pristina and Des Moines. Arrangements are being made for representatives of the Des Moines Police Department to meet with representatives of the Johnston and Norwalk Police Departments, who have cooperative arrangements with their counterpart police departments in their Kosovo sister cities.

Report to the Greater Des Moines Sister Cities Commission
Commission Delegation to Pristina, Kosovo
6/23/19 – 6/27/19

Purpose of Travel
In November 2018, a mayoral delegation from Pristina, Kosovo traveled to Des Moines to sign a sister city agreement between Des Moines and Pristina. The delegation not only met with municipal officials but also met with educators, medical professionals, and community and business leaders. The purpose of the Des Moines Sister Cities Commission return trip to Pristina was to continue the discussion of projects and programs of mutual interest and benefit to create an action plan to implement those programs and projects. Pristina Mayor Shpend Ahmeti specifically requested the mayoral delegation.

Delegation Members
T.M. Franklin Cownie, Mayor of Des Moines
Roger Nowadzky, Greater Des Moines Sister Cities Commission Chairperson

Executive Summary
On this mission Des Moines delegates met with the Pristina Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Municipal Department Ministers, the Kosovo Prime Minister Haradinaj, the Prime Minister’s Economic Advisor, the United States Ambassador to Kosovo, the former Kosovo Consul General, Chief of the Mission Kosovo Consulate, the American Chamber of Commerce in Kosovo, entrepreneurs, business managers, family farmers, chefs, educators, students, and medical professionals.

The general goal of the Greater Des Moines Sister Cities Commission in sending a delegation to Pristina was to strengthen our new capital city-to-capital city sister city relationship. Pristina is the
seat of Kosovo’s national government and Kosovo is one of the newest democratic republics in the world. Again, our specific goal was to identify a plan of action in implementing that sister city relationship. In this regard, we accomplished both our general and specific goals. Media coverage of the delegation and its mission included a press conference conducted by Mayor Ahmeti and Mayor Cownie at Pristina’s City Hall. The American Chamber of Commerce in Kosovo also issued a press release following its meeting with the delegation.

Schedule and Activities
Please see the attached itinerary established by the City of Pristina in conjunction with discussions with the Greater Des Moines Sister Cities Commission and the Kosovo Consulate located in Des Moines. The itinerary was adjusted to accommodate changes because of international flight delays and cancelations.

**June 23, 2019 – June 24, 2019**
The first two days (and nights) of the mission entailed travel by four connecting flights, eventually to Pristina’s airport and then ground transportation to Pristina’s city center. Arriving late on the evening of the 24th the delegation had a dinner meeting with the Chief of the Mission Kosovo Consulate, Artan Duraku, going over the schedule.

Cancellation of Frankfurt direct flights to Pristina caused a change of airlines, rerouting, and an eight-hour delay in arriving in Pristina. The delegation’s meetings originally scheduled for the afternoon of the 24th had to be adjusted to accommodate this change in circumstances.

**July 25, 2019**
The delegation was greeted by Mayor Ahmeti and city officials in Pristina City Hall. Mayor Ahmeti gave opening remarks followed by Mayor Cownie’s. The deputy mayor and city ministers or department heads were introduced including those representing public works and public safety, finance, economic development, and municipal and international relations. Consulate Chief of the Mission Daraku also joined us.

The itinerary, program, and schedule were reviewed and then discussion ensued on the areas of interest and potential mutual support in community and economic development as well as cultural exchanges and in ways to enhance the profile of each city in the other’s sister city. Participation in festivals, opera exchanges and dedicated public spaces were some of the specific thoughts in the greater general discussion. Other possibilities were tied to the places, institutions and people the delegation was to see and meet during our stay.

Following this discussion and agreement, a press conference was held.
The delegation then toured two educational institutions. We were hosted by the Director of Education, Mrs. Shpresa at “Abdyl Frasheri.” This school was described as an agricultural high school. It was a bit more than that. It grew crops as ingredients for its culinary classes. There we saw their culinary kitchen where we talked to students, faculty and a visiting French chef while preparing food in an exhibition. We also toured their green house and laboratory.

The delegation was hosted again by Mrs. Shpresa and also Labinot Salihu, Advisor to the Mayor at “Shtetan Gjecovi.” This is a vocational-technical school.

In the afternoon the delegation met with the American Chamber of Commerce in Kosovo (AmCham). The meeting was hosted by Genc Bashota, Pristina’s Director of Strategic Planning and Sustainable Development. The delegation was also accompanied by Artan Daraku, Chief of the Mission of the Kosovo’s Des Moines Consulate.

Mayor Cownie expressed his interest in cooperative opportunities between Iowa companies and Kosovar companies, and in strengthening the Iowa-Kosovo relation, especially the Des Moines-Pristina relationship. President of the AmCham Board of Governors, Ilir Ibrahimi, spoke about the good relations between both countries, mentioning that the American Chamber of Commerce in Kosovo has played a crucial role in creating these relations, and pledging to continue this role in the future.

AmCham Executive Director, Arian Zeka, informed the delegation about the decision of the Government of Kosovo for the establishment of the Special American Economic Zone as a great opportunity in attracting businesses from the U.S. in general, and especially from Iowa. He spoke about certain business sectors that could be more attractive for U.S. investors but also about some Kosovo products which could find markets in the United States. In addition, Mr. Duraku, spoke about his plans on strengthening bilateral relations between Iowa and Kosovo, and specifically in economic development.
The delegation next visited the “Teleperformance” call center operation and then a municipal health care facility. These meetings were planned to correspond to previously identified areas of potential cooperation in a Des Moines-Pristina action plan pursuant to our sister city agreement.

In the evening, the delegation attended a reception hosted by the United States Ambassador to Kosovo.

And then were received at a welcoming dinner in our honor hosted by Pristina Mayor Ahmeti.
June 26, 2019
The morning of June 26th the delegation met with Ramush Haradinaj, the Prime Minister of Kosovo, in his governmental offices. We were joined by Consulate Chief of the Mission Artan Daraku and former Consul General Xhavit Gashi. Kosovo’s progress and development as a democratic republic was discussed, as well as Kosovo’s gratitude to the United States and its special and unique relationship with Iowa. Advisor to the Prime Minister Erolld Belegu briefed the Mayor about the Kosovo American Economic City (KAEC) economic development zone for Iowa and U.S. based companies which wish to penetrate or expand their business in the European market.

Following the meeting with the Prime Minister, Mayor Cownie departed Kosovo for another international meeting previously scheduled and coordinated with this trip, while the Greater Des Moines Sister City Commission Chair Nowadzky continued the scheduled preplanned meetings and visits. Two of the meetings and facilities tours were with small business entrepreneurs and the third was with a school, its administrators, teachers, and students.

One of these enterprises which was visited was “Eurofruti,” an agribusiness based in the collection center. In a simplified description, in Iowa we would call this a family farm. The municipality of Pristina has a core urban area with a population approximately the population of Des Moines. It also includes a surrounding rural area that is not densely populated but is composed of 93 percent of the physical land mass of the municipality.

Farming operations in Kosovo, as well as in Pristina, are quite different than in Iowa. The size of farming operations are small and the market and profitability of certain crops are much different than those grown in the U.S. Midwest. The farming operation the delegation visited specialized in growing raspberries, strawberries, and blueberries with a primary European market destination as opposed to domestic consumption. The visit was hosted not only by the family farm owners but also by Pristina’s Director of Agriculture, Mr. Shkumbim Gashi. Pristina and ADA subsidize such farming operations.
The next small business visited was an enterprise which was managed by female business owners located in Thanishte. The visit was hosted by the Pristina Director of Agriculture Shkumkim Gashi. This business gathered, grew, processed and sold aromatic and medicinal herbs and plants. The business was also supported by foreign loans and grants, in addition to Pristina municipal support.

Finally, the delegation visited “Botanika,” which is a community-based kindergarten, located in the Arberia neighborhood of Pristina. The school system in Kosovo and in Pristina is the responsibility and jurisdiction of municipal government, as it is in many states in the United States but not in Iowa. Still the sister city agreement and an action plan between Des Moines and Pristina supports creation and implementation of school-to-school non-travel connections and activities between designated schools and their students.

This visit, as well as the other school visits by this delegation on this trip, was to understand Pristina’s educational system and to identify appropriate schools for twinning with appropriate Des Moines school district schools.

One of the interesting things in visiting with preschoolers or kindergarteners at this school was their ability to speak the English language, and so well at such a young age.
In the evening of the last day in Pristina, the delegation was invited as a guest of Mayor Ahmeti to join him in a public classical music concert in Pristina's central public square. It was a Wednesday night but the venue was packed for this free program, as if it were a special weekend summer event in Des Moines. Individuals of all ages, families, and groups of friends attended this classical music symphonic concert and chorus featuring Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony. The beautiful music under the stars, the attendance turnout, and the audience appreciation on this perfect summer night was an interesting gauge of the culture and sophistication of our new sister city community and its inhabitants.

June 27, 2019
The morning of June 27th, the remaining Des Moines delegate departed Pristina and Kosovo for Des Moines.

Respectfully submitted,
Roger Nowadzky
Chairperson of the Greater Des Moines Sister Cities Commission

Itinerary Attached
Official Visit from City of Des Moines, IOWA, US
Place: Municipality of Prishtina, Kosova
Date: 24 - 26 June 2019

Agenda

Members of the delegation:
- Frank Cownie, Kryetar i Des Moines, Iowa
- Roger Nowadsky, kryetar (Chair of the) Greater Des Moines Sister Cities Commission

Date 24 June 2019

Date 25 June 2019

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09:55 - 10:00</td>
<td>Arrival of the Des Moines delegation at Municipality of Prishtina; Place: Municipality of Prishtina.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 - 10:45</td>
<td>Working meeting with the Mayor of Pristina; Place: Cabinet of the Mayor of Pristina</td>
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<td>Mr. Shpend Ahmeti, Mayor of Prishtina</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:45 - 11:00</td>
<td>Press Conference</td>
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<td>Mr. Shpend Ahmeti, Mayor of Prishtina</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Frank Cownie, Kryetar i Des Moines, Iowa</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 - 12:00</td>
<td>Visit: “Abdyl Frashëri” High School of Agriculture</td>
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<td>Exhibition of workshops, visit to the kitchen, greenhouse and laboratory</td>
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<td>Host: Director of Education Directory, Mrs. Shpresa Shala</td>
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<td>12:00 - 13:00</td>
<td>Visit: High School “Shtefan Gjeço”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Presentation of students projects, visit of the workshop</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Host: Director of Education Directory, Mrs. Shpresa Shala</td>
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<td>Labinot Salihu – Adviser to the mayor</td>
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<tr>
<td>13:30 - 14:30</td>
<td>Visit: Lunch: Restaurant “Tiffany”</td>
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<tr>
<td>14:30 – 15:30</td>
<td>Visit: <strong>American Chamber of Commerce</strong> (request by delegation) Host: Director of Strategic Planning and Sustainable Development, Mr. Genc Bashota</td>
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<tr>
<td>16:00</td>
<td>Visit to Call center: Teleperformance Free time</td>
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<tr>
<td>17:30 - 18:00</td>
<td>Cocktail at the American Embassy, farewell reception in honor of Mrs. Colleen Hyland, deputy chief of mission</td>
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<td>19:30</td>
<td>Dinner: Restaurant &quot;Pinokio&quot;</td>
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**Date: 26 June 2019**

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 - 9:30</td>
<td>Meeting with Prime Minister of Kosovo Mr. Ramush Haradinaj Government Building</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00</td>
<td>Mayor Cowine – Transport to Airport</td>
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<td>10:30-11:15</td>
<td>Visit: &quot;Eurofruit&quot; agribusiness located in Mramor collection center for fine trees - raspberries, strawberries Products are mainly for exported (subsidized by the municipality and ADA) Director of Agriculture, Mr. Shkumbim Gashi</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:15 – 11:45</td>
<td>Visit: Collection center for aromatic medicinal plants located in Thanisht (Slivovo) Director of Agriculture, Mr. Shkumbim Gashi</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00 - 13:00</td>
<td>Visit: <strong>Community-Based Kindergarten &quot;Botanika&quot;</strong> Place: Arbëria Neighborhood Ms. Diellza Begolli Adviser to the Mayor</td>
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<td>13:00 – 14:00</td>
<td>Lunch: Restaurant Vila &quot;Gërmia&quot; Place: in Gërmiya</td>
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<td>14:00 – 15:00</td>
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<td>15:30 – 16:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>16:00</td>
<td>Return to <strong>Swiss Diamond</strong> Hotel The end of Official Visit</td>
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<tr>
<td>18:00 - 19:00</td>
<td>Concert of Classical Music: Symphony IX of Beethoven Scanderbeg Square</td>
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<td>19:30</td>
<td>Dinner: TBD</td>
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<td>The end of the official visit</td>
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Two-Year Preliminary Plan of Cooperation, and Action
Between the
The Greater Des Moines Sister Cities Commission,
City of Des Moines, Iowa, USA
and the
City of Pristina, Kosovo
Beginning July 2019

In accordance with the Sister City Agreement authorized and approved by and between the City of Des Moines, Iowa, USA and Pristina, Kosovo, the following is a preliminary plan of cooperation and action which the City of Des Moines, through its Greater Des Moines Sister Cities Commission, agrees with the City of Pristina.

It is our individual and joint intent to explore and pursue the following initial areas of interest for the mutual benefit of our cities:

1. We believe that cultural understanding is the foundation of trust, cooperation and appreciation of each of our cultures and its citizens. To promote this cultural understanding and appreciation, we agree to pursue exchanges and programs which highlight our cities’ people and cultures. Art exchanges, including art work and performing artists including opera singers and musicians, are encouraged and will be explored, as well as possible sports exchanges.

2. To serve as a reminder of our friendship and connection, each City agrees to explore providing an appropriate public place or space in which our sister city can be honored and highlighted to the public.

3. We support connecting the students of our communities, at all levels of education. We agree to help facilitate student and teacher travel and non-travel program opportunities.

4. Our Sister City Agreement is a municipality-to-municipality agreement. We support and will explore the sharing of best practices information, including but not limited to good governance, energy conservation, and community policing.

5. We support assisting each other in community and economic development. We agree to explore and promote economic and business development opportunities for and between our communities.

6. Part of community development is developing human potential. Young adults, including young professionals, are the future of our cities. We support and promote efforts between young adults and young professionals and groups between our cities in networking and sharing ideas on support systems and development strategies for community and business leadership development.

These six (6) areas of concentration are starting points in nurturing not only friendship between our citizens, but in stimulating an active and productive sister city relationship. It is our intent to pursue these objects and to identify the appropriate people, groups and organizations to plan and carry out appropriate strategies. It is our intent to periodically review progress on these objects, and to adjust and to refine them accordingly.

Mr. Nowadzky shared that the trip was extremely successful despite the shortened time due to travel delays. He noted that Mayor Cownie connected well with the Prime Minister of Kosovo. The Commission
discussed the thoroughness of Mr. Nowadzky report and that the high level of detail was beneficial for the Commission. The report, along with the Kofu and Shijiazhuang reports, will be include in the annual report the City Council. The Commission discussed following similar formats in the future.

**Saint-Etienne Committee**
Dr. Zeff shared the following written report:

The Sister City Commission and the St. Etienne Committee co-chaired, with the Alliance Française, Bastille Day celebration at Birdland Park on Sunday, July 14. There was a very successful turnout and was an excellent way to grow the reputation of the Sister City Commission.

*St Etienne connections:*
We sent a response letter to Robert Selby in St. Etienne to link him to the Greater Des Moines Partnership and other Des Moines businesses. This letter was in response to a letter we received from St. Etienne. We are hoping to make some new connections between Des Moines and St. Etienne.

Dr. Zeff discussed the success of the St. Etienne Bastille Day Celebration on July 14 and the partnership with the event cosponsor Alliance Française. Dr. Zeff noted the shelter being a great location to host the event, and that they have already reserved the shelter for next year.

The St. Etienne Committee did not meet this past month, but they will be meeting before the September Commission meeting. Dr. Zeff noted that she is considering an unofficial visit in September to St. Etienne. Dr. Zeff also noted that the Committee is looking forward to next April when students from Des Moines will travel to St. Etienne. Students from St. Etienne visited Des Moines this past year, and the cities have the mutual goal of working towards internationalization.

**Shijiazhuang Committee**
Ms. Zhao Mandelbaum discussed Governor Reynolds’ Trade Mission to China visit that the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) will be hosting this year from November 14-17. The fee for organizations to participate in the trip is $5,000. Ms. Zhao Mandelbaum suggested that she could discuss with IEDA about getting a waived or reduced fee for the City, or perhaps a business sponsor.

Ms. Whisenand made the motion that the Commission authorize Ms. Zhao Mandelbaum to further explore the opportunity of participating in the trip to Shijiazhuang in November 2019, and to sign up for the trip contingent on the City receiving funding for the participation fee. Mr. Spaine seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**Stavropol Committee**
Mr. Spaine shared the following written report:

An email was sent to Tatiana, thanking her for the paintings sent to us by the Stavropol School of Art. Tatiana then requested that Roger send an official letter to the head of the school, thanking them for the paintings.

The official date for Stavropol Day Celebrations is now set to take place on September 21. They have sent an official letter inviting Mayor Cownie, but unfortunately, he is unable to travel to Stavropol at this time.

Tatiana also informed me that the invitation letter to send me to Stavropol for this occasion should come directly from the Mayor’s office, listing my name and anyone else that wants to go, including
passport number, and Date of Birth (DOB). This letter, she emphasized, should come from the Mayor's office.

Tatiana also asked me to work on getting art displays from Des Moines Public Schools (DMPS) students that will hopefully be included in the art exhibit area during the celebration.

Our friends in Stavropol are looking forward to someone representing the city of Des Moines at this year's celebrations.

If I am to represent the city, I will have to be gone from school from September 19 to the 23. I will start the process of submitting request to HR for permission to be gone during that period of time.

Mr. Spaine shared that the Commission has looked into the possibility of him visiting Stavropol for the September 2019 celebrations; however, it was discovered that the process to acquire a VISA to travel to Russia is too lengthy for the timeframe between now and September. Mr. Spaine will continue to work with students to send artwork to Stavropol once the DMPS school year begins. Mr. Spaine requested that Mr. Nowadzky or Mayor Cownie send a thank you letter to the Stavropol school that sent artwork to the City.

**Kofu Committee**
No report was provided.

**Italy Committee**
Ms. Renda shared that Mayor Cownie has not heard back from Florence since he sent a second letter inviting them to discuss the potential of a relationship. Ms. Renda noted that it might be time to look at other potential cities in Italy that might be good partners for Des Moines.

**Education Committee**
No update at this time.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Des Moines Arts Festival Report – June 28-30, 2019**
Ms. Patrick noted that she sent the Committee information regarding the process that was taken this past year to be part of the Des Moines Arts Festival. This can be used as an example for next year's festival. Additionally, the Commission would like to see the artwork sent by students from Stavropol displayed at next year's festival, but will need to submit it to the Festival coordinators well in advance.

**Adjustment to 2019 Fall Meeting Schedule**
Mr. Nowadzky advised the Commission that his teaching schedule for the fall will conflict with the current Commission schedule in November. He gave the options that the Commission could either change the date of the meeting or Vice Chairperson Ms. Patrick could lead the meeting. No decision was made at the meeting. The Commission also discussed the December meeting and what type of structure or event they would like to follow.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Events Calendar**
Mr. Ortiz brought up a discussion on events and how the Commission communicates Commission sanctioned events and non-Commission sanctioned events to Commission members. A discussion ensued on how the Commission might better communicate events with one another, even if they are not directly hosted by the Commission. Some suggestions included adding them to the Commission's Facebook page, sending calendars with every monthly committee report, add a line item on the agendas before the
“Adjourn” line item, and sending a calendar at the beginning of each year with known events. No decision on the type of communication was made at this meeting. Ms. Zhao Mandelbaum also mentioned that she’d like to explore doing Des Moines Sister Cities newsletters, which could also be an avenue to communicate events related to the Commission.

ADJOURNMENT
Motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Whisenand and seconded by Mr. Spaine. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 5:57 PM.

NEXT MEETING
The next meeting will be September 10, 2019 at 5:00 PM in the MacRae Conference Room, Richard A. Clark Municipal Service Center, 1551 East Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway.