NEXT MEETING MARCH 10, 2020, AT 5:00 PM
MACRAE CONFERENCE ROOM – RICHARD A. CLARK MUNICIPAL SERVICE CENTER

MINUTES
February 11, 2020

Members Present: Lyndi Buckingham-Schutt, Marcus Coenen, Madeline Goebel, Jake Grothoff, Doug Lewis, Joseph Nolte, Roger Nowadzky, Edgar Ortiz, Ginny Renda, Angie Ritchie, Vidal Spaine, Sherill Whisenand, Hollie Zajicek, Eleanor Zeff, Li Zhao Mandelbaum

Guests Present: Dana Hustedt, Director, Esports, Grand View University
Brooks Reynolds, Cofounder, Blue Ribbon Bacon Festival

Staff Present: Joyce Warburton

On Tuesday, February 11, 2020, Chairperson Mr. Nowadzky called the meeting of the Greater Des Moines Sister Cities Commission to order at 5:00 PM in the MacRae Conference Room, Richard A. Clark Municipal Services Center, 1551 East Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway.

MINUTES
Mr. Nolte moved to approve the January 14, 2020 minutes. Ms. Whisenand seconded the motion. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORT
Financial report for July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020 was distributed indicating January expenses of $43.60 to American Marking for name badges for four (4) Commissioners; and $21.44 for the December 10, 2019 publication of the Sister Cities Commission minutes in the Business Record. There were no February expenses reported at this time. Ms. Whisenand moved to approve the financial report. Mr. Nolte seconded the motion. Motion carried.

NOVEMBER 12-17, 2019 SHIJIAZHUANG DELEGATION TRIP REPORT
Ms. Zhao Mandelbaum introduced Ms. Dana Hustedt, Director, Esports, Grand View University, who presented the following as it related to her participation in the November 2019 delegation trip to Shijiazhuang.
Des Moines, Iowa and Hebei Province Celebration  
Riot Headquarters, Shanghai  
November 13, 2019

MISSION STATEMENT

Grand View University engages, equips, and empowers students to fulfill their individual potential and serve society. Committed to the development of the whole person—mind, body and spirit—and to preparing students for successful careers and responsible citizenship both in their communities and in a diverse and changing world, Grand View offers a liberal arts education that:

• Challenges students to inquire with a disciplined and critical mind, communicate effectively, and display an awareness of the global issues that affect us all.
• Creates a community of learners where differing perspectives are welcome, where friendly interaction is the norm, and where intellectual and personal integrity is expected and modeled.
• Offers a supportive environment where students can engage in community with others, discern life purpose, and grow in leadership.
• Affirms Christian faith and ethics as a vision for life, a vision that enhances our respect for the diversity and dignity of all people, for relating to others, and for the pursuit of lifelong learning.
VISION STATEMENT

With boldness and confidence, we will...

- Provide a rigorous education that prepares students for successful careers and inspired lives;
- Afford this opportunity to all qualified students, including those who have been under-represented in college populations;
- Preserve the virtues of independent, residential, church-related, liberal arts education for future generations;
- Blend the strengths of engaging and interactive in-class experiences with appropriate technologies to enrich learning and extend our reach;
- Build community ties that enhance life in the region and add value for our students.

FAST FACTS

- 1,800 total enrollment
- 56% female, 44% male
- 84% Iowa, 13% non-Iowa, 3% international
- 20,800 alumni
- 10,000+ living in Iowa

- 40 undergraduate majors
- 5 master's degrees
- Average class size: 16
- Student to faculty ratio: 12:1

- More than 40 clubs and organizations
- 26 men's and women's athletic teams
- 830 students reside in six residential facilities

- 89% of full-time day students receive financial assistance
- 99% job placement for two decades

- Grand View University
Li Zhao Mandelbaum

- Only female executive being part of President Trump's 29 CEO delegation in 2017
- President and Founder of China Iowa Group
- Chair woman for Des Moines/Shijiazhuang Sister City Committee
- Board of Trustee of Grand View University

Dana Hustedt-Director of Esports

- First Female Collegiate Esports Director in United States
- Featured on ESPNW and ESPN Esports
- Tournament Director of Global Esports Classic 2018, 2019, 2020
- ASU GSV Summit Inaugural Esports Tournament Organizer 2019 and upcoming 2020
- Published writer and speaker for UBTECH Esports Division
- Day-to-day operations, mission and program development of Grand View Esports
- National Association of Esports Coaches and Directors Advisory Board Member
Sister States Relationship

President Xi visited Iowa in 1985 and stayed here with a host family for a month.

His old friend, former Governor of Iowa became Ambassador to China.
Madam Peng joined and hosted our Iowa delegation for the 35th anniversary in 2018.
Connie Sweeris takes on a Chinese player in 1972 during the Chinese table tennis team’s visit to the US. [Photo/China Daily]
Grand View Esports

- Established August 2017
- First esports program in Iowa + first to offer esports specific scholarships
- One of the first 15 varsity programs established in US
- Inaugural season: 8 League of Legends players
- 2018-19 esports student players
- 2019-20 esports student players
- Compete across five game titles:
  - League of Legends (2 teams), Overwatch, Rocket League, Fortnite, Smash Ultimate

Recent Competition

- Ranked #28 in ESPN Esports Collegiates LOL Ranks: Spring 2019
- 1 of 8 teams in first RSAA approved travelling esports conference for Spring 2020 Season
- First place, $4,500 winner Nextech KC
- Second Place, $2,500, Esports Festival Des Moines
- 3rd Place, $1,000, HUEFEST 2019
- Annual host of Grand View Esports Classic & Clinic
  - $10,000, 16 team collegiate League of Legends LAN
  - Sponsored by OWEN by HP
Des Moines, Iowa

Celebration of Relationship Anniversary

Instead of Ping Pong diplomacy, we would like to propose an esports diplomacy representing today's generation of continued friendship.

League of Legends Friendship Cup for the 35th Anniversary Celebration

- Hosted in Shijiazhuang (idecal) or Beijing
- China Iowa and Dana Hustace will coordinate 4 US Collegiate Teams to travel to China and compete in the friendly tournament

Objective

- Celebrate the Des Moines, Iowa relationship with Shijiazhuang
- Create a unique lifetime experience for US collegiate teams, cross-cultural play and unity through League of Legends

- Participating Chinese teams from the Hebei Province and any other collegiate equivalent institution wanting to experience cross-continent competition, cultural experience and celebration of the 35th anniversary activities involving both countries governments and players
Celebration Opportunity Example

Exhibition tour set up for Chinese teams to compete at or against multiple American institutions and reputable esports programs.
- Maryville University, St. Louis, Missouri
- Harrisburg Institute of Technology, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
- University of California- Irvine, Irvine, California
- Any others of interest can be collaborated upon

In turn, this celebration creates a recruiting pipeline for multiple institutions and provides more opportunity for Chinese students to explore their options for collegiate scholarships, careers and potential professional team recruitment.

Proposal #2

In conjunction with our historic relationship, the celebration could be extended to the professional ranks for a premier event of both nations feeding the hearts of League fans everywhere.
- One North American Team and one Chinese Team
  - Des Moines, Iowa
  - Exclusive venue seating capacity at Wells Fargo Arena
    - Approximately 16,500
    - Similar to Little Caesars in Detroit for LCS Summer Split
What does this mean for Chinese Participation?

I. Scholarships and American education

II. Player development in two continents. Share knowledge, culture and expand competitive circle of NA Collegiate, further impacting the development needs of NA

III. Career Opportunities

IV. Part of Historic Movement of unity between cultures and fostering the relationships of our future generations through esports
Ms. Zhao Mandelbaum then introduced Mr. Brooks Reynolds, Blue Ribbon Bacon Festival Cofounder, who presented the following as it related to his participation in the November 2019 delegation trip to Shijiazhuang.
In 1983, Hebei and Iowa became sister states by formal agreement. Over the years the cooperative agreement has fostered friendship, understanding and trust as well as exchanges in education, culture and, importantly, trade.
SISTER CITIES

Two years after Iowa and Hebei became sister states, their respective capitals became sister cities – Shijiazhuang and Des Moines.

OUR VISION

In celebration of the long-standing friendship between Des Moines and Shijiazhuang, organizers of the Blue Ribbon Bacon Festival (BRBF) would like to join forces with a group of young professionals living in Shijiazhuang to organize and cohost a “Pork & Fellowship Festival” in Shijiazhuang.

Proceeds from the cultural exchange will support educational exchanges between Des Moines and Shijiazhuang.
OUR PURPOSE

1. Further strengthen the international relationship between Iowa and Hebei through a pork-inspired cultural exchange
2. Promote U.S. pork products in China
3. Raise funds to support educational exchanges between Hebei and Iowa
4. Set the stage for an annual cross cultural celebration in Hebei

ABOUT

Blue Ribbon Bacon Festival (BRBF) is an annual event held in Des Moines, Iowa attracting over 5,000 bacon-lovers from around the world. The bacon-centric organization also cohosts annual bacony events in Keystone, Colorado, and Reykjavik, Iceland.

BRBF builds cultural bridges through bacon fellowship while also raising critical funds to support local charities. BRBF encourages people throughout the world to celebrate their commonalities and differences, get a little goofy and break bacon together.
PROOF OF CONCEPT

Reykjavik Food Festival has completed its 8th year, and continues to promote the values of international bacon fellowship throughout Iceland. The bacon-inspired partnership has led to full-filled meetings with dignitaries from both Iceland and Iowa, raised over $50,000 for charitable organizations and played an important role in increasing the consumption of pork in Iceland by over 15%, with bacon sales up over 200%!

OUR PLAN

Private Event
A pork-infused gathering for all those who have contributed to building bridges between Hebei and Iowa. This would include but not be limited to; government officials, business leaders, trade organizations, meat processors, food distributors, pork producers, soybean producers, corn growers, educational institutions, grocery stores, teachers, exchange students, and host families. (Approximately 150-200 attendees)

Pork Fellowship Festival
The inaugural Pork Fellowship Festival will offer approximately 5,000 pork-lovers an abundance of Iowa-style and Hebei-style pork, pork-inspired cuisine by 20 local restaurants, beverages, food demonstrations, live music, a pork queen contest, a pork eating competition and international pork fellowship. Festival proceeds will support educational exchanges between Hebei and Iowa.
DES MOINES/SHIJIAZHUANG CHEF EXCHANGE

DESCRIPTION: A Des Moines Chef will collaborate with a Shijiazhuang Chef to create a unique bacon-inspired dish that represents a fusion of both cultures. Their creation will be paired with a wine or craft cocktail and served at the inaugural Pork Fellowship Festival.

FUNDING

Our plan is to raise $50,000 from stakeholders in the U.S. to cover festival-related costs. Targeted sponsors currently include but aren’t limited to:

- Iowa Pork Producers Association
- Iowa Soybean Association
- Iowa Corn Growers Association
- National Pork Board
- Iowa Department of Economic Development
- United States Meat Export Federation
- Pioneer Hi-Bred
- John Deere
- Principal Financial Group
- Stine Seed Company
- Hormel
- Smithfield
- Tyson
- Berkwood Farms
SPONSORSHIP GOALS

There are four sponsorship levels offered to our partnering organizations. Each level comes with its own unique set of benefits. Please review each sponsorship level and choose the one that best fits your organization’s objectives and budget.

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<th>LEVEL</th>
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<tr>
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PAST EVENT IMAGES

- REYKJAVIK, ICELAND
- KEYSTONE, COLORADO
PAST MEDIA COVERAGE

CONTACT INFO

MARSHALL PORTER
marshall@brbfest.com
C: (515)577-5145

BROOKS REYNOLDS
brooks@brbfest.com
C: (515)865-8078

EVENT WEBSITE
www.blueribbonbaconfestival.com
COMMISSION CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT
Mr. Nowadzky shared the following written report for November:

With sadness, I present the Chair’s February report. The most significant Commission event in January was the passing of the Commission’s Vice-Chair Peggy Hoover Patrick.

Peggy passed away January 18th. I think that I share the sentiment of the Commission in saying that she will be missed, not only as a dedicated colleague but also as a friend. If it is of any small consolation, Peggy received the flowers Commissioners sent her on the Friday following our Commission meeting. She knew we were thinking of her to the end.

As to the business of the Commission, February marks the time of the municipal budgeting process. It is the time for Commission planning and programing for fiscal year 2020-2021.

Logically, the work of the Commission flows from our partner relationships with our respective sister cities. Standing city committee activity should be the drive shaft which propels those relationships. While there is no substitute for face-to-face meetings with our sister city counterparts, a majority of our connectivity is through non-travel programing. Proposing those feasible non-travel activities with a plan of implementation, is the work of the city committees under committee leadership, with the culling, sorting, synchronization, and coordinating of the timing of those activities, the work of the commission leadership. The Commission, through the Finance Committee and with the assistance of the Marketing Committee, will be working closely with the Friends of Sister Cities nonprofit group to raise funds to supplement the Commission’s budget, particularly relating to enhancing inbound and outbound delegation activities and participation.

Since the committee assignments last year, we have a large number of “new faces” on the Commission. Even a significant number of “seasoned” commissioners are relatively new to the body. So, I believe this is the appropriate time to regroup and reassign, before we can plan and budget.

In this regard, I would request that every commissioner within the next week send me an e-mail indicating their first, and second preference for an assignment to the Kofu, Japan; Pristina, Kosovo; Shijiazhuang, China; Stavropol, Russia; Saint-Etienne, France; or Italy City Committees.

In addition to the standing city committee assignments, there are three (3) ad hoc administrative committees that carry out the internal functions of the Commission. They are the Marketing Committee, the Governance Committee, and the Finance Committee, to which I will be making appointments. Lastly, there is the ad hoc Education Committee, which supports the standing city committees’ educational partnership programs, and which has a liaison function with the Des Moines School District.

Again, please express to me your preferences for the specific city committees in which you are interested, so we can start the reorganization of those committees so as to begin the planning and budgeting for next fiscal year.

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

I talked to Tatiana on the phone and she made it clear that the invitation to send someone from the Commission to Stavropol should come from the Mayor’s Office. They would like this process to start at this time since the process of obtaining a VISA to Russia requires a lengthy process. The timeline for this trip should take place this summer in June or July. In that case, I will draft a letter of invitation and send it to the Mayor’s secretary for his approval and signature. She also informed that they are still waiting for the final design of the banner commemorating 75 years of
the end of WWII. They have asked us to donate a banner representing our sister city relationship, which they have also requested of all their sister city relationships.

Tatiana requested that we submit a year’s plan of action for our sister city relationship sometime soon. In that regard, I ask that a Vice Chair of the Stavropol Committee be named to work with me on this project, and hopefully this will be something that will be presented to the Mayor of Stavropol during our visit this summer. It is also worth noting that Kerry Bowen, Vice Chair of the Stavropol Committee, is no longer a Commissioner and has since been replaced.

**Shijiazhuang Committee**

Ms. Zhao Mandelbaum shared the following written report:

China declared a Coronavirus outbreak shortly after the Chinese New Year holiday started. The massive holiday travel fueled the spread of the virus. China is doing everything they can to fight this virus. A medical team from the US arrived several days ago to help. As of today, there are 157 confirmed patients infected with the coronavirus within Hebei with 24 in Shijiazhuang, 18 in Handan, 17 in Tangshan, and 14 in Langfang, all being Iowa sister cities in Hebei. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of those who lost their lives. And if any citizen of Des Moines has connections in helping with donations of medical N95 masks, suits, please let us know.

So far, no date for our 35th anniversary has been set; and, it will largely depend on how soon this virus is under control.

While the Bacon Festival and eSport Tournament are being planned for Shijiazhuang in honor of our 35th anniversary, Ms. Zhao Mandelbaum wondered if it would be appropriate to partner with the Iowa State Fair to host a special celebration event here in Des Moines during the 2020 Iowa State Fair. Mr. Nolte requested that Commissioners be notified as to the specific date this event would take place so as to allow schedules to be adjusted so they might be able to volunteer for this event. Dr. Zeff suggested the possibility of combining the Saint-Etienne, France with Shijiazhuang’s anniversary celebration event(s).

Ms. Whisenand moved that Ms. Zhao Mandelbaum pursue the idea of holding a 35th anniversary celebration event at the Fair with the Iowa State Fair administration. If agreement is reached and a signature on a contract is requested, then it would be forwarded to City Legal for review. Seconded by Mr. Nolte. Motion carried.

**Saint-Etienne Committee**

The following written report was shared on behalf of Dr. Zeff:

We would like to report on a few events that have occurred this month.

1. We received a response to a letter I sent last month to the chair of the Franco-American Committee in Saint Etienne, Bernard Chavanne. He is very interested in making and continuing connections between our two cities. He is a teacher and says that he has connections with high schools in Saint Etienne. We now plan to connect him directly to Olivia Howe from the Des Moines Schools, which we have been discussing in the Sister City Commission for a few months. So, we are now happy to say that we have a connection for her from Saint Etienne. We will contact her this month.

2. We would also like to connect Mr. Chavanne with Maura Nelson from the DMACC French Chefs Exchange as Mr. Chavanne visited Des Moines in 2010 on the chef exchange program, and he is very interested in the 35th Anniversary of this exchange. He might also be able to help welcome (to Saint Etienne) some of the students who will be interning with chefs in the St. Etienne area this summer and celebrating this 35th anniversary.

3. We have also received more exchanges from Robert Selby, and we will continue to work on possible exchanges with him and other businesses in France.
4. We continue to explore possible exchanges such as on environmental and infrastructure interests. Most Sister Cities promote some mutual economic benefits where jobs are created, for example.

5. The Sub-committee on Saint Etienne met on February 6, 2020. We are setting up another meeting in February to exchange ideas with some business interests, Berkwood Farms, etc. and to look into Iowa Economic Development strategies and international connections, especially in Europe.

6. I (Eleanor) attended one of the DMACC 35th Anniversary French Chefs’ dinners on Saturday, February 1. Mayor Cownie was also there, and they made a big deal about the importance of the Sister City Connection with Saint Etienne for starting this program. A picture of the event is included. There was also coverage of the dinners in the Des Moines Register and the Perry News.

**DMACC Culinary Institute celebrates 35th exchange program with France**

JANUARY 27, 2020 BY DAR DANIELSON, RADIO IOWA

(Photos courtesy of DMACC)

A group of French chefs are visiting the Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC) campus as part of the anniversary celebration of an exchange program with the school’s culinary program.

DMACC French professor Maura Nelson says it also started when the state of Iowa started a sister relationship with Saint-Étienne in 1985. She says Saint-Étienne is about 45 miles outside of the gastronomic heart of France, which has a chef’s association. They decided to send two chefs here in 1986 to DMACC because the school had a culinary program and they thought that would be a good fit.

Nelson says the exchange program was a success and a kept going. “Every year since then we’ve had two chefs from the association — they come every year in January — they spend two weeks here working with our faculty doing demonstrations of traditional French cuisine,” according to Nelson.

She says the top eight students in the DMACC program get to go on a trip to France. “We take the students all over France. We take them and try to give them some really good experience as we take them to Michelin star restaurants. We take them to some of the better-known vineyards. We show them a lot about French culture, French history, but particularly about French food and wine,” she says.
There are 20 chefs visiting this year as part of the 35th anniversary of the program. Chef John Andres is the director of the Iowa Culinary Institute at DMACC. “As far as we know, we are the only community college or culinary school in the country that has this type of long-lasting relationship with any foreign culinary group,” Andres says.

Andres says it has become an annual tradition that everyone loves. “You know, our students love these demonstrations — this is what they look forward to all year long — it’s kind of a penultimate point. Seeing these students hanging on every word, every action of these demonstrations during these couple of weeks is just incredible to see,” according to Andres.

The students go through a class on French culinary terms before the French chefs arrive that helps them as they watch the French visitors. He says a lot of the culinary terminology in America is based on French cuisine already and he says they also have an interpreter that brings not only the terminology — but also a lot of the French culture.

Professor Nelson says there’s a few more things going on this year with the celebration of the 35th anniversary of the exchange. “We not only are having the chefs here doing cooking demonstrations — we are also entertaining the spouses. So we’ve tried to take them to different places here in Des Moines, we’re visiting Maytag, they are going to give us a tour of (making) Maytag cheese. We’re going to go to Pella, we’re going to go to Ames, we’re going to Winterset,” Nelson says. “Again as chef Andres says, it’s really nice because it’s an exchange. They also learn things from us.”

Nelson says the visiting French chefs get to take in our culture too and find that not everything we call French is linked to their country. “French toast is actually not theirs, French salad dressing is not theirs,” Nelson laughs. “They always go ‘French dressing,’ dressing for them is basically oil and vinegar, they don’t go for the Ranch dressing, blue cheese, that’s a sauce to them.”

The school holds three special dinners featuring the French cuisine during the stay of the chefs at DMACC.

THE PERRY NEWS

Perry DMACC culinary arts student works with French chefs
By Dan Ivis, DMACC Media Liaison - January 30, 2020

DMACC Iowa Culinary Institute (ICI) second-year student Zoe Rene Gordon, right, of Perry pours water into a bowl as French Chef Frederic Stalport watches in preparation of an upcoming French gourmet dinner. Photo courtesy DMACC

Zoe Rene Gordon of Perry, a second-year student in the DMACC Iowa Culinary Institute (ICI) program, is among a number of chefs-in-training learning French cuisine at the hands of the masters.

For 35 years, two chefs from the St. Etienne region of France have come to the DMACC Ankeny Campus every January as part of the annual DMACC Iowa Culinary Institute (ICI) French chefs exchange.

Since 2020 this marks the 35th anniversary of the exchange, 20 French chefs from Les Cuisiniers de la Loire, along with their spouses, are spending two weeks in Iowa, teaching French cuisine to the DMACC culinary students.

Des Moines is a Sister City to St. Etienne.

As part of the exchange program, a group of eight ICI students will travel to France in May to tour Michelin-starred restaurants and wineries for two weeks and then serve two-week internships in the kitchens of the French chefs.

The DMACC Culinary students will also help prepare three gourmet dinners under the tutelage of the world-renowned French chefs.
Bonjour! French chefs give culinary demonstrations

Since 1986, the Iowa Culinary Institute has been hosting chefs from Des Moines’s sister city, Saint-Étienne, France, to demonstrate their skills to the culinary students. Usually, two chefs come to the States, but since this year is the 35th anniversary, 20 chefs came over to Des Moines, which is more than the school has ever had.

Some of the chefs are new, and some are returning, but the most important part of the exchange program to both the French chefs and the ICI instructors is the relationships they have formed in the last 35 years.

Chef Jerome Baron-Pélossier, in his 11th trip to the U.S. for this program, said the reason he keeps coming back is “to keep the bonds going.”

While the chefs are demonstrating, the students are listening intently, taking notes, and hanging on every word. DMACC Culinary Institute Director John Andreas said, “It’s an experience that no other culinary student in America, really, gets.”

During the other half of this exchange, eight second-year students are chosen by the instructors to travel to France and work alongside the chefs in their kitchens. Because of the tremendous donor support, each student receives a scholarship for the trip.

Second-year student Holly Dreesman said that in her first year, the French chef program inspired her to improve her skills. Now in her second year, she has received the scholarship to go to France in May, and will get the opportunity to work with the chefs in their own kitchens. After graduation, Holly hopes to continue using her skills to style food. “I like to get other people excited about food,” she said.

The exchange started 35 years ago when the sister-city relationship was formed. French Professor Maura Nelson was an adjunct when she was originally asked to help interpret. She initially suggested they make the exchange an annual occurrence. She offered to help organize because at the time she was part-time, only teaching one class, and spoke French.

Thirty-five years later, the program has become more than just a learning opportunity. “It’s our French family,” said Nelson.
Bienvenue to chefs from Les Cuisiniers de la Loire, who will spend the next two weeks at the Iowa Culinary Institute at #DMACC!

This year marks the 35th Anniversary of #DMACC’s annual exchange with chefs from #DesMoines’ French sister city of St-Etienne: bit.ly/ICIFrenchChefs
Pristina Committee
Mr. Nowadzky shared the following written report:

I wish to share some news from Kosovo. Kosovo’s two largest political parties reached an agreement last week to create a new government almost four months after Kosovo held national elections following Prime Minister Haradinaj’s resignation.

According to news articles, Kosovo’s parliament approved Albin Kurti, the 44-year-old leader of the Vetevendosje (Self Determination) party who became Prime Minister and under the agreement will work with the LDK and other groups representing Bosniaks, Serbs, Turks, and other ethnic minorities. Commissioner Hollie Zajicek may have some further insight on this.

Locally, the Kosovo Consulate office will be celebrating Kosovo’s 12th anniversary of its independence on February 17th. Also, the week of February 24th there will be a delegation coming to Iowa, composed of mayors from 10 Kosovo cities. Pristina is not one of those cities selected to participate.

Lastly, at the Sister Cities Commission level, there has been activity. I have been visiting with individuals in the community interested in serving as volunteers on the Pristina Committee. I also have had conversations and meetings with Todd Jacobus, Chair of the Iowa Sister States Kosovo Committee, in an effort to coordinate information and activities.

Vushtrri, Kosovo
Ms. Zajicek reported the newly elected Prime Minister is now Albin Kurti and the Speaker of Parliament is Vjosa Osmani of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK). The new leadership has indicated their priorities will be economic development, trade, jobs, education, which aligns with our priorities. When the delegation goes to Vushtrri (tentatively scheduled for the second week of June), there will be a big focus on trade missions and business. They have made it very clear that they want tangible results from these partnerships.

In recognition of Kosovo’s 12th anniversary of their independence, a reception is scheduled for February 17, 2020, at Camp Dodge in Johnston, Iowa.

There is also a Mayors’ delegation from cities in Kosovo who have sister city relationships with cities in Iowa will be in Iowa February 27-28. The Mayor of Vushtrri will be a part of that delegation; however, the Mayor of Pristina will not be. On February 28th, there will be a roundtable at Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC) where the Mayors from Kosovo will be joined by mayors of our sister cities to figure out best practices for the new mayors in Kosovo regarding establishing new sister city relationships in Iowa.
Plans are still moving forward on the hotel in Norwalk with the Kosovar principal investors, and they are now looking at adding a Mediterranean Kosovo restaurant/coffee bar. These would be the first brick and mortar businesses here from Kosovo.

In addition, while in Vushtrri in June, it is anticipated there will be a dedication of the Norwalk Park. It is also expected a ribbon-cutting for the Kosovo American Economic City during that trip.

**Kofu Committee**
Mr. Lewis reported Japan will mark the 75th Anniversary of the end of World War II. Mayor Cownie has indicated an interest in participating as part of the Mayors for Peace organization in the commemoration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 2020.

**Italy Committee**
Ms. Renda shared the following written report:

Ms. Warburton finally received a response from Sister Cities International (SCI) last week; and on February 5th, I received a response to one of my emails sent over three (3) months ago. I have tried to fill out the papers that they sent in their email. That information has been sent to Ms. Warburton, who has kindly agreed to type them and send them back to SCI. I think it will be a slow process, but at least we have started the search with the help of SCI.

Ms. Warburton reported Mayor Cownie has indicated he will again reach out to the Mayor of Florence, Italy regarding establishing a relationship.

**Education Committee**
Ms. Olivia Howe was not available to attend this month’s meeting. Mr. Spain will attempt to reach out to her again regarding attending the Commission’s meeting in March. Meanwhile, Ms. Howe responded to Ms. Zhao Mandelbaum’s email in which she submitted the name and telephone number of the person in charge of school partnerships in Shijiazhuang. Ms. Howe indicated her intention of reaching out to that individual.

Ms. Kristen Massa, Art Teacher at Walnut Creek Elementary School, is working with her students to complete the certificates to be presented to the best art displays presented to us by students in our partner schools in Stavropol, Russia. We received permission from the City of Des Moines’ Legal Department to use the Sister City logo on those certificates.

**OLD BUSINESS**
No Old Business was discussed at this time.

**NEW BUSINESS**
No New Business was discussed at this time.

**ADJOURNMENT**
Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Nolte and seconded by Ms. Whisenand. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:10 PM.

**NEXT MEETING**
The next meeting will be March 10, 2020 at 5:00 PM in the MacRae Conference Room, Richard A. Clark Municipal Service Center, 1551 East Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway.