



City of Madison

City of Madison
Madison, WI 53703
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Meeting Minutes - Draft SISTER CITY COLLABORATION COMMITTEE

*Consider: Who benefits? Who is burdened?
Who does not have a voice at the table?
How can policymakers mitigate unintended consequences?*

Monday, February 6, 2023

5:30 PM

Virtual meeting

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Meeting called to order by Chair, Charles James, at 5:32 PM.

- Present:** 9 - Frank L. Alfano; Josephine H. Oyama-Miller; Carolyn A. Gantner; Daina P. Zemliauskas-Juozevicius; Charles J. James; Jon F. Heinrich; Salvador A. Carranza; Rahel Desalegne and Lamin Drammeh
- Excused:** 2 - Nasra Wehelie and Jennifer C. Johnson

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Carranza, seconded by Gantner, to approve the minutes from the November 7, 2022 Sister City Collaboration Committee meeting. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. [70299](#) Public Comment

There was no public comment.

DISCLOSURES AND RECUSALS

No disclosures or recusals.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

REGULAR BUSINESS REPORTS

2. [75811](#) Sister City Program Reports - February 2023

Tepatitlán, Mexico (Salvador A. Carranza) - The Madison-Tepatitlan Sister City project is now an independent charitable organization, having recently received a section 501(c)(3) designation from the Internal Revenue Service. Previously they had operated under Dane County's Latino Chamber of Commerce. Carranza also said that they have completed a 2023 strategic plan that includes the creation of a new mosaic in a Tepatitlán schoolyard,

organized by Madison artists, a student exchange later this year, and other activities.

Vilnius, Lithuania (Daina P. Zemliauskas-Juozevicius) - A Lithuanian Independence Day celebration will occur on February 16, one of two Independence Day celebrations the country observes.

Zemliauskas-Juozevicius indicated that Madison-Vilnius Sister Cities will participate virtually. MVSC has also recently become involved in a project spearheaded by the Roots organization that will focus on the restorations to Lithuanian cemeteries in the U.S.

Bahir Dar, Ethiopia (Rahel Desalegne) - The Tigray conflict ended last year with a signed agreement in November. Desalegne also mentioned a recent contentious incident within the country's Orthodox Church, which serves a significant portion of the population. She fears that this may develop into a more serious conflict than Tigray.

Arcatao, El Salvador (Carolyn Gantner) - Gantner reported that MASCP participated in the Fair Trade Holiday Festival at Monona Terrace on December 3. Many items were sold from the women's embroidery co-op in Arcatao and from artisans in that area of El Salvador. The festival also gave MASCP an opportunity to discuss their organization with the community, as well as to share information about the SCCC. They are sending a delegation to Arcatao this June in collaboration with the US El Salvador Sister Cities network. With the intention of reaching out to the community, MASCP has hosted two monthly Saturday morning gatherings at Finca Café on Rimrock Road. The next meeting is scheduled for Saturday, March 11. These meetings have provided an opportunity to share information about Arcatao as well as Finca, whose owners are from El Salvador.

The interviews (including supporting material and photos) for the Oral History Project are completed and have been sent to the Madison Public Library. Gantner said Library staff will notify them when the interviews will be posted on their website.

Stations of the Cross will be at Bethel Lutheran Church's art gallery during March and April. The exhibit includes photographs of the actual Stations of the Cross in Arcatao's church. For the past few years, the photos have been exhibited in various Madison churches during the Lenten season.

Mantova, Italy (Frank L. Alfano) - Alfano reported that the lake contamination conference in Madison being developed in collaboration with both city mayors has been cancelled with hopes that it will be able to occur later this year. The communities are staying in touch and there is strong interest in having such a conference in the future.

Kanifing, The Gambia (Lamin Drammeh) - Drammeh felt that Mayor Rhodes-Conway's visit to Kanifing last year was successful. The Madison contingent included other local government officials and politicians. There were many contacts with Kanifing officials and Drammeh feels that a close partnership between the cities will develop. The contingent also visited neighboring Senegal. The Madison-Kanifing Sister City committee is also planning their annual celebration to be held in October this year.

Freiburg, Germany (Charles J. James) - James said that the Madison Freiburg Sister City Committee's annual dinner is set for mid-March at Memorial Union on the UW campus. Details are being worked on and James gave an invitation to all sister city organizations to attend. They held their monthly "Stammtisch" gathering at the Capital Brewery in Middleton on January 29th and plan to do this every month on the last Sunday through the rest of the year. Students from West High School will be going to Freiburg in June for two weeks. In September a group from their sister school in Freiburg, the Theodor-Heuss-Gymnasium, will be in Madison. James also said that they have applied for a permit from the Capitol Police for an information table during the Farmers Market this summer, but will be at a different location (#13 instead of #36).

Obihiro, Japan (Josephine H. Oyama-Miller) – Members of Madison-Obihiro Sister Cities are developing a middle school student exchange. Oyama-Miller is hopeful that the Madison contingent will make a visit this coming fall. They are also working on an agricultural exchange. Oyama-Miller is planning to attend the emperor's birthday celebration in Chicago in February, an annual holiday in Japan.

ITEMS FOR POSSIBLE ACTION

3. [75810](#) Discussion of Chair & Vice-Chair Elections

Alfano thanked James for his service as committee chair for the past four years, normally a two-year obligation, during a difficult and unusual time. Other committee members also expressed their appreciation.

The committee has been without a community representative for some time. Carranza indicated that he has a potential candidate, and will discuss his recommendation with D'Costa before proceeding.

James indicated that there was agreement to move forward at the previous committee meeting to select a new Chair and Vice-chair at the March or April meeting and that we should return to a two-year commitment.

Zemliauskas-Juozevicius, the current Vice-chair, received verbal support from other committee members and did indicate her willingness to serve as the next Chair. Other committee members who have not previously served include Carranza, Desalegne, Drammeh, Heinrich and Johnson.

Drammeh wondered about the duties of the Chair and Vice-chair and expressed interest in having that information provided to the committee before the March meeting.

4. [75999](#) Celebrating Madison's Sister Cities Event

Due to the Covid pandemic, the committee has not held an event since 2019. Alfano expressed disappointment that an event highlighting the three European sister city organizations could not proceed as planned for 2020 and felt that it likely couldn't occur this year.

The committee had a significant discussion about what type of event could be

developed this year, considering the shortness of time available. The following were key essentials that emerged:

- Move the event away from MATC Truax Field and center activities downtown to get more community awareness of our organizations.
- Establish a photograph exhibit as the centerpiece this year and then decide on whether a reception and/or dinner or other activities would be appropriate additions.

Gantner agreed to explore where and when an exhibit could be held this year focusing on the Overture or a campus location and provide her findings at the March committee meeting. James thought with that information the committee could proceed to plan an event for 2023 or decide to focus on 2024.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Carranza, seconded by Desalegne, to adjourn. The motion passed by voice vote/other. The meeting adjourned at 6:35 PM.