



City of Madison

City of Madison
Madison, WI 53703
www.cityofmadison.com

Meeting Minutes - Approved 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, August 2, 2021

5:30 PM

Virtual Meeting

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Present: 9 - Frank L. Alfano; Josephine H. Oyama-Miller; Carolyn A. Gantner; Daina P. Zemliauskas-Juozevicius; Charles J. James; Jon F. Heinrich; Nasra Wehelie; Rahel Desalegne and Lamin Drammeh
Excused: 1 - Salvador A. Carranza

Meeting called to order by Chair Charles James at 5:30 PM

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Alfano, seconded by Oyama-Miller, to approve the minutes from the June 7, 2021 Sister City Collaboration Committee meeting. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1 [66639](#) Public Comment

There was no public comment.

DISCLOSURES AND RECUSALS

No disclosures or recusals.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

James mentioned that the SCCC should begin to consider a new chair for the group at a future meeting. He indicated that he has gladly served as chair for the past four years but it is time for a successor. Also, the next SCCC meeting is tentatively set for Monday September 13th, a week later than the first Monday of the month which is Labor Day.

REGULAR BUSINESS REPORTS

2 [66642](#) Sister City Program Reports

Bahir Dar - Bahir Dar is significantly affected by the current conflict in Ethiopia being geographically very close to the Tigray region, the center of the unrest. Support is needed and Desalegne said they have focused on providing Covid relief assistance sending face shields to Bahir Dar and the surrounding region.

Obihiro - No future events are planned for this year. The Madison-Obihiro sister city relationship did recently receive a commendation from the Consulate General of Japan in Chicago. Oyama-Miller indicated that they have continued Zoom meetings on several topics with Obihiro including the mental health group. The 14 hour time difference makes these discussions challenging to schedule and conduct.

Camagüey - The Covid-19 difficulties the Cuban people are facing are significant. The immediate need for Cubans survival is direct aid of food, basic goods and medicines. Based on the latest unrest by the Cuban people, President Biden decided to establish new sanctions on the Cuban government, an action that does not help respond to the needs of the Cuban people.

Instead of sanctions, the President could consider direct aid to help the Cuban people and eliminate the restriction imposed by President Trump that prevents individuals from sending funds to relatives in Cuba. These are actions the President can take now.

The Madison-Camagüey Association has sent funds to support the purchase of syringes for Cuba to allow them to vaccinate individuals with a vaccine they have developed. We are also planning to send a shipping container with medical goods to Camagüey in cooperation with the Wisconsin Medical Project. This will be the second container this year. The first arrived in May.

Freiburg - On July 6, our two mayors, Martin Horn from Freiburg and Satya Rhodes-Conway from Madison, met via Zoom. They invited each other to visit their cities, hopefully next summer when Freiburg celebrates its 900th (plus 2!) anniversary as a city. The meeting was recorded.

We will continue to set up an information table every Saturday morning from 9 to 1 in front of the wooden box that surrounds the pedestal where Col. Heg once stood. We've scheduled ourselves to be there at the Farmers Market until the end of September.

The University of Freiburg will be open this fall semester. Students from UW-Madison will be heading there in September. We're all hoping to be able to travel to Freiburg and to welcome visitors from Freiburg in the coming year.

Kanifing - Drammeh indicated that Madison-Kanifing is planning an outdoor celebration for their organization on September 11th.

Arcatao - Madison Arcatao Sister City Project continues to meet via Zoom about every other month. We have had a few Zoom meetings with the Directiva (city council) in Arcatao to share what is happening in our communities and country. There were plans for possible in-person exchanges/delegations to Arcatao and visa-versa but, like with other groups, all that is on hold now due to uncertainty with the Delta variant.

Our national sistering organization, U.S. El Salvador Sister Cities Committee (USESSC), and Salvadoran regional organizations have helped to maintain our connections with Arcatao. A number of workshops have been held in the Chaletanango province where Arcatao is located. Some of those workshops focused on alternative medicine, mental health therapies and other issues. On March 8th, the women in Arcatao organized a very meaningful Commemoration of International Women's Day attended by many in the community as well as a forum to celebrate the successful ban on Metallic Mining (which happened 4 years ago).

ITEMS FOR POSSIBLE ACTION

- 3 [66640](#) SCCC Meeting Mode - Virtual or In-Person

Committee staff informed the SCCC that the city leadership recommends virtual meetings for all city committees until the end of the year. However, each committee does have the ability to request in-person meetings if that is desired. There was no disagreement to Alfano's suggestion that the SCCC continue meeting virtually this year.

- 4 [66641](#) SCCC 2021 Budget Disbursement - Second Installments

The second installment to the current nine sister cities is ready to be distributed.

Oyama-Miller asked about next year's budget and her concern that the current amount of funds given to each sister city not be affected by the likely addition of another sister city organization. Committee staff indicated that nothing has yet been determined for the 2022 city budget. She thought September was the first the Common Council might begin discussions on a budget for next year and would relay our concerns to the Mayor's finance director.

Oyama-Miller felt that the SCCC hasn't in some time had interaction with the Common Council about the relationships we have established with other communities throughout the world and it might be in our interest to consider taking action to ensure funding of our organizations. Activities mentioned included setting up informational tables at an upcoming Common Council meeting and making formal presentations about our sister city relationships at an upcoming Common Council meeting.

- 5 [66643](#) Celebrate Madison's Sister Cities Events

Alfano suggested that SCCC proceed to plan for a Celebrate event next May featuring the Freiburg, Mantova, Vilnius sister cities as was planned for the 2020 Celebrate event which was postponed. There was no objection and James will organize a meeting with himself, Alfano and Zemliauskas-Juozevicius to discuss planning. We do have funds from previous events being managed by Madison-Kanifing and it was agreed that they should

be made available to support preparations for the 2022 event.

6 [65727](#) Cusco, Peru Sister City Application

Attachments: [Cusco Peru Sister City Application 3- 2021.pdf](#)

The SCCC voted 5-3, on a motion by Alfano seconded by Gantner, to recommend that the Common Council approve adding Cusco, Peru as a Madison sister city.

Alfano presented a brief history of the Mundo Esperanza groups long standing interest and efforts to have their relationship recognized formally as a Madison sister city. He felt that their presentation and materials provided at the previous SCCC meeting in June demonstrated that they have progressed in their relationship with the Cusco community and city government to a point that they have met the requirements to become a Madison sister city.

Oyama-Miller was concerned that the SCCC had not yet performed a complete review of the application requirements to decide. In response, committee staff shared by, email and virtually, related application materials and a recent Cusco city government communication regarding their interest in a formal relationship with Madison that Alfano referenced during his discussion.

7 [66644](#) Draft Cusco-Madison Resolution (dependent on 65727)

Committee staff reviewed the next steps for the Common Council to act on formal recognition. At their upcoming August 31st meeting, Alder Wehelie will introduce a resolution based on the SCCC approval at today's meeting. The draft was shared with the SCCC and committee staff read it to the group. The Common Council will not act on approval until their September 21st meeting. Committee staff said that the SCCC will have an opportunity to consider the Cusco-Madison resolution at their next meeting tentatively scheduled for September 13th, which is prior to the Common Council decision.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Oyama-Miller, seconded by Alfano, to adjourn. The motion passed by voice vote/other. The meeting adjourned at 6:55 PM.