

Sister Cities Ad Hoc Planning Committee Report

November 15, 2010

INTRODUCTION

In September, 2010, the Madison Common Council approved a resolution (Legistar # 19803) creating an ad hoc planning committee to make recommendations on the charge, scope and purpose of the City of Madison Sister City Program. The ad hoc committee met to discuss issues and prepared this report for review by the Common Council Organizational Committee (CCOC) and the Common Council. The report addresses two issues, the role of the Sister City Collaboration Committee and the purpose of the Sister Cities Program.

ROLE OF THE SISTER CITY COLLABORATION COMMITTEE (SCCC)

Initially, the mission of the SCCC was to be a forum at which local Sister City organizations could collaborate with each other, City agencies and community members around cultural, educational and humanitarian program initiatives. The SCCC was also charged with fundraising to support committee activities and to explore the potential for joint initiatives between sister cities and organizations; between individual sister cities and between sister cities and businesses; all with the goal of maximizing educational and business opportunities for Madison companies in Sister City regions or countries.

The current mission of the Sister Cities Program mirrors the Sister Cities International organizations vision that developing Sister City relationships is a great way for our community to establish meaningful and lasting global connections. These partnerships allow our community to creatively learn, work, and solve problems through cultural, educational, municipal, business, professional, and technical exchanges and projects.

POTENTIAL NEW GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR SCCC

Maintain the current mission, but add clarifying goals to include the following:

1. With City staff support, coordinate quarterly events such as receptions, International Day at Overture, etc. to publicize Sister City programs
2. Reporting to Common Council and Mayor on Best Practices by Sister Cities and other countries
3. Creating and publicizing a calendar of events of all Sister City programs
4. Assessing financial impact of Sister City visitors to Madison economy
5. Being available to assist and mentor less developed Sister City partnerships
6. Assessing effectiveness of Sister City efforts
7. Assist City staff in developing marketing materials on Madison, including information on Sister Cities Programs
8. Identifying City agencies with whom to link the Sister Cities Program
9. Creating a "Madison" gift section within the Monona Terrace gift shop or other appropriate venue to provide remembrance items for visitors

GOVERNANCE:

The ad hoc committee recommends that the membership of the SCCC be limited or that an Executive Committee of nine members be created. Attendance would be open to all Sister City organizations but voting membership would be limited to the nine members. The voting membership/or the Executive Committee membership would be reviewed annually to ensure representation by active organizations and provide an opportunity for rotation of membership if needed. Representation of community organizations like Rotary International, Greater Madison Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Chamber of Commerce would also be encouraged as part of the nine permanent members.

A chair, elected by the committee for an annual term, would help organize agendas and run the meetings. Staff support would be provided by the Mayor's Office or other agency designee. City staff from a variety of agencies may be called in to discuss their agency responsibilities, opportunities for linkage and to participate in meeting with visiting delegations.

A bi-monthly meeting schedule is recommended. Annual reports or updates on SCCC activities and Sister City events would be delivered to the Mayor's Office and the Common Council.

CRITERIA FOR PARTICIPTION IN THE SISTER CITIES PROGRAM:

The Sister City ad hoc Planning Committee recommends that membership in the Sister City Program is based on the criteria defined in the original 1988 resolution:

1. There should exist areas of mutual interest and involvement with the prospective city in the areas of culture, business, technology, education, agriculture, sports or humanitarian goals.
2. There should be evidence of strong, diverse, local community support for the prospective Sister City relationship in order to assure an adequate financial base and an on-going interest in exchanges. There should be an active organization in the proposed Sister City that supports and commits to the creation and work of a Madison organization. The Madison organization must meet the following conditions prior to consideration as a proposed sister city:
 - a. Have a formal structure with officers and appropriate sub-committees
 - b. Submit to the Mayor's Office a work plan, accompanying the proposed resolution requesting an official sister city relationship, showing how the activities of the committee will further the objectives of the Sister City Program for the next 12 months, as well as a report on all the activities the committee has been involved in during the previous 12 months
 - c. The organization must present to the Mayor's Office a budget for the first year's activities following the request for the formal affiliation,

showing the funds available to meet the budget requirements and indicating how the organization plans to fund activities in the future.

d. In addition to a. and b., the committee shall provide an annual report to the Mayor's Office at the end of each calendar year detailing the past year's activities and budget.

e. There shall be a counterpart organization in the prospective sister city, with which the Madison organization has corresponded and obtained a written agreement concerning affiliation; or the Madison organization must have obtained a positive written indication from the government of the foreign city that a sister city relationship would be welcome.

f. The Madison organizations shall apply for 501(c) (3) status from the IRS or become fiscally sponsored by an established non-profit organization, within two years from the passing of the resolution requesting the formal Sister City relationship.

FUNDING NEEDS:

Historically the funding (\$5,000) for individual organizations basic, core, operational expenses was included within the City Operating budget and had been distributed equally among the Sister City organizations. The ad hoc committee recommends that the City of Madison continue this core funding, but also provide supplemental funding for the following;

- Annual membership fee for the International Sister Cities organization
- Identifying and purchasing of small remembrance items for visiting delegations, which is part of established cultural practice for many of our Sister Cities.
- Future internationally themed events

Exploration of possible grant funding opportunities from City agencies, government entities, non-profits or foundations and possible corporate sponsorships is also recommended.

MARKETING:

To increase the visibility of the Sister Cities Program and enhance the understanding of Madison's cultural, educational and business environment, the ad hoc committee recommends the development of marketing materials and a stronger web presence. The materials should include City of Madison, demographics, industries, economics, institutions, organizations, maps, policies, etc. The materials would also stress the benefits of belonging to Sister Cities Program, the past successes of the program and have a contact list. Collaboration with economic development activities conducted by city agencies, GMCVB, Madison Chamber of Commerce, THRIVE, UW and business entities should also be pursued.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS:

The ad hoc committee recommends the re-creation of the SCCC with nine permanent members, more specific goals, and a focus for funding expenditures, as outlined earlier in this report. Banners and flags designating the Sister City groups should be placed at various locations, like the airport, Monona Terrace, the proposed South Park St. gateway and other places that make the Sister city program visible. The Sister City exposition space in the City-County building should be kept up to date with rotations of Sister City materials. The ad hoc committee recommends that displays be coordinated through the City of Madison Arts Program Administrator.

The ad hoc committee feels strongly that maintaining and enhancing Madison's involvement and exposure to with the global economy, important cultural, environmental, educational and humanitarian initiatives through participation in the Sister Cities Program is important to our community's future.