



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, January 13, 2025

5:30 PM

Virtual

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by James, seconded by Oyama-Miller, to approve the minutes from the October 7, 2024 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

Alder Conklin recused herself from the approval of the minutes, as she was not present at the October 7, 2024 meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Zemliauskas-Juozevicius introduced Alder Conklin and present committee members introduced themselves and their respective sister cities.

REGULAR BUSINESS REPORTS

2. [86561](#) Sister City Program Reports - January 2025

Obihiro, Japan (Jo Oyama-Miller) -- The Madison-Obihiro group is facilitating a student exchange of 5 students between an Obihiro high school and East and LaFollette high schools. They are looking for transportation help. It is the 15th year they have participated in this student exchange. They are working to find 8 people to travel to Obihiro and elsewhere in Japan in late September 2025. Additionally, some people they know from Obihiro have expressed interest in visiting and learning from Alzheimer's and dementia programs in Madison.

Arcatao, El Salvador (Carolyn Gantner) – In October the Madison-Arcatao group had a great time hosting visitors from Arcatao, and staff of US El Salvador Sister Cities, with numerous activities including: an interview on

WORT FM radio station; presentations at East High School and Madison College; a public event at Village Co-housing with presentations by the visiting delegation and Salvadoran food with donations going towards the Well Project; and a visit with Mayor Rhodes-Conway. On Nov 10th, they sponsored a sold-out musical storytelling performance at Burr Oak with proceeds going to the Well Project, a program aiming to repair a crucial well in Arcatao. At the Fair Trade Holiday Fair at Monona Terrace on Dec 7, the group sold items from the Arcatao women's embroidery co-op, and arts and crafts from other Salvadoran artisans, and took in \$1300 which will go towards projects in Arcatao. In addition, the fair was a great opportunity for outreach and community connections. They also have an upcoming delegation to Arcatao in March, possibly in coordination with another El Salvador sister city.

Freiburg, Germany (Charles James) -- The Madison-Freiburg group is holding its annual meeting on March 1, and James invited all committee members to attend. The group applied for their annual permit for an info table at the Farmer's Market this spring/summer. The group is also helping organize a group of students from West High school going over to their sister school in Freiburg in June, with Freiburg students coming to Madison in October. The student groups plan to meet the mayors of the respective cities.

Tepatitlán, Mexico (Salvador Carranza) – The theater group from Tepatitlán that had to cancel their planned trip in 2024 may be able to visit Madison this coming October instead. The Madison-Tepatitlán group is considering hosting a fundraiser in the summer, at which the community would sell food to raise funds. They also have a possible trip to Tepatitlán in the works. The mayor of Tepatitlán who visited Madison in 2019 was recently reelected, which is good news for the group because he is very supportive. The group has also been in contact with the Tepatitlán tourism department; they want to start a tourism group to encourage Madison folks to visit. Tequila and agave products are big draws.

Frank Alfano (Mantova, Italy) – The Madison-Mantova group took visitors from Mantova ice fishing during their visit to Madison.

Vilnius, Lithuania (Daina Zemliauskas-Juozevicius) – The Consul General of the Republic of Lithuania from Chicago will be the speaker for the Madison-Vilnius group's annual banquet on Friday, April 11 at the Madison Club.

ITEMS FOR POSSIBLE ACTION

3. [86588](#) Collaboration Opportunity: WUD Global Connections

No presentation, as the event was cancelled.

4. [86562](#) International Festival

Oyama-Miller reported that she put in the application for space for the committee at International Festival with the Overture Center. She also specifically asked them that the sister cities all be grouped spatially together, and also that they not be placed in a separate room away from the main event, as happened last year. The International Festival is scheduled for Saturday,

March 8, 8:00 am - 5:00 pm.

5. [86586](#) Attendance and Meeting Schedule

Staff-person D'Costa spoke briefly about the committee's challenges last year with achieving quorum. She reminded members that if they miss 3 meetings in a row, or 5 out of 12 meetings, the Mayor can remove them from the committee. She mentioned the notion of adjusting how often the committee meets, using the example of every other month, but noted that this poses the problem of which months to skip. She will be following up and reporting back.

ADJOURNMENT

Oyama-Miller moved, James seconded, a motion to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 6:18 pm.