



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, December 6, 2021

5:30 PM

Virtual Meeting

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Present: 8 - Frank L. Alfano; Carolyn A. Gantner; Daina P. Zemliauskas-Juozevicius; Charles J. James; Jon F. Heinrich; Nasra Wehelie; Rahel Desalegne and Lamin Drammeh

Absent: 2 - Josephine H. Oyama-Miller and Salvador A. Carranza

Meeting called to order by Chair Charles James at 5:34 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Alfano, seconded by Zemliauskas-Juozevicius, to approve the minutes from the September 13, 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

Committee staff D'Costa announced that Niamh McPartlin has left city employment. James acknowledged her service to SCCC while she was with the mayor's office.

James will improve the sister city display case on the first floor of the city/county building, recognizing that it is pretty bare now, with only items from two organizations represented.

The remaining amount of this year's sister city stipends will be dispersed by the end of the year.

James also reminded each SCCC member to complete and submit annual disclosure forms. A link to the form was provided by email to all representatives by the City Clerk's Office.

REGULAR BUSINESS REPORTS

2 [68104](#) Sister City Program Reports - December, 2021

Camagüey – Heinrich reported that as of December 1st, 90% of the Cuban population has received the first shot of a three shot vaccine (Abdala) developed in Cuba, with 80% fully vaccinated.

There is civil unrest in Cuba brought about by food shortages and other difficulties brought on by the pandemic. The ongoing U.S. embargo and President's Trump's restrictions placed on travel by U.S. citizens are significant contributors to the difficulties Cubans are facing. President Biden, so far, does not seem interested in reinstating the approach initiated by President Obama that sought to allow more openness between Cuba and the U.S.

The Wisconsin Medical Project is scheduled to send a shipping container of medical equipment and supplies to Cuba, likely in February 2022.

Mantova – Alfano reported that Mantova is a hotspot for the Omicron variant and that a Zoom call will occur on December 12th for an update from the city. Mantova city officials are planning a trip to Madison in May to celebrate the anniversary of the sister city relationship with thoughts of another visit later in 2022. Alfano said Madison members have no travel plans at this time.

Arcatao – Gantner reported that the Fair Trade Holiday Festival at Monona Terrace was well attended and a success. Artisans in Arcatao that provided crafts will receive \$2000 from sales at this event.

A national meeting of U.S. - El Salvador sister cities will occur via Zoom call in December. Each organization will prepare a video for the meeting. Gantner will talk about the SCCC as part of her presentation, which will be taped in front of the SCCC display case in the City-County Building. Their organization has continued monthly meetings remotely.

Although it is understood that El Salvador is being seriously affected by Covid infections, it is clear that the central government is not being upfront about the extent of the problem, and it is also believed that they are significantly underreporting the number of cases.

Kanifing - Drammeh reported that The Gambia recently held a Presidential election with the incumbent being reelected under concerns about the fairness of the results. The organization has not been very active recently due to the pandemic, but is looking forward to more events in 2022.

Bahir Dar - Desalegne provided an update on the conflict in Ethiopia and its effects on Bahir Dar. Thankfully the city is not directly engaged, however it is being overwhelmed by those that have been displaced and, at times, hundreds

of wounded. She felt that much of the news we are receiving is inaccurate. They are planning a fundraising event to provide relief.

Freiburg - James said that Germany is also facing a resurgence of Covid infections, regional more than national, with the north worse than the south. Freiburg is okay and is following the national guidelines requiring mask wearing and showing vaccine cards as requested.

The Freiburg sister city art display, cancelled several times, is set for June 2022 with all 12 of their sister cities to be represented. The art display is one of the features of the 902nd anniversary of the city's founding.

The Madison-Freiburg organization continues to hold monthly virtual meetings with the next scheduled for December 15th.

ITEMS FOR POSSIBLE ACTION

- 3 [68610](#) SCCC 2022 Meeting Mode - Virtual or In-person

D'Costa informed the group that they needed to decide if they would like to continue meeting virtually or have in-person meetings in 2022.

Zemliauskas-Juozevicius made a motion to have the SCCC meetings remain virtual next year, which was seconded by Alfano. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

- 4 [66643](#) Celebrate Madison's Sister Cities Events

Alfano said there is a date reserved at MATC for May 7th, 2022 and that the Freiburg, Mantova, and Vilnius sister cities will be featured, as initially planned for the 2020 and 2021 meetings that were cancelled. The three sister cities to be featured have formed a working group and are initially planning an event similar to our past events including entrance fee, information tables for all organizations, a sit-down dinner, musical entertainment, and a guest speaker.

Alfano proposed a motion that the SCCC continue to plan for a Celebrate Madison's Sister City Event that was seconded by Wehelie and passed by voice vote/other.

There were additional discussions about the event centered on what may occur if the seriousness of the pandemic continues, with questions about the possibility of considering a date for eliminating portions of the event such as the dinner and entertainment and whether it would be appropriate to charge admission if the event became an information only gathering. James said the work group will consider these concerns and have an update at the next SCCC meeting.

- 5 [66999](#) Establishing a sister city relationship between the City of Madison, Wisconsin in the United States and the City of Cusco, Peru in South America.

Sponsors: Nasra Wehelie

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

A motion was made by Alfano, seconded by Desalegne, to RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL TO ADOPT - REPORT OF OFFICER. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Gantner, seconded by Desalegne, to adjourn. The motion passed by voice vote/other. The meeting adjourned at 6:18 PM.