

Sister City Ad Hoc Planning Committee Report

October 2010

INTRODUCTION

In September, 2010, the Madison Common Council passed a resolution (Legistar # 19803) creating an ad hoc committee to review the charge, scope and purpose of the City of Madison Sister City Program. The ad hoc committee met two times to discuss issues and prepare this report for review by the Common Council Organizational Committee (CCOC) and forwarding to the Common Council.

BACKGROUND ON SISTER CITY COORDINATING COMMITTEE (SCCC)

Historically, the mission of the SCCC was to be a forum for Sister City partnerships to connect 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 SCCC had challenges with defining selection criteria for committee membership, and getting committee representatives to attend regular meetings. Individual Sister City partnerships also had different levels of development and support which led to challenges for the Committee when it came to defining overall needs and objectives.

POTENTIAL NEW MISSION OF SCCC

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

- With City staff support, coordinate quarterly events such as receptions, International Day at Overture, etc. to publicize Sister City programs
- Reporting to Common Council and Mayor on Best Practices by Sister Cities and other countries
- Creating and publicizing a calendar of events of all Sister City programs
- Assessing financial impact of Sister City visitors to Madison economy
- Being available to assist and mentor less developed Sister City partnerships
- Assessing effectiveness of Sister City efforts
- Developing annual calendar of events and activities
- Assist City staff in developing marketing materials on Madison, including information on Sister Cities Programs
- Linking Sister Cities Program to a specific City agency.

GOVERNANCE:

The ad hoc committee recommends that a smaller sized SCCC or Executive Committee of seven members be created, so as to avoid lack of quorum issues. Attendance would be open to all Sister City organizations, but voting membership would be limited to seven members. 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 seven permanent members.

A chair, elected by the committee for an annual term, would help organize agendas and run the meetings. Staff support would be through 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 or quarterly meeting schedule is also recommended. Quarterly update reports on SCCC activities and Sister City events would be delivered to the Mayor's Office and the Common Council.

MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA:

Membership in the Sister City Collaboration Committee would be based on the following 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 on-going interest in exchanges. There should be an active organization in the proposed Sister City to support and commit to the creation of a Madison committee and its work. The Madison committee must meet the following conditions prior to consideration as a proposed sister city.
 - a. The committee shall have a formal structure with officers and appropriate sub-committees
 - b. The committee shall 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 committee 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 committee 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 committee has corresponded and obtained a written agreement concerning affiliation; or the Madison committee 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 committees 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.

FUNDING NEEDS:

Historically the funding included within the City budget has been distributed equally among the Sister City members. The ad hoc committee recommends that Sister City funds be used for the following;

- Annual membership fee for the International Sister Cities organization
- Identifying and purchasing of small gifts for visiting delegations, which is part of established cultural practice for many of our Sister Cities.
- Future internationally themed events
- Potentially support some of the travel costs of delegations

The international sister city organization charges membership fees. Should there be a membership fee for the SCCC program? What possible grant funding opportunities might there be from City agencies, government entities, non-profit or foundations? Is it possible to gain more corporate sponsorship for sister city organizations?

MARKETING:

As a way to increase the visibility of the SCCC and to enhance 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 would 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.

Banners and flags supplied by 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 display case in the City-County building should be kept up to date with monthly rotations of Sister City materials. The ad hoc committee recommends that displays be coordinated through the City of Madison Arts Program Administrator.

RECOMMENDATION:

The ad hoc committee recommends the re-creation of the SCCC with a smaller (7) permanent membership, more specific mission activities and a focus for funding expenditures. The ad hoc committee feels strongly that maintaining and enhancing international linkages will keep Madison connected to the global economy and important cultural, environmental, educational and humanitarian initiatives.