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## GREATER DES MOINES SISTER CITIES COMMISSION

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**NEXT MEETING OCTOBER 8, 2019, AT 4:45 PM**  
**MACRAE CONFERENCE ROOM – RICHARD A. CLARK MUNICIPAL SERVICE CENTER**

### MINUTES September 10, 2019

Members Present: Tom Becker, Madeline Goebel, Jake Grothoff, Doug Lewis, Joseph Nolte, Roger Nowadzky, Edgar Ortiz, Ginny Renda, Sherill Whisenand, Hollie Zajicek, Eleanor Zeff, and Li Zhao Mandelbaum

Members Absent: Kerry Bowen, Peggy Patrick, Vidal Spaine

Staff Present: Joyce Warburton

On Tuesday, September 10, 2019, Chairperson Mr. Nowadzky called the meeting of the Greater Des Moines Sister Cities Commission to order at 5:04 PM in the MacRae Conference Room, Richard A. Clark Municipal Services Center, 1551 East Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway.

#### INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBER

The Commission welcomed new member Mr. Joseph Nolte, who was appointed to the Commission on July 15, 2019, by Council Member Joe Gatto to fill vacated Seat 14.

#### MINUTES

Ms. Whisenand moved to approve the August 13, 2019 minutes as presented. Mr. Becker seconded the motion. Motion carried.

#### FINANCIAL REPORT

Financial report for July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020 was distributed indicating August expenses of \$52 to reimburse Mr. Nowadzky for new Commissioner orientation lunch; \$194 to 8/7 Central for additional Commission T-Shirts; and \$1,030 to Sister Cities International for Fiscal Year 2019-20 membership dues. Mr. Nolte moved to approve the financial report. Ms. Whisenand seconded the motion. Motion carried.

#### Commission Chairperson's Report

Mr. Nowadzky shared the following written report.

I will be brief and succinct. Since the Commission Chairperson's August report, much of my focus has been with specific Commission committees. Follow-up on the Pristina-Des Moines action plan involved exploration of possible cooperative law enforcement efforts in coordination with the Des Moines Police Department and the other metro police departments with Kosovo sister cities. Please see the Pristina Committee report for those details.

Discussion of the Shijiazhuang-Des Moines 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sister city relationship has begun. Several meetings, some including the Mayor, have taken place, on the planning of delegations and activities. Please see the Shijiazhuang Committee report.

The Commission's Marketing and Communication Committee will be reorganizing into a separate Marketing Committee and a Communications Committee based upon functions. Commissioners who will serve on the Marketing Committee met with the Commission Chairperson and Vice Chairperson to explore a marketing plan.

### **Commission Vice Chairperson's Report**

No update at this time.

### **Committee Reports**

#### ***Stavropol Committee***

The following written report was shared on behalf of Mr. Spaine:

The student paintings received from Stavropol have been delivered to Walnut Street Elementary Art Teacher, Kristen Massa.

#### ***Saint-Etienne Committee***

Dr. Zeff shared the following written report:

All Government offices and many businesses are closed in France in August, often up through mid-September, so the St. Etienne Sub-Committee did not meet this month, and we did not send or receive any correspondence.

At the end of July, I had sent an email to our business contact, but do not expect to hear back from this source until sometime in September.

The sub-committee will meet in September, now that everyone is back to work.

#### ***Shijiazhuang Committee***

Ms. Zhao Mandelbaum shared the following written report:

Shijiazhuang is hosting the 4th annual Hebei Provincial Tourism Industry Development Conference on October 14-October 16, 2019. They have kindly asked Mayor Cownie to send them a video with a few sentences about Des Moines and invite our friends from Shijiazhuang to come visit Des Moines.

The Trade Mission lead by Governor Reynolds is cancelled. The Iowa Sister State (ISS) is still organizing a trip at the same time to China. I have requested information from ISS's Executive Director Heather Jones, but she is out of the country right now and won't be back until September 20. The Shijiazhuang committee will report to the Commission as soon as we hear from Heather.

Shijiazhuang Foreign Affairs invites the Mayor and our Commission to Shijiazhuang to kick off the 35th Anniversary celebration either in November this year or some future date if that works better.

If the Commission should choose to participate in ISS's trip (November 12-17, 2019), a \$1,000 administrative fee for up to 2 participants. Participants would be responsible for their own airfare and lodging if not in Shijiazhuang. The 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary could be celebrated while there with ISS. Ms. Zhao Mandelbaum will try to obtain sponsorship for expenses in Beijing. Ms. Renda moved to pay up to \$1,000 for the administrative fee and up to \$1,000 per person for Ms. Zhao Mandelbaum and Mr. Nowadzky for a total of \$3,000 for this trip depending on if the cost is deemed appropriate. Mr. Nolte seconded the motion. Motion carried.

***Pristina Committee***

Mr. Nowadzky shared the following written report related to the June 23-28, 2019 trip to Pristina, Kosovo:

As reported in the August's Committee report, action has been taken in planning and implementing the Des Moines–Pristina Sister City action plan. Meetings have taken place with the Kosovo Consulate Chief of the Mission to review the action plan and to start implementing specific steps of the plan. Those steps included meetings with representatives of the Des Moines Police Department. Community policing and ways of fostering cooperation between the police departments in Pristina and Des Moines have been discussed.

In August, representatives of the Des Moines Police Department met with representatives of the Norwalk Police Department, which has a cooperative arrangement with their counterpart police department in Vushtrri, Kosovo, at the Kosovo Consulate office. Executive Director Heather Jones and Program Manager Kassi Bailey of Iowa Sister States with the Chairperson of the Greater Des Moines Sister Cities Commission and Kim Heideman, Kosovo consultant also participated in the meeting.

The general goals of the meeting were to:

1. Share what has already been done in Kosovo in cooperation with Iowa law enforcement, as well as reviewing the challenges.
2. Seek out the level of interest in all the metro police departments with Kosovo sister cities as to how they would like to be involved/continue to be involved in the Kosovo relationship.
3. Attempt to map out a path forward to see if there is some synergy between all these respective police departments working together on some cooperative effort. And to explore support for individual police departments on an individual basis with their respective Kosovo sister city.

In August, 28 women from Kosovo arrived in Des Moines as part of the Women in Energy program (which is similar to the STEM program here) through the Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC). In addition, the President of Kosovo, Kosovo Ambassador to the US, and the Minister of Economic Development will be in the Des Moines/Norwalk area September 18-20. These dignitaries, along with the 28 Women in Energy students, will be part of DMACC's Iowa Culinary Institute Dinner on September 19<sup>th</sup> to celebrate the partnership between DMACC and the Millennium Foundation Kosovo on the Women in Energy Program.

***Vushtrri, Kosovo***

Ms. Zajicek shared the following information:

While a new project called the Kosovo American Economic City (KAEC), a 1,250-acre free-trade zone that offers free land, no property taxes, low labor costs, and a plethora of other incentives, and is located in Gjakova, is designated solely for U.S. companies that want to expand into Europe. Ms. Zajicek indicated Vushtrri has its own zone (which is not restricted to US companies only). Work is being done to pair a couple of local Norwalk companies to the Vushtrri zone, as well as on the Iowa/National side for the international zone at Gjakova.

City of Vushtrri continues to work on the Norwalk City Park that they are building in the old ancient town center in Vushtrri, and Norwalk in kind is working to build a pedestrian bridge as a small replica of Vushtrri's famous ancient Stone Bridge in one of Norwalk's parks.

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Student exchange programs continue this year with the International TOKA camp, which is a non-governmental organization that functions similar to our Boy Scout/Girl Scout camps. The camp will involve the Norwalk High School and the Norwalk Police Department.

***Kofu Committee***

No update at this time.

***Italy Committee***

No update at this time.

***Education Committee***

Bergman Academy in Des Moines has extended an invitation for the Commission to participate in their Cultural Night on November 8 from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM. Ms. Zeff moved that Mr. Nowadzky pursue this opportunity and follow-up with Bergman Academy. Ms. Renda seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Adjustment to 2019 Fall Meeting Schedule**

Mr. Nowadzky advised the Commission that his teaching schedule for the fall will conflict with the current Commission schedule in October and November. He gave the options that the Commission could either change the date of those meetings, adjust the start time for those meetings, or appoint a Commissioner to lead those meetings in his absence. Consensus was to adjust the start time for the October and November Commission meetings to 4:45 PM.

**NEW BUSINESS**

No New Business was discussed at this time.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Becker and seconded by Ms. Whisenand. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 5:46 PM.

**NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be **October 8, 2019** at **4:45 PM** in the **MacRae Conference Room, Richard A. Clark Municipal Service Center, 1551 East Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway.**