

CITY OF MILPITAS
SISTER CITIES ADVISORY COMMISSION (SCC)
MILPITAS CITY HALL COMMITTEE MEETING ROOM

UNAPPROVED MINUTES
April 25, 2013

- I. Call to Order and Roll Call** Chair Grilli called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m. Commissioners present: Arbaugh, Arefi, Grilli, Hardin. Commissioners absent: Mateo, Serpa, Galvan. Alternate Commissioners: present, Chang; absent, Chen.
- Council Liaison Carmen Montano: Present
MHS Student Liaison Brenda Su: Absent
MUSD Liaison Gunawan Alisantosa: Absent
Staff Liaison Leslie Stobbe: Present
- II. Alternates Seating of** Alternate Commissioner Chang was seated.
- III. Allegiance Pledge of** Chair Grilli led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- IV. Minutes Approval of** MOTION to approve the minutes of March 28, 2013.
M / S: Arbaugh / Arefi Ayes: All
- V. Agenda Approval of** MOTION to approve the agenda of April 25, 2013.
M / S: Arbaugh / Arefi Ayes: All
- VI. Announcements:** The staff liaison announced that Commissioner Galvan called to state he is recovering from a serious illness. He is “on the mend” and looks forward to attending the May 23 meeting. He sends his regards to all commissioners.
- VII. Public Forum** None
- VIII. New Business**
- 1. Mission (Purpose) Statement and Printed Materials**
The staff liaison distributed a copy of the SCC by-laws and noted the request from the previous meeting to review the by-laws. The question was raised whether the Purpose Statement needed to be changed to include the consideration of ‘economic development’ and / or ‘commerce’ in current or future sister city relationships. Commissioner Arbaugh noted that the document Focus Areas and Criteria to Establish Sister City Relationships on the SCC’s page of the City’s website, includes a section listing potential economic development aspects. Chair Grilli asked if it is the role of the SCC to start the economic development program of the City purely based on a sister city relationship. He noted that in an upcoming agenda item that the discussion relating to the renewal of the City’s Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Huizhou Municipality, commerce and economic development between Milpitas and Huizhou could specifically be added based

on existing Purpose Statement of the current by-laws. Further, similar modifications can be made to as other sister cities MOUs are due for renewal. In future consideration of proposed new sister city relationships, topics of commerce and economic development can and should be reviewed in addition to all other possible aspects of the relationship, such as cultural, educational governmental and any other facets of interest between the cities. Commissioner Arbaugh noted that the Purpose Statement was complete and encompassed the duties of the SCC. Chair Grilli asked if there was a motion to make changes to the by-laws. No motion was made and the topic was not discussed further.

2. Addition of a Sister City in China

Alternate Commissioner Chan distributed a news article “The Columbus Comeback” by Rana Foroohar that appeared in the October 8, 2012, edition of Time Magazine. He reviewed the Columbus, Ohio situation and suggested that Milpitas take advantage of a similar opportunity with a second sister city in China. He acknowledged the questions raised at the previous SCC meeting about which commission is best equipped to lead economic development aspects of a sister city relationship. Commissioner Chang stated he invited Don Peoples, Chair of the Economic Development Commission (EDC), to help further this discussion. EDC Chair Peoples stated that Milpitas is a good place for investment, and its technological business base is an asset. For the EDC, the overall work plan has areas that overlap into the area of sister city relationships with an economic development emphasis. However, working on such relationships would require approval by the City Council. EDC Chair Peoples noted that the main perspectives of the EDC are Milpitas’ image and attracting businesses. He stated that the EDC work on this type of relationship seems appropriate and that both commissions would need to determine how to connect the cities and procedures to conduct the exchanges. Discussion followed regarding the capacities of the SCC to implement an economic development relationship. It was the opinion of most SCC members present that they and this commission do not have the expertise. Chair Grilli emphasized that the SCC is not capable or qualified to pursue and economic or commerce exchange with a sister city. If such an aspect in a sister city relationship is desired, then it needs to be pursued and developed by a qualified City employee who is in the position to negotiate with authority. Further points made by SCC commissioners were: a cultural exchange is of the highest value to the community; it’s best to work as a bridge to the EDC and the Council if economic development relationships are desired; economic development aspects can be included within overall criteria, but should not be the sole reason, to select a sister city. Alternate Commissioner Chang noted that in China, the prestige is with the mayor of a city. Chinese city representatives seek communication with a mayor as a person of authority. He pointed out that the economic development target is mid-size western Chinese entrepreneurs. SCC Chair Grilli noted that the same opportunity resides with Huizhou City and agreed that the mayor’s involvement is key to facilitating such relationship aspects. The MOU between Milpitas and Huizhou expires this September. Chair Grilli has been in contact with Huizhou staff regarding the points of adding both economic development aspects and an electronic pal project for schools to the MOU. There is a positive response to accepting both of these elements from Huizhou. Outcome of the discussion is that EDC Chair Peoples will add this topic to the May 13 EDC agenda and bring back the EDC’s discussion to the SCC May 23 meeting.

3. City of Taitung, Taiwan

This item was tabled to the May 23 meeting.

IX. Old Business

1. Use of Social Media for Sister City Relationships

The staff liaison distributed a flyer to assist the student liaison with sign-ups for the “e-pal” project at the Milpitas High School (MHS). The group discussed how completed flyers will be disseminated to the sister cities. It was determined that flyers can be scanned and sent to the staff liaison. These scans can then be emailed to sister city representatives.

2. Tsukuba City, Japan

Commissioner Arbaugh reviewed a list of 30 Tsukuba students interested in e-pal connections. Of the 30 students, 18 are middle school age and nine request to communicate in Japanese (of the nine, eight are in the 7th or 8th grade, one is in 9th grade). It was determined that the 18 students can be matched with students at Rancho Middle School (which will be involved in the e-pal exchange with Figline Valdarno). As for communicating in writing in Japanese, the staff liaison stated that the Milpitas student would have to first write an email, then cut and paste it to one of the free Internet translators, and then cut and past the Japanese translation info an email. She presented a sample of English to Japanese translations using Internet programs. Commissioner Hardin read the Japanese translations and determined that the Google translator offered the best translation. She also advised telling students to avoid using ‘and’ in a sentence. Use of direct, single topic sentences will produce better translations. Commissioner Arbaugh will reply to his contacts in Tsukuba stating he is working on providing the matches.

3. Dagupan City, Philippines

Commissioner Mateo forwarded an email from Dagupan staff person Natacia Rimorin to Chair Grilli. Ms. Rimorin states that Dagupan is busy conducting citywide elections. She will contact Mrs. Siapno regarding planning to send a student delegation in October.

4. Huizhou Municipality, China

Chair Grilli reported that he is in contact with Huizhou staff regarding a mutual desire to renew the MOU. Huizhou has expressed interest in adding economic development and e-pal communications between students. The staff liaison distributed the MOU between the City and Huizhou and information about the Shanghai Communiqué, which is mentioned in the MOU.

5. Comune de Figline Valdarno, Italy

Chair Grilli reported for Vice Chair Serpa. The level of e-pal requests from Figline Valdarno is approximately 500 students ages 11 through high school. It was noted that ages 11 – 12 are 5th – 6th grade, ages 13 – 14 are 7th – 8th grade, and ages 15 and up are at the high school level. For ages 11-12, two science teachers at Sinnott Elementary can involve 130 students. Ages 13 – 14 will be referred to the Vice Principal at Rancho Middle School, and high school ages will be referred to the student liaison.

X. City Council Liaison Report

Council Member Montano asked if the SCC would consider starting at 6PM. There was no opposition and Chair Grilli asked to place this item on the May 23 agenda. Council Member Montano reviewed recent items on the Council's agenda.

XI. School District Liaison Report – None

XII. Future Agenda Items

- a. Sister City Relationships / Cultural Exchanges
 - i. Tsukuba, Japan
 - ii. Dagupan, Philippines
 - iii. Huizhou, China
 - iv. Figline Valdarno, Italy
- b. Sister City Visit and Promotional Expenses / Printed Materials & Costs
- c. Sister Cities International 2014 Conference
- d. Fundraising for Student Visits to Sister Cities
- e. Use of Social Media for Sister Cities Relationships
- f. Review Purpose / Mission Statement & Printed Material
- g. City of Taitung, Taiwan
- h. Coordination with Economic Development Commission
- i. Amend Commission By-laws to start at 6PM

XIII. Adjournment

No further business was discussed. Chair Grilli adjourned the meeting at 8:52PM until the next regularly scheduled meeting on May 23, 2013.

MOTION to adjourn the meeting of April 25, 2013

M / S: Arbaugh / Arefi

Ayes: All

Respectfully Submitted,

Leslie Stobbe
Staff Liaison