

**SISTER CITY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
BY TELECONFERENCE
AUGUST 16, 2021**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Shanks-Stewart at 4:33 P.M.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Chair Shanks-Stewart, Vice-Chair Williams, Commissioners del Rosario, Dowling, Lowe, Stewart, and Placido

Commissioners Absent: None

City Staff Present: Executive Assistant to the Mayor Rzomp, Councilmember Liaison Verder-Aliga excused

4. COMMUNICATIONS

A. Report from Executive Assistant to Mayor, staff to Sister City Commission.

B. Report from the Council Liaison to the Sister City Commission.

C. Report from Chair to the Vallejo Sister City Commission.

Executive Assistant to the Mayor, Rzomp reminded commissioners that they may pick up their business cards on the Mayor's office. Reminder to the commissioners to stay within the dictates of the Brown Act when emailing, please send documents, notes, etc. to the staff support to have the item blind copied to the commission by staff.

Council Liaison Verder-Aliga, was unable to attend the meeting.

Chair Shanks-Stewart reported that the Sister City Association canceled their dinner fundraiser because GVRD is doing some renovation even though two months prior it was a go. This is a blow to fundraising activity. The front room of the Sister City room was vandalized. There is a recommendation to replace with riot glass. Sister Cities International has webinars available and it is recommended that commissioners try out the webinars.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

6. CONSENT CALENDAR AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes

Recommendation: By motion, approve the Sister City Commission minutes for the regular meeting of June 21, 2021, Sister City Commission.

Action: Approved minutes. Motion by Commissioner Placido to approve minutes and seconded by Vice Chair Williams. Motion passed unanimously.

B. Approval of Agenda

Recommendation: By motion, approve the Sister City Commission Agenda with flexibility for the regular meeting of August 16, 2021, Sister City Commission.

Action: Approved agenda. Motion by Commissioner Stewart to approve agenda and seconded by Commissioner Placido. Motion passed unanimously.

7. OLD BUSINESS

A. Accept final draft of new procedures for selection of Friendship City and Sister City

Final draft of new procedure not yet complete. At the suggestion of the Chair a sub-committee was formed to complete the final draft. Sub-committee members are Vice-chair Williams, Commissioners del Rosario and Lowe. Ensenada packet is in process and will not be held to new procedural requirements

B. Review revisions of timeline on when a Friendship City becomes a Sister City

Timeline revisions not completed, will be added to sub-committee responsibilities

C. Clarification of Sister City – Sister County relationship

This is an issue because Bagamoyo, Tanzania is not actually a city, but is a district which is analogous to a county in the United States. The commission authorized Commissioner Stewart to reach out to the City of Vallejo to recognize the Sister City-Sister County relationship and to Solano County to recognize a potential Sister County – Sister County relationship. Commissioner del Rosario commented that guidance from Sister Cities International on this matter would be appropriate.

D. Review Ensenada packet for elevation to Sister City status

Thank you to Commissioner del Rosario for preparing the packet. The packet at 101 pages is long and could be pared down. Chair Shanks-Stewart, Commissioners del Rosario and Lowe and the staff support Rzomp will be the subcommittee. Grammar errors to be fixed and text and photo credits to be identified. Common interests are included and must be a part of a Sister City packet. Number of photos to be reduced. A portion of the emails may be excluded because they are historical only and not necessary for a packet. Commissioner del Rosario to bring electronic and hard copy of packet to subcommittee meeting.

The plan is to have the packet ready for the October Sister City Commission meeting so the commissioner may vote on it and it will be ready to go before the Vallejo City Council for approval.

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. Request from Assemblymember Castro Asumadu Addae of Akim Oda, Ghana

Request to become a Sister City sent to Vice Mayor Verder-Aliga. The commission is not

sure why this request came to the Vice Mayor. There are two follow up items for this agenda item. 1. Check in with the Vice Mayor to find out if she has more information, if she knows this person or if this is an unsolicited email. 2. The Chair will respond through the Executive Assistant to Assemblymember Castro Asumadu Addae and tell him that our commission is in the process of setting up guidelines for Friendship Cities and Sister Cities and once finalized we can discuss your intentions further.

B. Furniture expenditure as part of the budget

Because there was no travel or major expense incurred due to COVID, in early June 2021 it was proposed that the budget from the last fiscal year be used to purchase new furniture for the Sister City Room. This was to have presentable furniture for guests and visiting dignitaries instead of the mismatched, old, furniture which is presently in the room. Because the expenditure was not approved before the end of the fiscal year, the commission lost the money. The City Manager's Office and Finance said it was acceptable to make a one-time furniture expenditure for furniture, if the commission wanted to use this year's budget. The furniture is approximately \$12,000 and the budget for this fiscal year is \$16,000 leaving approximately \$4000 for commission business.

After discussion, the commissioners did not want to spend money meant for travel, SCI dues and other commission business on what is maintenance and upkeep of city facilities. A majority of commissioners Stewart, Lowe, del Rosario, and Placido stated they did not want to use the budget for furniture. An email will be sent to the commission liaison requesting that money be made available for furniture outside of the commission budget.

9. REPORT FROM COMMISSIONERS AND AD HOC COMMITTEES

A. Sister City Committee Reports

1. Trondheim, Norway – Commissioner Lowe reported she was in contact with Paul Ligda to find people associated with Norway to help get theme, food and entertainment going in preparation for the dinner auction. Unable to get email response from contacts in Trondheim. Unable to get in contact with Sons of Norway contact in Vacaville. Potential resource in the Norwegian Seaman's Church in San Francisco. Trying to get student exchange going again.
2. Baguio City, Philippines– Commissioner Placido wants to release \$2000 funding to Sister City Association to have them fund the painting of the Baguio Golden Gate Bridge painting. There still has not been receipt of an estimate from Baguio. There is a new mayor there Benjamin Magalo and due to COVID this is delaying the estimate. Madam Chair stated an invoice is needed to get funding not an estimate.
3. Bagamoyo, Tanzania – Focus on Philmore Graham International Science Fair. Going to present to each of the subcommittees a packet to all sister city schools, individuals and groups an invitation to participate in the science fair. Willie Mitchell of Lawrence Livermore Labs and a Vallejo resident is helping. They will mail a robot kit to the participants and the participants will video the assembled robot. The international blue ribbon committee will determine the winners who will get a certificate from the Bagamoyo committee. Also looking at succession planning for

the position of chair for the Bagamoyo committee. Bagamoyo will conduct their independence celebration in December. Traditionally there has been a delegation sent to the celebration.

4. Jincheon, South Korea – no report
5. La Spezia, Italy – Commissioner del Rosario wants to review MOUs
6. Akashi, Japan – Commissioner Del Rosario reported she has been talking to new chair of Akashi committee about resuming youth pen pal activity. She is also looking into home stay sponsors and into a contest for making origami figures. Can we use budget for this. An origami tree would be presented to the Mayor's office. Madam Chair stated invoices would be needed for reimbursement for the contest supplies.

B. Friendship Cities Subcommittee

1. Ensenada, Mexico - Discussed in New Business. Israel Delgado became a member of Association and is willing to work as a part of the Ensenada committee.
2. Muju, South Korea – no report
3. Rota, Northern Mariana Islands (U.S. Commonwealth) - Commissioner Stewart spoke to co-chair of Chamorro people and they are excited about the possibility of a visit in 2022. Also excited about the banner dedication in the Sister City Room. City officials will be invited to a ceremony for the banner dedication.
4. Parun, Afghanistan- We received the letter from Parun Mayor to establish friendship city relationship. The commission accepts the letter of friendship. Commissioner Stewart met with Dr. Zamani. Dr. Zamani is to schedule a meeting with three people from Vallejo and three people from their Northern California group to work on a bigger event of a meeting of leaders from both groups, the commissioners and association board members like a round table to build relationships. No date set yet. Interest in helping people who are leaving Afghanistan and coming to the U.S.
5. Ennery, Haiti - No information regarding possible earthquake damages to this city.
6. Zanzibar, Tanzania – No report
7. Seven Generations Inter Tribal Council – No report. Commissioner Dowling needs contact information. To be provided by Commissioner Stewart.

10. NEXT MEETING DATE: October 18, 2021 4:30 P.M. by Teleconference

11. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

A. Discussion of Agenda Items for Future Meetings

Items for the October regular meeting:

- Monitor situation in Haiti – anything we can do for our friendship city in Haiti.
- Approval of Sister City procedure to approve Sister city and Friendship city.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:54 P.M.

ELISSA SHANKS-STEWART, CHAIR

ATTEST:

ERIK RZOMP, SECRETARY