



Village of Hanover Park Administration

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Village Manager
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VILLAGE OF HANOVER PARK SISTER CITIES COMMITTEE Committee of the Whole Meeting 2121 Lake Street, Hanover Park, Illinois 60133

Tuesday, July 14, 2020

7:00 p.m.

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER - ROLL CALL:
The meeting was called to order at 7:13 p.m. by Sister Cities Committee Chair Pamela Fowler.

PRESENT: Committee Pamela Fowler, Trustee Herb Porter, Frank Grant-Acquah, Maria
 Members: Pineda
ABSENT: Committee Arnulfo Flores, Adelaide Grant-Acquah, Gustavo Pineda
 Members:
ALSO PRESENT: Guest Darius Robinson, Staff Liaison Katherine Perez

2. ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA:
Motion by Frank to accept agenda. Second by Trustee Porter. Voice Vote: All ayes. Motion carried.

3. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS:
None.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
Motion by Maria to approve meeting minutes from February 11, 2020. Second by Frank. Voice vote: all ayes. No discussion. Motion carried.

5. ACTION ITEMS:
5-a. Penpal program status report – Ontarioville School (Maria) and Laurel Hill School (Trustee Porter) – Chair Pamela commented that two rounds of letters were sent out to the schools (December 2019 and February 2020). The school in Valparaiso responded with drawings and paintings. The Sister Cities will continue with a structured penpal letter program, with letters being sent via the postal service. Maria commented that there was another batch of penpal letters brought back from Valparaiso, however, due to the COVID shutdown, the letters never got delivered to the schools in Hanover Park, nor was it possible to share the letters with the committee (for its review)

prior to delivery to the Laurel Hill School or Ontarioville School. Trustee Porter commented about a hybrid return to school and teachers and principals having their hands full when schools re-open. This will need to be taken into account when the schools are approached about their participation in the penpal letter program. .

- 5-b. 2020 Black History Month event wrap up – Chair Pamela commented on the event noting that approximately 55 people attended. The selected theme of the culture and history before the onset of the slave trade was well received. She said she had received wonderful feedback, and everyone enjoyed the dancers, music and costumes. Once again, Trustee Porter did a fantastic job putting the program together and graciously taking on the role of master of ceremonies. Appreciation was extended to Frank for his participation and taking the stage to be part of the Q & A session to share his personal knowledge. Meeting guest, Darius Robinson, attended the BHM and commented that he enjoyed being at the event and seeing the historical connection to West Africa. Darius noted that he has studied African history and religion for 30 years and that he was impressed with the program. Chair Pamela extended appreciation to Darius for his kind comments.
- 5-c. Celebration of Valparaiso 10th Anniversary discussion - Updates from Arnulfo and Trustee Porter – Trustee Porter announced that Village events are cancelled up until October so there aren't any large-scale events taking place in the near future. **For the first time in a number of years, it won't** be possible for committee members to support and attend the annual Zacatecanos Festival (Maywood) and Ghanafest (Chicago) as these July events have been cancelled.
- Sadly, it was further noted that Chair Pamela had received notification from Maria that Arnulfo, Gustavo and she have need to take a break from all Sister Cities Committee-related meetings and activities due to illness in the family and the resulting caretaking responsibilities. Committee members offered words of support and encouragement to the Flores-Pineda family.
- 5-d. Sister City of the Year application – deadline & status of distribution from State – Frank commented that the Illinois State Sister Cities board has met virtually. He advised that the Sister City of the Year Award is suspended and that new guidelines for the application will be forthcoming.
- 5-e. Distribution of funds to schools in Valparaiso (scholarships) & Cape Coast (scholarships & general needs) & verification of contact info for designated recipients. Even though not presently in session, the wire transfer payments to the schools can still be processed. Maria confirmed Principal Consecpcion Figueroa is the designated recipient in Valparaiso; her contact information is current. Frank confirmed that Mr. Ato Mould is the designated recipient in Cape Coast; his contact information is current. Staff Liaison Katherine will forward the details to the Finance Department for processing.
- 5-f. Travel planning for 2021 Cape Coast visit and fundraising plans – Plans for a visit in Cape Coast will need to be pushed back to 2022, at the earliest, due to disruptions caused by COVID. Major improvements must be made by the airline industry before organizing any trans-Atlantic trips. Although the extra time planning for the trip may allow for more opportunity to fundraise, Trustee Porter advised that it will be difficult to have fundraising until there is a designated account **established into which funds can be deposited, something that's exclusively used by the**

committee. He commented that with most active committees, if not totally funded by their villages, they have a very active 501c3.

Further exploration and research are needed, including a possible sit down with the Village Attorney and consulting with Sister Cities International to determine if there might be something that could be set up through them. Whatever gets set up, the account will need to be structured so that it remains with the committee, regardless of the change in membership. Frank commented that he has all of the Friends of Cape Coast paperwork. Chair Pamela asked Frank to take a look at the by-laws and report back regarding possible instructions or guidance that may be contained therein. This will be a good starting point.

- 5-g. Upkeep and repairs at Hanover Park Primary School and Regional Hospital in Cape Coast - Trustee Porter - *(NOTE: Frank advised of the correction **that it's a District Hospital, not a Regional Hospital.**)* Trustee Porter visited Cape Coast in early 2020, and he toured Hanover Park Primary School and the District Hospital. He advised that both structures are in desperate need of repairs due to the damage caused by the harsh climate and from being in close proximity to the ocean. It has a corrosive effect and everything looks worn. Both the school and the hospital need to be painted. The Director there asked if Hanover Park Sister Cities could supply funds to purchase paint. **It wouldn't take a lot of money.** Trustee Porter encourages assistance from the Village Board given these organizations bare **the name "Hanover Park."** It was also noted that the sign at the school is obliterated and in need of repair and being painted. The current condition is embarrassing and on display for visitors to see.

Chair Pamela commented that since the committee won't be having a Valparaiso celebration this year, the money set aside for that purchase could possibly be transferred over and go towards improvements in Cape Coast.

- 5-h. FY21 budget request – Staff Liaison Katherine Perez advised that FY21 budget requests are due in the second half of August. She will attend the Village budget kick-off meeting the first week of August and expects to receive instructions confirming that budget requests are to remain flat with no increases over the 2020 budget and that **goals are to align with the Village's strategic goals** and vision. There was discussion regarding the status of 2020 budget goals, additional accomplishments and 2021 proposed goals; and the committee provided input and verbiage to draft the budget paperwork. The committee feels strongly about importance of attending the annual Sister Cities International conference in 2021 and requests an additional \$2,300 for two new line items in the 2021 budget:

- 1) \$1,300 to cover the conference registration fee for two Committee members to attend (2 x \$650)
- 2) **\$1,000 to cover travel and accommodations for one person's attendance at the SCI annual conference.**

Trustee Porter advised that SCI has a presentation available that advocates for attendance at the annual conference. The presentation answers questions and puts forth good reasons why a community would want to be a part of the conference. Chair Pamela will download the presentation and use as needed when responding to the Village Board and Administration during budget review.

The 2021 budget request will include line items for office supplies (\$100); memberships/subscriptions (\$670); postage (\$150); annual SCI conference registration for two (\$1,300); travel and accommodations for one person attending the annual SCI conference (\$1,000); annual state conference (\$900); special events for Black History Month and Mexican American Heritage (\$1,500); Cape Coast and Valparaiso scholarships (\$2,000); Hanover Park Primary School general needs (\$500) and miscellaneous advertising (\$300)

STATUS OF 2020 BUDGET GOALS

--Engage local Sister City groups; and participate in other area cultural events. –
Ongoing. Members attended the Martin Luther King breakfast hosted by the Village of Hoffman Estates. Member/Trustee Porter was on the program for the event and made a presentation. Trustee Porter had been invited to speak at that event after members of the organizing team had heard his presentation during the 2019 Black History Event hosted by the Hanover Park Sister Cities Committee. Locally, many traditional Sister City and cultural events were cancelled due to COVID, so the opportunity to engage was greatly restricted.

--Engage community service groups and Village committees in opportunities to interact internationally.

Nothing to report due to COVID and the cancellation events.

--Award scholarships to students in Cape Coast and Valparaiso.

In progress. Scholarships are being awarded to students at the schools in Valparaiso and Cape Coast. (3rd Qtr.)

--Assist with Cape Coast Primary School students' general needs.

In progress. Funds are being issued for ongoing upkeep and maintenance at the Hanover Park Primary School in Cape Coast. (3rd Qtr.)

--Attend annual state conference.

Due to COVID, the annual state conference was cancelled. (2nd Qtr.)

--Pursue school-to-school relationships with Cape Coast, Valparaiso and Hanover Park.

Ongoing. The penpal letter exchange expanded and now includes participation by Ontarioville School students. A structured penpal letter plan was adopted to facilitate scheduled letter exchanges and a proposed end-of-school year skype meeting so students could see and talk to **each other. Due to COVID, it wasn't possible to have the skype meeting.** (1st – 4th Qtrs.)

--Host 2020 Black History Month event.

Completed. The committee hosted a successful Black History Month event in Room 214 with a theme highlighting the rich history and culture of Africa prior to the onset of the slave trade. Chair Pamela, Trustee Porter and Frank coordinated the event. (1st Qtr.)

--Participate in Mexican Independence celebration.

Unfortunately, due to COVID, committee **members won't be participating in the Mexican Independence parade** hosted by St. Ansgar Church. (3rd Qtr.)

ADDITIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Committee Member Frank Grant-Aquah participated in virtual meetings with the Illinois State Sister Cities Association.
- Trustee Porter visited Cape Coast in early 2020, and he was able to enjoy many cultural activities including the opportunity to meet dignitaries and present gifts. He stopped by the **school which wasn't in session; and he visited the district hospital and met with the Director and staff.**

- The annual Sister Cities International conference was conducted virtually in July; and Chair Pamela, Trustee Porter and members Frank and Maria participated online during the two-day conference which included workshops and training.

2021 BUDGET GOALS

1. Engage local Sister City groups; and participate in other area cultural events.
First through fourth quarters. The Committee will meet with area Sister City groups to share experiences, and it will participate in cultural events in the area.
 2. Engage community service groups and Village committees/commissions in opportunities to interact internationally.
First through fourth quarters. The Committee will engage community service groups (eg. Lions, Scouts) and Village committees to act together and develop strategies for greater visibility and exposure of Sister Cities.
 3. Award scholarships to students in Cape Coast and Valparaiso.
Third quarter. The Committee will award scholarships to students at the schools in Valparaiso and Cape Coast.
 4. **Assist with Cape Coast Primary School students' general needs.**
Third quarter. Funds will be issued for ongoing upkeep at the Hanover Park Primary School building in Cape Coast. Deterioration of the building caused by the harsh climate conditions requires ongoing maintenance such as painting; repairs to the roof and shutters; and window pane replacements, etc.
 5. Attend annual state conference.
Second quarter. Committee members will register for and attend the Illinois Sister Cities State Conference historically held in April.
 6. Attend annual Sister Cities International conference.
Third through fourth quarter. Two committee members will register for and attend the 2021 Sister Cities International Conference.
 7. Pursue school-to-school relationships with Cape Coast, Valparaiso and Hanover Park.
First through fourth quarters. The Committee will continue coordinating the penpal program involving students at schools in Hanover Park, Valparaiso and Cape Coast.
 8. Host 2021 Black History Month event.
First quarter. The Committee will host a Black History Month event in February.
 9. Participate in Mexican Independence celebration.
Third quarter. Committee members will participate in an activity supportive of the Mexican Independence celebration in September.
6. TOWNHALL SESSION:
Meeting guest, Darius Robinson, shared information about his personal and professional life, and he commented on his introduction to the Hanover Park Sister Cities Committee which came about through his attendance at past Black History Month events. Mr. Robinson is an industrial engineer by trade, and the study of Ancient Africa is his passion. He has traveled to Africa, and he has been involved with volunteer work. Mr. Robinson is excited about the prospect of being a part of an organization. Chair Pamela extended appreciation for his attendance at the meeting, and the Committee welcomes his participation and expertise.
7. OLD BUSINESS (NON-ACTION ITEMS):
- 7-a. Recap of recent activities - Sister Cities International Virtual Conference – Chair Pamela, Trustee Porter, Member Frank and Member Maria participated in the virtual conference. Speakers included Karen Pense, Dionne Warwich and Prince Kwame. Sister City of the Year awards were

presented to Tacoma, Washington, and Fort Worth, Texas. A pre-conference event featured the Ghana Ambassador to the United States. Frank commented that the Illinois State Board is meeting virtually. The soccer tournament was cancelled and all other Illinois State Sister Cities Association activities are on hold.

7-b. Budget activity update – The invoice was received for SCI annual membership dues. \$620 is and will be paid with the next bill cycle.

8. NEW BUSINESS (NON-ACTION ITEMS):

8-a. Upcoming event announcements - Due to COVID, most activities have been cancelled or put on hold.

8-b. Agenda topics for upcoming meetings – Estimates for repairs at Cape Coast school and hospital (Frank). Download of SCI presentation on annual conference attendance (Pamela). Fundraising account/Friends of Cape Coast 501c3 – review and report (Frank).

9. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Trustee Porter to adjourn at 9:35 p.m. Second by Frank. Voice Vote: All ayes. Motion carried.

Minutes recorded and transcribed by:

Katherine Perez, Interim Staff Liaison

Pamela Fowler, Chair
Hanover Park Sister Cities Committee