

City of Naperville

*400 S. Eagle Street
Naperville, IL 60540*



Naperville

Meeting Minutes - Draft

Wednesday, November 15, 2023

6:30 PM

NEU

Sister Cities Commission

A. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Fuhrer called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

B. ROLL CALL:

Present 8 - Tony Chamberlain, Lance Fuhrer, Allison Longenbaugh, James Alan Lowe, Arun Mani, Becky Rudolph, Neelam Saboo, and Yugin Wang

Also Present: Rachel Pruneda, Assistant to the Mayor

C. PUBLIC FORUM:

The following speakers addressed the Commission:

1. Marilyn Schweitzer would like the Commission to succeed, adding that there does seem to be confusion with roles and responsibilities between the Commission and Foundation. She stated that the Foundation should be able to handle any expenses incurred and no additional funding should be provided, other than what the City has already proposed combined with SECA funding. She feels that the Foundation could continue to exist without the Commission.
2. Patty Gustin addressed the Commission on behalf of the Sister Cities Foundation. She does not support merging the Commission and Foundation. She stated that the Foundation Bylaws do not address absorbing the Commission. She also added that the Foundation would seek support from staff and funding from the City to provide an attorney to amend the current Bylaws. She stated that there is support from our Sister Cities in Nitra and Cancun and that they have sent letters to City Staff in support of keeping the Commission.
3. Tom Altoff read aloud a statement prepared by Laurie Donahue. In summary, Laurie supports keeping the Commission and believes that by removing the Commission in Naperville will eliminate the ability to have this important and cultural connection.
4. Rosemary Wisnosky addressed the Commission stating that she was on the initial Sister Cities Task Force. She stated that there was a vetting process to add a sister city and they had to meet 31 point criteria. She stated that Nitra has made attempts to reach out to members of the Commission and they would welcome a relationship.
5. Greg Gustin addressed the Commission about the options presented at the meeting by Commissioner Lowe stating that the options should have been part of the meeting agenda.

D. OLD BUSINESS:

E. REPORTS:

Approve the Sister Cities Commission meeting minutes of September 13, 2023

Commissioner Lowe made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Mani to approve the Sister Commissioner minutes of September 13, 2023. Motion carried by voice vote.

Receive and file the year-to-date budget report for Sister Cities Commission

The Year-To-Date Budget Report was received and filed.

F. NEW BUSINESS:

Develop three options to present to City Council on the reorganization of the Sister Cities Commission

Chairman Lance Fuhrer provided some background on how we reached this point. The Commission is unique in the task that it's been given. Our commission engages in event planning and international outreach. We are faced with financial challenges and must adhere to strict OMA rules and we can no longer be involved in event planning. The Chairman stated that he met with City Staff and that the discussion led with questions rather than statements and that is the foundation for a good relationship. He further stated that this is not a rejection of Sister Cities or its mission to build bridges with other communities. When we think about changes to the Commission, we are not changing our objectives, all of which do not need to change. Our Foundation will still be a place of vibrant conversation. There has not been enough engagement with our Sister Cities. Some of our Sister Cities do not have a sitting commission. The Foundation may be a better match to carry out our mission.

Commissioner Lowe stated that the City has proposed that the Commission be dissolved and that the Foundation take on the role of the Commission. At the City Council meeting he proposed that the City allow the Commission 30 days to offer some alternative suggestions. The Commission is tasked with providing 3 options to present at the December 5, 2023 meeting.

The 3 options that we are proposing are 1) Keeping the Commission and Foundation status quo, but with some improvements. 2) Proposing that the Commission become a Task Force and the Foundation remain the same. 3) Follow Staff's recommendation and dissolve the Commission into the Foundation.

Commissioners discussed the pros and cons of the options. Pros included that the City has authority under the current agreement and a direct relationship between cities. Cons included, following the strict rules of the City and the OMA rules. The Commission cannot raise funds or spend money at their will. They agreed that there needs to be improvements made to the current process and structure. A couple of Commissioners stated that they did not sign up do special events and they would like the roles between the Commission and Foundation be better defined.

After a lengthy discussion, it was decided by the Commission to change option 3. Since the Staff's recommendation is already on the table, option 3 will be to have an Advisory Board come back at a later time with some future options.

Councilwoman Longenbaugh offered her support and stated that the Council would like the Commission to come back with alternatives and a report that outlines the pros and cons of each option. She further stated that the Council will vote on the item at the City Council meeting.

Commissioner Lowe made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Chamberlain to present the following options to City Council 1) Keeping the Commission and Foundation status quo, but with some improvements. 2) Proposing that the Commission become a Task Force and the Foundation remain the same. 3) Advisory Board with recommendations to look at future options with a longer time frame. Motion was approved.

Aye: 7 - Chamberlain, Fuhrer, Lowe, Mani, Rudolph, Saboo, and Wang

G. ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Commissioner Lowe, seconded by Commissioner Mani to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 p.m.

/S/ Rachel Pruneda
Rachel Pruneda
Assistant to the Mayor