

City of Naperville

*400 S. Eagle Street
Naperville, IL 60540
<http://www.naperville.il.us/>*



Naperville

Meeting Minutes - Draft

Wednesday, March 12, 2025

6:30 PM

NEU

Sister Cities Commission

A. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairperson, Arun Mani called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL:

Present 7 - Tony Chamberlain, Becky Rudolph, Allison Longenbaugh, Yugin Wang, Ganesh Kar, Arun Mani, and Abdechafi Boubkir

Absent 5 - Neelam Saboo, Daniel Bukowski, Navya Shah, Elin Amundson, and Joel See

C. PUBLIC FORUM:

Laurie Donahue, a former Commissioner addressed the Commission to discuss the student exchange program that they did while she served on the Commission.

D. OLD BUSINESS:**E. REPORTS:**

1. Approve the Sister Cities Commission meeting minutes of November 13, 2024 and January 16, 2025

Commissioner Wang made a motion to approve the Sister Cities Commission meeting minutes of November 13, 2024 and January 16, 2025, seconded by Commissioner Chamberlain. Motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

2. Receive information on a Monarch Butterfly Project and plan that connects to our Sister City in Patzcuaro, Mexico

Chairman Mani announced that any Commissioners interested in working on this project should reach out to Commissioner See.

Councilwoman Longenbaugh stated that in March 2023, the City had a resolution that included commitments based on the City's resources and strategic plans to work with the DuPage Monarch Project, and the library is involved in that project as well.

Staff will connect Ben Mjolsness who is our Sustainability Manager with our newly appointed Commissioner Dr. See.

Commissioner Rudolph moved to table the Monarch Butterfly Project and Plan Presentation to the next Sister Cities Meeting on April 9, 2025, seconded by Commissioner Boubkir. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

3. Receive information on a Student Exchange Program

Chair recognizes Commissioners Boubkir and Chamberlain to provide an update on the Student Exchange Program.

Commissioner Chafi stated that this is not a touristy program, but rather a Cultural Exchange Program that can open the door to students to learn about countries and for students coming here to learn about our city. Students can forge relationships that can continue for a lifetime.

Councilwoman Longenbaugh asked about the financial means for participating in this program. Will students hold fundraisers or will the Foundation being the fundraising arm for this program.

Commissioner Chamberlain added that he believes in the past, the Foundation held fundraisers to fund this project. He will talk to Laurie Donahue and report back.

Chairman Mani stated that once Commissioners start working with schools they will have a better idea about the funding for this project. Commissioners are asked to report back with more information.

Staff arranged a tour and visit of City Hall with a teacher from Matea Valley High School. The teacher is bringing several German Exchange Students to meet with the Mayor as part of an exchange program that she has been involved with for 15 years. The teacher is willing to talk to Commissioners and answers any questions they may have.

Commissioner Rudolph made a motion to receive the information and request more information on the Student Exchange Program at a future meeting, seconded by Commissioner Kar. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

4. Receive information on a Sister City 2-Day Conference for all three Sister Cities: Cancun, Patzcuaro and Nitra

Chairman Mani asked for information on a Sister Cities Conference being proposed.

Commissioner Kar shared that he is proposing an annual two (2) day Sister Cities Conference two (2) day to include all 3 Sister Cities. The idea is to promote Naperville, promote our Sister Cities, exchange information, and build community involvement.

Chairman Mani said even if we have a one (1) day conference or a business fair, invite guests to speak, and offer investment opportunities.

Commissioner Kar suggests working on a budget so that the Foundation has an idea on how much money to raise.

Commissioner Chamberlain suggested selecting a location and when Commissioners bring a proposal forward to add all of the financials behind it.

Commissioner Kar will provide an update at a future meeting.

Motion was made by Commissioner Chamberlain to receive information on Sister Cities 2-Day Conference and report back with additional information at a future meeting. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

5. Receive a Sister Cities Foundation update

Commissioner Chafi reported that the Foundation would like to move forward with these events and are asking us to provide an entire year plan. They would support are participation in the Sister Cities Young Artist Show and Youth Leadership Summit.

Chairman Kar said for the art project, we would have to submit a proposal and start marketing the event 2 to 3 months prior to the event.

Chairman Rudolph likes one of the students suggestions to have an online art gallery.

Chairman Mani said that there are 3 projects that we can present to the Foundation, which are the Student Exchange Program, Monarch Butterfly Program and the Sister Cities 2-Day Conference.

Staff suggests provided information to the Foundation at the end of June with a tentative budget. Staff also suggests adding this to a future agenda and voting whether to move forward with these projects.

Motion was made by Chairman Boubkir to receive the information from Commissioner Kar, seconded by Commissioner Rudolph. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

6. Received an invitation to Cancun's invitation to Cancun World Fest

Chairman Mani shared that Cancun officials reached out to us about Cancun World Fest to see if we can send a delegate, unfortunately it's not feasible for us to send anyone this year, but we will consider it in the future once we have more information to evaluate the needs of attending this event and provide more information.

Chairman Mani will work with the team to gather more information.

Staff stated it is unclear as to what the goals is and what we could achieve by attending. Staff also suggests that with each project, determining the objective and benefits to Naperville should be clear.

Chairman Rudolph stated that the cost of the booth is \$800.

Commissioner Kar asked if anyone can participate. Chairman Mani suggests asking North Central College to possibly sponsor a booth. We still need to learn more about the business opportunities.

Motion was made by Commissioner Chamberlain to receive the invitation to Cancun World Fest, seconded by Chairman Kar. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

7. Receive information on the Illinois Sister Cities Association's Annual (ISCA) Conference to be held on Saturday, May 3, 2025, at Sauk Valley Community College, hosted by the Dixon Sister Cities Association

Chairman Mani asked who would like to attend. In the past, we have sent 2 Commissioners to the conference.

Staff is asking Commissioners to check their calendars and let us know if they are interested in attending.

A motion was made by Commissioner Boubkir to receive information on the Illinois Sister Cities Association Annual Conference, seconded by Commissioner Rudolph. Motion was passed unanimously by voice vote.

8. Receive information on the Sister Cities International 2025 Young Artists and Authors Showcase and discuss participation in 2026

Chairperson Mani asked Commissioner Kar if we should explore the Young Artist program further and Kar does feel like this is worth exploring further.

Staff stated that the program seems like a great project to research and markets and suggests partnering with the Art League.

Commissioner Rudolph suggests asking our student representatives if there is any interest in submitting art work for this program.

Commissioner Chafi shared that this is a good opportunity to work with the schools.

Staff suggested that if the Commission takes on this project in the future, we could hold it at the Municipal Center similar to the District 203 Art Show that is held here.

Staff said there's no fundraising component to this, the key things are marketing and judging and selecting 5 people to submit their work.

Motion was made by Commissioner Rudolph to receive the Sister Cities International 2025 Young Artists and Authors Showcase and discuss participation in 2026, seconded by Commissioner Wang. Motion passed unanimously by voice

vote.

9. Receive information on the Sister Cities International Youth Leadership Summit on June 15-21, 2025 in Washington, D.C.

Commissioners stated that we consider collaborating with an organization like KidsMatter and the Foundation. Chairman Mani also stated that there are a lot of projects and discussing the benefits of each and whether it is worth pursuing.

Motion made by Commissioner Kar to receive the information presented on the Sister Cities International Youth Leadership Summit, seconded by Commissioner Boubkir. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

10. Receive the Sister Cities calendar items of past and present events

Motion was made by Commissioner Kar to receive the Sister Cities Calendar, seconded by Commissioner Chamberlain. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

F. NEW BUSINESS:

Motion made by Commissioner Rudolph to add a Sister Cities Meeting on April 9, 2025, seconded by Commissioner Chamberlain. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

G. ADJOURNMENT:

Motion was made by Commissioner Boubkir to adjourn the Sister Cities Meeting of March 12, 2025, seconded by Commissioner Chamberlain. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

/s/ Rachel Pruneda
Rachel Pruneda