

City of Sheboygan
2021-07-01

C4EQK608435

CITY OF SHEBOYGANMAYOR'S INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEETHursday, July 1, 2021

Mayor Sorenson called the meeting to order at 5: 15 pm in Conference Room 106 at City Hall (828 Center Avenue, Sheboygan) and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Members present in-person: Mayor Ryan Sorenson, Sarah Schwefel, Alderperson Betty Ackley, Nick Laurie, Dane Schaefer, Deidre Martinez, Dana Elmzen, Carolyn Miesfeld, Cole Phillips, Tony Rammer, Deb Sabol-Williams, Pete Janssen.

Members not in attendance: Rich Miesfeld and Annie King-Close.

Election of officers: Dane made a motion to postpone the election until the next MIC meeting because Rich Miesfeld is not at today s meeting and he has expressed interest in running for the chairperson role; second by Pete; all in favor; motion passes.

Correspondence:

Sarah received an email reply from Tsubame on May 30, this was forwarded to the MIC members on June 1. Mayor Sorenson has replied back to them and now that he s in contact with the Mayor of Tsubame and they have a Zoom meeting planned for the end of July. Mayor Sorenson has been in contact with the German Consulate in Chicago to assist with getting Visas for the Esslingen students who plan on traveling to Sheboygan this year.

Mayor Sorenson has been in contact with Sister City International which is kind of a branch off of the State Department. We are not currently a member of Sister City International, but that s something we might consider joining, the

fee is about \$600 per year. We can discuss this further at a future meeting.

Minutes: Motion to approve minutes of April 1, 2021 meeting; motion passes.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

Esslingen Sister City updates. Sarah and Mayor Sorenson had a Zoom meeting with Katrin, Jasmine, and Mayor J•rgen Zieger on June 9. Mayor Zieger is retiring this September after 23 years in office and there will be an election for the next mayor this summer. Katrin and Jasmine don't know whether or not the incoming mayor will be as supportive of the international efforts as Mayor Zieger has been, but they are optimistic and they plan to continue to support that initiative as much as possible. They are very interested in growing the student exchanges there are generally more Esslingen students interested in coming to the US compared to less interest from Sheboygan students to go to Germany. Mayor Sorenson suggested that we send fun/friendly postcards to them to keep in touch. Trip to Esslingen in 2022. Carolyn had been in contact with Discovery Travel because that's the agent that we've used in the past. Carolyn stated that they have historically traveled to Esslingen in May because the expense was more reasonable compared to traveling there in fall because of seasonal events such as Oktoberfest. Carolyn said that they often plan side trips to coincide with the main trip. When the MIC delegation traveled to Esslingen in 2017 it was a 12-day trip. We will continue to keep this item on the agenda for discussion. Esslingen Fest 2021. This is an annual brat fry that is a fundraiser for MIC, Carolyn said that Rich has reserved a date at 3 Sheeps, we will check with Rich to see what that date is. Sarah will ask Henry if he has been in contact with the Ryan Kautzer Band to inquire if he's available. A question was asked regarding how much profit we've made in past years, Sarah said she will look up that information and provide it to the MIC members by the next meeting. A suggestion was made to consider adding the Hammerschlagen game to the event. Cole mentioned that he is the lead arborist at Christopher Farm & Gardens and he could assist with getting our event at that venue in the future if we're interested. Dane mentioned that we might consider doing this event at a different time of year other than in the fall to have a separation from Oktoberfest events. Nick suggested an idea of doing an event that's during the Christmas Market season. Tony, Deidre, Pete, and Dane mentioned that they're interested in being part of a subcommittee for this. Youth symphony exchange with Esslingen. For the new members of the committee, the background info about this is that Josh Hernday, who is the executive director of the Sheboygan Symphony, attended the March 4 meeting of the MIC and proposed the idea of doing a youth symphony exchange between Sheboygan and Esslingen. Sarah has provided Josh's info to Katrin and Jasmine earlier this week and hopes that we can all connect soon to further discuss ideas for this. Sarah will reach out to Josh to invite him to the August 5 MIC meeting. Esslingen Coffee Talks update from Annie King-Close. Sarah reported on Annie's behalf. Earlier this year, Esslingen initiated the idea of a new project called Coffee Talks to connect conversation partners from the Esslingen fire/emergency dispatch to match them up with a Sheboyganite conversation partner. These informal video call conversations began in March with five sets of partners, and are continuing to proceed smoothly. Schedules vary among the conversation partners, and generally take place every week or two. There has been a noticeable improvement in the English skills our Esslingen counterparts, which has been great to see. Annie envisions that these one-on-one friendships would add a personal dimension to future exchange trips between Sheboygan and Esslingen. Nick offered the idea about having a

comparable program for high school students who are each learning the respective languages. Tsubame Sister City updates and sub-committee. Mayor Sorenson stated that one of the primary reasons that we have a Sister City relationship with Tsubame is because they are world-renowned in their high-end utensils and culinary implements this is something we have in common with regard to Vollrath. We have been Sister Cities with them since 1996 this year is our 25 -year anniversary! Dane has photos from 1996 when the Tsubame delegation visited. Deb suggested an idea of doing a video of children gathering and singing at Peace Park that we could share with Tsubame. Cole is thrilled to hear that Mayor Sorenson has a Zoom meeting scheduled he proposed doing a similar idea of doing the Coffee Talks. Cole also mentioned that he has a contact in Kenosha who is from Japan if we are in need of translation assistance. Annie, Betty, and Cole have been working as a sub-committee and will continue their efforts. Promoting other Sheboygan international relationships. Mayor Sorenson has been in contact with a variety of International Consulates. He mentioned that because there is a large Hmong community in the Sheboygan, we might consider supporting them with their events such as the Hmong New Year. This section is open to ideas. Pete mentioned that he was recently in Madison and he saw flags on light poles that represented Madison s Sister Cities we could consider doing something like that here. Dane suggested that we consider highlighting the stories/lives of refugees. Tony mentioned that the JMKAC is hosting cultural community conversations we need to determine the scope of what we want our efforts to be. A question was asked about what our mission statement is for the MIC, Sarah stated that the mission statement is included in the guidelines document that was emailed to the MIC members on Tuesday. Future plans and ideas. We ve pretty much covered this topic with discussions in the previous agenda items. A question was asked about our social media presence and Sarah said she will send everyone the link to the MIC Facebook page.

NEXT MEETING DATE: August 5, 2021.

Adjourned at 6: 37 pm.