

**MINUTES of the Morgantown Sister Cities Commission (MSCC) Meeting
February 19, 2013** (prepared by Betsy Pyle)

ATTENDANCE: Commissioners: Roz Becker, Betsy Pyle, Rich Fleisher, Bill Byrne.
Excused: John Gaddis, George Lies, Peggy Myers-Smith, Liz Finklea. Visitor:
Zhengjun Wang.

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting called to order at 4:09 PM by Bill Byrne, Vice Chair. Mr. Byrne welcomed our visitor to the meeting. Zhengjun Wang is Vice President of the Chinese Student Organization at WVU and, because of our Friendship City of Xuzhou in China, his group is interested in the work of the Commission.

Due to the lack of a quorum, we did not hold an official meeting nor vote on the minutes of the previous meeting. The minutes from the January meeting will be presented for a vote at the March meeting. The commissioners who were present, however, stayed to hear reports on a number of relevant items and to discuss issues of concern.

OLD BUSINESS REGARDING EXISTING RELATIONSHIPS:

Chinese New Year Celebration: Mr. Wang provided a report on the Chinese New Year celebration that was held in the WVU Health Sciences Center on February 9, 2013.

Nearly 500 people attended representing a broad cross section of Morgantown with many Chinese people, community residents, and students attending. Entertainment in the form of dance, song, tai chi lasted for 1.5 hours and then all in attendance were invited to the cafeteria for a complementary meal of traditional Chinese food. Jenny Selin and Marti Shamberger, City Councilors, provided brief comments. Councilor Linda Herbst also attended. Betsy Pyle and Liz Finklea attended as representatives of the Sister Cities Commission. Dave Fryson the Chief Diversity Officer for the University and Mike Lastinger from the WVU Office of International Programs also attended. Mr. Wang stated that next year they will look for a larger venue for the event and hope to involve more KL-12 students from the community. He also mentioned that the Chinese Student Association hopes to be involved in the WVU Extension Day at the WV Legislature, and they hope to participate in some way at the state fair in Lewisburg in August.

Residency Requirement for Morgantown Sister Cities Commissioners: Mr. Byrne reported that the proposed revision to the Morgantown Sister Cities Commission Ordinance to allow some representation on the Commission by interested citizens of the Greater Morgantown Area who live outside the city limits passed by a vote of 7-0. As passed, the revision states that up to two members can participate on the commission, but they are to be considered "ex officio" members. In other words, they may not vote. If two of nine seats are held by ex officio members, a quorum will consist of four members. The commissioners present were not concerned about the non-voting status of non city residents on the commission, because most business of the commission is conducted by consensus. The second reading of this ordinance revision was to be held that evening (2-19-13) and it was expected to pass 7-0 again. Mr. Byrne stated that he would try to ensure that the wording of the ordinance was permissive, not mandatory. He suggested

that at the next meeting of the commission we should talk about soliciting a new member to replace Pam Hodge and look at the terms of the existing commission members.

OLLI Class on Guanajuato (Gto): A class about the Sister Cities Program and more specifically about Guanajuato, Mexico, our sister city, was offered at Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) on Friday February 8, 2013, from 10 AM to 12 Noon. About 15 people attended the class. Ms. Becker and Mr. Fleisher made the presentation and Ms. Pyle assisted. It was their hope that this class could serve as the beginning of an educational campaign to inform residents of the city more about our Sister City and the goals of the program, and to help generate interest among residents of the city traveling to Guanajuato on a guided excursion so that more people become familiar with our sister city and enrich their lives through cultural exchange. Slides of the city were shown and a brief survey was distributed to encourage those who participated to share their preferences for the type of trip they would like to see offered to members of the community. Those in attendance also agreed that they would like to see a very basic "Spanish for Travelers" class offered at OLLI before a trip. Mr. Fleisher will ask Pablo Gonzales (retired WVU faculty member) if he is willing to do this. They also asked to have their names and contact information added to the Friends of Gto listserv so they are notified when another self-host social event is planned. Several who attended also suggested that they would favor including a service component in the trip to Gto. Mr. Byrne will follow-up with Pepe in Gto to see if he has ideas about organizations for which we could do service projects. Ms. Pyle will attempt to contact Sara Ramirez for the same type of information.

NEW BUSINESS:

Friends of Guanajuato Winter or Spring Social Gathering: Other than suggesting that maybe the month of May (since Cinco de Mayo is celebrated in May) would be a good time to hold the next self host social event at a local Mexican restaurant, discussion of this topic was tabled for the next meeting due to limited attendance for planning purposes.

Promotion and Educational Programming in 2013: Mr. Byrne recommended we search for ways to get more Chinese and Mexican culture exposure in the schools. Mr. Wang stated that the Chinese Student Association would send participants to the Cheat Lake Elementary School International Fair that will be held on the morning of March 6.

Global Engagement Presentation: Mr. Fleisher invited commissioners to attend a presentation at noon on Friday February 22 at the Extension Service offices in Knapp Hall on campus by Mr. Wang. He will present information about the role of Chinese students in the United States and Chinese-US relations.

City Council Election: It was noted that Morgantown City council elections will be held on Tuesday April 30. Mr. Byrne is not running for re-election so there will be turnover on the current council.

Election of a New Chair: The commission will need to elect a new chair due to the resignation of Pam Hodge. Mr. Byrne noted that we will need 5 people to be present at that meeting, and Ms. Pyle and Mr. Fleisher stated that they will be unable to attend on the day of the next scheduled meeting which is March 19. Mr. Byrne noted that he would ask Bethany Sypolt from the City Clerk's office to distribute the current makeup of the commission and the terms of each commissioners appointment.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 5:06 pm.

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting will be held on **TUESDAY, March 19, 2013 at 4:00 PM** in the **CONFERENCE ROOM** of the **Public Safety Building**. (Meeting room has been confirmed.) Additions or corrections? Please email them to Betsy at betsypyle@comcast.net