

**MINUTES of the Morgantown Sister Cities Commission (MSCC) Meeting
April 16, 2013** (prepared by Betsy Pyle)

ATTENDANCE: Commissioners Present: Roz Becker, Betsy Pyle, Bill Byrne, John Gaddis, Liz Finklea, George Lies. Commissioners Excused/Absent: Rich Fleisher, Peggy Myers-Smith. Visitors: Zhengjun Wang, Helene Friedberg, Jeff Ryan. City of Morgantown Representative: Bethany Sypolt.

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting called to order at 4:03 PM by Bill Byrne, Vice Chair. Mr. Byrne welcomed our visitor to the meeting. Zhengjun Wang is 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. Helene Friedberg and Jeff Ryan are interested in the vacant seat on the Commission.

Due to the lack of a quorum at the March meeting, a working discussion was held but no formal minutes were recorded that required a vote of approval. The commissioners who were present stayed to hear reports on a number of relevant items and to discuss issues of concern. Roz Becker did record some notes and they were distributed prior to this meeting.

OLD BUSINESS REGARDING EXISTING RELATIONSHIPS:

Friends of Guanajuato Social Gathering and WVU-U of G'to Exchange: Because May is so close, we discussed the possibility of holding a social event during the summer rather than for Cinco de Mayo. There will be visiting faculty from Guanajuato studying English in the WVU Intensive English Program so they could be invited to attend a social gathering. The format will be the same: self-host dinner (everyone buys their own meal) at a local Mexican restaurant. We will tentatively plan for it to be on Sunday August 4th at 6 PM at Mariachi Loco restaurant near the Walmart off Grafton Road south of town. Mr. Lies may also do a reception for the G'to visitors sometime during the week of July 8-12 soon after they arrive in Morgantown. Mr. Lies also reported that WVU may be sending 2 or 3 people to G'to this summer for the language exchange program.

Plans for Sister Cities Guided Tour to Guanajuato: We still have a goal of eventually offering a guided trip to G'to in which each participant pays their own way to give more local residents the opportunity to get to know our Sister City. Bill Byrne is working on trying to make contacts in G'to with someone that would help us include a service component in such a trip because many people in our community find service-oriented trips appealing. We also need to keep connections with Nancy Fiator alive in case she is still in G'to and could help with this project since she expressed a lot of interest in helping with our Sister City activities.

Chinese Student Association Activities Related to Friendship City: Zhengjun Wang reported that he participated in the Cheat Lake Elementary School International Fair. He and others from the WVU Chinese Student Association spoke in 5 classes. He was surprised to learn that all students in that elementary school receive some Chinese

language instruction. The WVU Chinese Student Association also participated in the WVU Day at the Legislature and met with President Clements and Provost Wheatley. Mr. Wang invited us to participate in the Chinese Professionals Association picnic on May 4th at Laurel Caverns in Pennsylvania near Uniontown. On a personal note, he will be traveling back to China from May 11-July 21.

NEW BUSINESS:

Web Space for Sister Cities Commission: Mr. Gaddis asked about getting space for the commission on the city web space. Ms. Sypolt said this is possible and offered to maintain our site. She will post minutes or notes from meetings and any other relevant things that we ask her to post.

Budget Matters: \$1300 from this fiscal year that did not get spent will carry over to the next fiscal year because no new funding for commissions was allotted to city commissions for the upcoming fiscal year.

New Commission Members: Ms. Sypolt distributed a list of all Morgantown commissions, their members, and terms of service including the Sister Cities commission. She also had distributed the information completed online by five people who expressed an interest in serving on the Sister Cities commission. She had invited all of them to attend this meeting to learn more about the commission and its work. Two attended this meeting: Jeff Ryan and Helene Friedberg. Mr. Byrne introduced them and asked them to give a brief statement about their backgrounds and why they are interested in working as part of the commission. Ms. Friedberg is a former Morgantown city council member and has traveled extensively and specifically to Guanajuato numerous times. She is interested in learning Spanish and international travel and would like to promote more relationships between Morgantown and our Sister City. Mr. Ryan is an art teacher at a local school and has traveled to China and numerous other countries. He believes his international and art experience could be put to good use on this commission. Mr. Byrne also provided some background information for them on international activities in Morgantown that led to the formation of the Sister Cities commission.

Currently, we have one open seat on the commission created by the resignation of Pam Hodge, our previous chair. After some discussion, a decision was made to recommend to City Council that Helene Friedberg be appointed to fill that vacant seat. Some additional turnover on the commission is anticipated, so Mr. Ryan was thanked for attending and told that he would most likely have an opportunity in the near future to join the commission.

Mr. Gaddis informed the commissioners that he did NOT wish to be reappointed when his term was completed. Mr. Byrne stated that he would contact Ms. Peggy Myers-Smith to see if she wished to continue to serve on the commission. Mr. Byrne also noted that following the upcoming city council elections, a member of city council would be appointed to the commission as one of its nine members to fill the seat that he will vacate at the end of May. All other commissioners agreed to be reappointed. Ms. Sypolt stated that she would place the existing commissioners into the open slots and attempt to stagger

the terms of appointment so that 3 would cycle off each year since there are nine commissioners and 1, 2, and 3 year appointments possible.

At the next meeting we will take up the matter of appointing officers because the key leadership roles will need to be filled since Ms. Hodge resigned and Mr. Byrne will be rotating off when his term on city council ends. Commissioners were encouraged to think about who would be willing to take on leadership of the commission.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 5:07 pm.

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting will be held on **TUESDAY, May 21st, 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