

Morgantown Sister Cities Commission

Minutes of Thursday, January 26, 2023

Meeting Called to order at 5:02PM.

Attendees: Ixya Vega, City Council Rep.; Liz Finklea, George Lies, Lola Contreras.

Excused: Helene Friedberg.

Minutes – No monthly meetings held due to holidays Nov. 24, Dec. 22, 2022.

Discussion of Correspondence (see attachments).

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Reported on approval of Financial Dept.'s payments (\$650) to Colombia Espiral Musicians (George) for October 8 International Street Festival, and covering the four-member group's two week tour of local venues, such as a school, a church, restaurants, clubs, and other international non-profits groups.
2. Liz discussed current city process in reimbursing volunteers for using their own personal payments, to pay commission business, such as happened with 2021 festival invoice paid to Main Street Morgantown.
3. Ixya gave update on one new city resident applicant (4th Ward) for the MSCC Commission.
4. All members discussed the needs for planning of **Cinco de Mayo in Celebration of Guanajuato**, Mexico. Dates would be on/about May 5 (Friday) and May 6 (Saturday), 2023. Lola indicated her experience in organizing similar events in past years. We discussed venues: old Morgantown mall, Presbyterian Church, Wesley Methodist Church, and rejected smaller venues. Lola and Liz will follow-up on contacts.
5. George will look at **remaining funds in budget**, with commissioners' assistance. The FY 2021-22 budget, which listed a Guanajuato Day, has funds available to cover approximately \$1,250 in expenses (possibly more). Funds would cover expected musicians, performers, rentals, materials., food related items. Lola suggested we may benefit from donations from local establishments.
6. **Letter of Collaboration**, in past week, sent by George via email to Daniel Anorve in support of the Guanajuato's Virtual Museo of Sister Cities, depicting our city profile (see letter and related correspondence).
7. George reported on proposed visit by a Xuzhou delegation in 2023, but Xuzhou Foreign Affairs contact (Ellen) did not provide a date for the visit. (Refer also to email correspondence from Asst. City Manager Emily Muzzarelli). Xuzhou also sent **invitation** to city council and mayor to visit Xuzhou for new ceremony at the completed Morgantown Eco-Park facility in early 2023. Xuzhou paid all costs and completed the construction in late fall 2022, and distributed a video of the Green Eco-Park throughout China via social media.
8. For **2022 activities**, in addition to Cinco de Mayo, Ixya suggested Commission consider participating in Arts Walk, for promotion of activities and recruitment of new residents for the commission. March may be first month. For this, we agreed to buy a Table Banner (cost around \$60), branded with city logo, for promoting Morgantown Sister Cities. We agreed on developing a hand-out and a newsletter (estimated cost \$65-\$95)—and request further assistance from City Communications staff for design and printing. Both items to be available for Arts Walk and other President actions during Spring 2023.
9. For **events and visitors**, we agreed to purchase Visitor Protocol gifts and gift give-aways for residents and visitors at Cinco de Mayo and Arts Walk activities. After contacting vendors, estimated cost is at \$450 to \$550 for 'branded' tote bags and personal briefcases as well as small key chain flashlights. The funds are listed in current budget. Ixya noted we used poster boards, handouts, and bags of Halloween candies at the October 8 International Festival.

10. We all addressed the annual dues (about \$610) expected to be sent to Sister Cities International, by the city, and listed in the Commission's current budget.
11. In other business, George talked of **January 25 City Orientation**, Public Safety Bldg. Training room. City Clerk told Liz, there would be a second orientation for non-attendees. There is handout to be sent to all city's commission volunteers by City Clerk. George highlighted rules on ethics, social media, and other policies. There were 13 volunteers attending in-person, and about 11 attending on zoom.
12. Leading the Orientation were: City Clerk Christine Wade, City Lawyer Ryan Simonton, and new Communications Director (Drew Bailey). Their emails and phone numbers are on the **directory at morgantown.gov web portal**
13. We all congratulated Lola Contreras for being approved by City Council and receiving certification by City Clerk, as full-voting commissioner. We discussed the need to recruit residents for the remaining open seats on commission.
14. We did not have time to discuss **FY 2023-24 MSCC Budget—nor 2023-2024 Activity Plan** for Morgantown Sister Cities. Both were referred to commission's budget committee. The next budget proposal is due in early February for next fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024.

Adjournment at 5:50PM.

NEXT MEETING – Thursday 5PM, **February 23rd** on Zoom.