

**CITY OF SIERRA VISTA**  
**SISTER CITIES COMMISSION**  
**November 16, 2015**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Susanne Himstedt-Gilbert called the meeting of the Sister Cities Commission to order at 5:31 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Susanne Himstedt-Gilbert  
Randi Buros  
John McBee  
Lourdes Montoya-Murphy  
Irma Valdez

OTHERS PRESENT:

Milt Laflen  
Matthew Lentz  
Lauren Giamalis  
Susan Raymond

CITY COUNCIL LIAISON PRESENT:

Hank Huisking

STAFF PRESENT:

Victoria Yarbrough

**ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA**

Lourdes Montoya-Murphy made a motion to accept the agenda. Randi Buros seconded the motion.

**VOTE:** UNANIMOUS

The motion carried.

**ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING – OCTOBER 19, 2015**

Randi Buros made a motion to accept the agenda. John McBee seconded the motion.

**VOTE:** UNANIMOUS

The motion carried.

**CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS**

Susanne thanked everyone for coming to the barbecue party. All the volunteers appreciated it and had a great time. She also stated there will be a fundraiser for Buena's Sister Cities Club at Texas Roadhouse on November 17<sup>th</sup>.

## **REVIEW OF CITY COUNCIL ACTIONS – Hank Huisking**

Hank stated she and three of her colleagues went to Nashville, Tennessee for the Winter Conference of the National League of Cities. The trip was a great opportunity to network with other cities. The Mayor of the Sister City of Cannes, France was also present. It was discussed how Sister Cities have gone from just a cultural exchange to economic development. Sister Cities will certainly be a topic in future conferences according to the Chairman of the National League of Cities.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Victoria Yarbrough**

Victoria reported donation flyers for “Crutches and Canes for disabled and blind children” in Cananea, Mexico have been created and collection boxes will be placed at the Oscar Yrun Community Center and The Cove.

## **CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

There were no comments from the public.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **1. Treasurer's Report and Approval of Expenditures – Randi Buros**

Randi stated last month the total of funds available was \$ 7,048.86. Since then, money in the amount of \$ 98.05 was spent on crutches and canes for Cananea Outreach and an additional \$ 88.93 was spent on supplies for the volunteer barbeque. He reported this brings the total of funds presently available to \$ 6,862.17. Victoria added the reimbursement for Matthew's ticket has been submitted and as soon as she receives the check she'll forward it to Randi.

### **2. Discussion on Cananea Outreach – Susanne Himstedt-Gilbert**

Susanne thanked Monika and Victoria for assisting with the crutches and canes collection. Humberto spoke to her the other day and asked if members of the commission could come to Cananea to present the purchased items to the group. Susanne stated she recently called the VA and the Sierra Vista Hospital to get additional donations of crutches, but is still waiting on their feedback. She's also been in contact with Canter because according to Humberto the organization would like to start working with the handicapped kids and horses. Susanne asked Irma to come up with a list of things to collect in the future for Cananea, Mexico.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **1. GAPP program presentation and discussion – Matthew Lentz**

Matthew stated, after researching more information about the GAAP program, he decided to put his energy in the Sister Cities Commission for now and will revisit opening a GAAP in the future. He believes Sister Cities will help with the growth of his German classes due to the student exchange to Germany. Susanne stated it would be great if Matthew would consider joining the commission.

### **2. Buena Sister Cities Club Updates – Susan Raymond**

Susan reported the fundraiser at Texas Roadhouse will take place from 3-10 pm. Some of the children will be there to answer any questions if necessary. She also mentioned the kids are currently planning a Christmas party for the children from Cananea. The date for the party may be set for December 19, 2015, depending on the feedback from the participants.

### **3. Presentation by representative of Sister Cities International on the benefits of membership – Milt Laflen**

Mr. Laflen said he's impressed with the commission and their involvement in different programs. He shared that Sister Cities International currently has a budget of one and a half million dollars per year available. Mr. Laflen stated that the four major aspects of Sister Cities International are:

- Humanitarian Involvement
- Student Exchange
- Art Exchange
- Economic Development

Randi inquired, in the event of the Commission joining Sister Cities International what would be some of the responsibilities and what are some of the resources available. The pricing for membership was discussed and Mr. Laflen stated legitimacy and information of programs would be one of the benefits for joining Sister Cities International. He also said the organization partners with different clubs such as the Rotary and Kiwanis Club. Being part of Sister Cities International allows for a lot of networking opportunities. Susanne will be invited to the next State Level Board Meeting in January, 2016, which will give her the chance to meet some of the members. Mr. Laflen shared that he promotes Sister Cities International, however, he also wanted to point out that there's always the option to become an associate member of Sister Cities Arizona without paying international member fees. The cost for the associate membership is \$ 50 per year. A brief discussion continued.

#### **4. Discussion on German Student Exchange in February 2016 – Susanne Himstedt-Gilbert**

Susanne stated she would like to get started with the planning of activities for the upcoming exchange and asked commission members to bring a list of ideas to the next meeting. She said the duration of the exchange trip will be about 15-18 days. The special meeting on December 07, 2015 was cancelled.

#### **5. Discussion on term expirations in February 8, 2016:**

Susanne thanked Randi for all the help with the commission for the past two years and said she wishes he would re-apply.

- a. Susanne Himstedt-Gilbert:** Susanne said she was re-applying for appointment to the commission.
- b. Randi Buros:** Randi said he was re-applying for appointment to the commission.

#### **6. Discussion about commission vacancies**

Susanne stated she would like for Matthew to be a member of the commission and possibly the organizer for the student exchange. She also stated Ms. Giamalis is interested in joining due to her son's amazing experience in the student exchange.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REQUESTS OF COMMISSIONERS**

Hank thanked Susanne for hosting the volunteer barbeque and is hoping something similar can be planned for next year. Susanne shared all the volunteers appreciated the invite and are ready for Oktoberfest next year.

Irma stated that all commission members are invited to Mexican night in Cananea, Mexico on November 21<sup>st</sup>.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

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Susanne Himstedt-Gilbert, Chairperson