

Minutes of the Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board Meeting of September 2, 2020

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order by Chair Pat Fallin at noon.
2. **ROLL CALL:** Members present: Pat Fallin, Chair, County-at-Large; Margaret Saavedra, Vice-Chair, City-at-Large; Whitney Rush, Secretary, City-at-Large; George Lilly, Representative, Kotor, Montenegro; Georgia Gastouniotis, Representative, Patras; Gil Garcia, Representative, Puerto Vallarta; Albe Dumlao, Representative, San Juan, Philippines; Linda Mathews, Representative, Toba, Japan;

Other Attendees: Linda Gunther, Staff to Board; Tom McCool, Providing report on Kinsale, Ireland.
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** On a motion duly made by Albe Dumlao and seconded by Gil Garcia, the minutes of the meeting held on March 6, 2020, were approved.
4. **ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Due to Covid-19, both the 9/11 Memorial Concert and the October United Nations dinner are canceled until 2021.
5. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.
6. **REVIEW CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR 2020:** No upcoming events due to Covid-19. Puerto Vallarta groups does meet monthly and the Weihai group held a general membership Zoom meeting.
7. **SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL (SCI) REPORT** – Pat Fallin reports that the virtual SCI International Conference was a success. Three thousand people attended online over two days in July. SCI is considering giving up their office space in Washington, D.C. and moving to a fully virtual office which would free up money to go to other initiatives. Additionally, SCI is looking into a Youth Leadership Summit. She will pass on more information once it becomes available.
8. **SCI'S SOCAL REGIONAL MEETING** – Margaret Saavedra reports that they're planning a young professionals meeting in February and the next SoCal meeting will be online in October. Gil Garcia reports that the board meetings continue and they're working on doing the regional meetings online.
9. **YOUNG ARTISTS AND AUTHORS SHOWCASE (YAAS)** – Margaret Saavedra shared that the Young Artists and Authors Showcase included an essay from a local Santa Barbara junior high school student. The essay was named a finalist and published in the news.
10. **REPORT FROM COMMITTEE ON REQUEST FOR NEW SISTER CITY – LIMA, PERU** - None. Miguel Arana with the Miraflores group was made aware of this meeting and Gil Garcia reached out separately as well with no response back. The request is on hold until the Board hears back.

11. **REPORT FROM COMMITTEE ON REQUEST FOR NEW SISTER CITY–KINSALE, IRELAND -**

Tom McCool sent his report to the Board prior to the meeting. Setting up meetings between the two cities is moving slowly. Their contact is Kinsale works with restaurants and hotels that have understandably been hard hit by covid. They have held two Zoom meetings and have postponed their October trip. The main goal right now is to make the expectations clear and putting together committees in both cities. In Kinsale they are working with Kieran Fitzgerald, former head of the Chamber of Commerce and one other representative. Also the Irish consul general in Los Angeles contacted Tom McCool about the dissolution of the Dingle Sister City and emphasized the importance of having an Irish Sister City. The Consul General supports the Kinsale progress.

12. **REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS:** (Limit 3 minutes each)

Kotor, Montenegro: George Lilly, Representative, reported on the following. The Santa Barbara – Kotor Sister City Committee raised \$18,000 during their Spring fundraiser. The Summer Festival continued as planned however the UCSB pianist could not travel to perform due to Covid. As part of the UCSB Arts and Lecture series, a performing guitarist happened to be from Kotor and the committee connected with him. The U.S Ambassador in Kotor does have money and is planning for a 2021 grant to go towards the Kotor arts concerts.

The annual culinary department exchange was canceled this year due to Covid. Four SBCC students had been planning for a paid internship in Kotor and two disabled students from Kotor were going to come to Santa Barbara. Additionally the youth water polo exchange was canceled and the committee is hoping for some events to resume in January. Overall though, the relationships continue to be very strong despite all this.

Patras, Greece: Georgia Gastouniotis, Representative, reports that there has been some communication between the two committees during the time. Donations were recently sent to the children's department of the hospital in Patras to purchase four medical items.

Puerto Vallarta, Mexico: Gil Garcia, Representative, reports that the visit to Santa Barbara was canceled as well as the visit to Puerto Vallarta in January. Both groups are looking to restart visits in 2022. The general meetings are being held on Zoom and representatives from the various organizations they support in Puerto Vallarta have been on. The representative from the Food Bank gave a good report as well as the rehab hospital reported their need for \$2,000 to complete their A/C and solar panels. The next meeting is tonight, September 2, and they will hear from the health clinic in Puerto Vallarta and discuss youth scholarships and how school continues through Covid.

San Juan, Philippines. Albe Dumlaog, Representative, reports that all events from March through December are on hold. They did have a successful Valentine's party before

Covid. The visit from San Juan's mayor is postponed as well as the invitation to San Juan's water festival.

Toba, Japan: Linda Mathews, Representative, reports that the group has had a Zoom meeting with Toba including the former mayor. The coronavirus has not hit Toba hard but tourism is way down. Sister City International reached out about a bell ringing ceremony on the anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bombs in Japan. With short notice, the Toba group was able to coordinate an event where the Santa Barbara group rang the Mission bells, and the bells at City Hall along with 75 rings from individuals while the group in Toba brought the temple bell to the local dolphin fountain to ring it. The event was filmed and picked up and broadcast throughout Japan. It was a very moving event honoring those that were lost.

Weihai, China: No representative at the meeting, however Peter Haslund shared via email after the meeting about the successful execution of their plans to host a Zoom conference between Chinese and American academics on the theme of what happens next, after the pandemic. He is now engaged in a very labor-intensive editing process. They hope to air the program some time this month.

15. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:12 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Whitney Rush, Secretary