



# CITY OF DE PERE

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Sister Cities Committee  
De Pere, WI 54115

Date: November 30, 2006

## Committee Meeting

Kathy passed out packets of information with the agenda and meeting minutes from 11-18.

Meeting called to order at 16:08 by Committee Chair Kathy VanVonderen in the Riverview room at city hall.

**Attending:** Jim Stupka, Lynn Lee, Jerilyn Schad, Mary VanVonderen, Paul Kegel.

**Absent:** Fr Seamus Nielson, Ben Villarruel, Larry Delo, Christine Fossen-Rades, Bill Patzke, Tracy Hopkins, Candy Heidersheid, Ron Baeten, Mayor Walsh.

**Guest:** Dr. Sarah Meredith from UWGB

Review of meeting minutes - Noted an incorrect spelling for VanVonderen in the past minutes (writer apologizes for his fat fingers).

Kathy started introductions and asked our guest how she should be properly addressed; she asked to be called Sara.

Continued membership discussion Kathy suggested the potential for consideration of a change in meeting date and time in order to accommodate other members who are having difficulty attending. Kathy will survey members to ascertain availability and determine the potential problems with a move.

Sara gave an overview of the items on the agenda and suggested a discussion with Lana from SNC who had just returned from Prague. Kathy gave a quick overview of the priorities and the potential sites we have previously worked on. Jim pulled the information out of the past minutes and Sara began the discussion. Sara came to Wisconsin as an instructor in 1988 fleeing Bucharest ending in Milwaukee and eventually settling in Green Bay. She wanted her students to have a connection to the people here. She initially judged at a voice competition and has been invited back eight times. She has been working to get her students involved and some currently perform as part of the competition. She stated the 1st year that the information was not in English but now is always available in English. Sara passed out several packets of information for different cities of comparable size in the Czech Republic.

Karlovy Vary has springs in the city that are perceived to hold healing waters and is a well known German tourist spot. There are actually a number of spa towns throughout the area. There are two distinct areas in the community. The big business is tourist trade, liquors, and corporate offices. The area is wooded so game hunting and fishing are similar to our area, there is even a place with a statue of a stag. There are many smaller villages close to the main city. They host an International Film Festival every year. Sara first hooked up with the Rotary Club to assist in 1991 with her

becoming the 1st American judge for the vocal competition in the community. She has continued to bring students from America to the competition. The panel consists of nine to eleven judges who choose a finalist for the fairly respectable prize of \$5,000 (all of this has occurred since her first contact in 1991). Jerilyn asked about the competition. Sara stated that high school goes to 19 years old and there is no "college" as such in the community. Government is separated in the Czech Republics, (in trying to describe) perceived as a socialist modified to be somewhat democratic. Paul asked how she gets around in the community. Sara stated that it is convenient to walk everywhere, there is however bus service. They may be interested in partnering with a city with similar goals. The community is not really people oriented because of the tourism.

Nowy Sacz, Poland is near where Pope Paul was born and close to Auschwitz. They have a new performing arts center. The city is sister(s) with ten different communities including a US city in Georgia. Business school is the biggest growing business in Poland and they are looking for US businesses in which their students can intern. The city is about an hour and 15 from the airport via ground transport. They hold a regular international vocal competition. The residents are very friendly and forward. Big industries include Salt mines.

Kathy was careful to point out that several of the people she had talked to at sister cities stated that most of the communities in Europe had some form of partnership with other communities, we should endeavor to define the relationships we want.

A final site is Banska Bystrica, Slovakia. As an aside Sara pointed out that these countries had been victimized in the past as part of the East European bloc they were not supported and growth was not encouraged. She stated she felt as if these people were the underdogs and would like to see them win. The area has huge mountains and rolling hills with a climate similar to ours. It has a busy market place. She is aware of a SNC visiting scholar agreement. A partnership could be mutually beneficial both ways because these citizens need other outside contacts. It is a beautiful, secluded, and unknown area. The Rotary club has supported Jazz festivals. A Korean car dealer ship is just being introduced. The area is known for wine production, furs, hunting, rafting, and water activities.

Discussion on the places near Florence, Sara has been there on her travels. Additionally, family values are very high in the Czech republic and all of Slovakian communities. Joel Blanic in Fish Creek would be a good contact because he knows all about the little towns there as he goes over at least three times per year.

It was suggested, by Lynn, that we should have a world map present for our meetings. Paul had talked to a professor in New Zealand and the school is a High School. Contact for Puyang stated the community is 1/4 million people. He also noted that Song Jiang is exceptionally large as well. Kathy spoke for Bill he had written a letter to Levin with out receiving a response. Kathy read a response to a letter stating they were not interested in forming a relationship. Kathy could not find any info on Viet Nam only one poor site in Laos, which was probably looking for help. There was not much info on Lisakovsk, Kazakhstan.

Mary passed out some articles. Discussions about looking beyond the sister city suggested sites because they weren't getting us anywhere. Kathy will revisit the application and change our wanted areas to better reflect our current search. Mary stated she did not get her book back for information on Song Jiang. Her staff called over to Maintal-Dorningheim and found out that they feel they have enough partners for now. She had dinner with a friend who suggested Amal, Sweden and he would be happy to contact the mayor in that community on our behalf.

Mission statement information was passed out from the web sites; Mary spoke briefly about what is there. Committee decided to wipe the December meetings.

Homework is to develop a draft of the mission statement and brainstorm on what we want in it. Look at the cities from Sara. Discussion on what our mission actually is. Discussion on what our committee should have for a formal name. We are not owned by the city so we should better be called "define name". Suggested polling all areas from across the city to better link to the community.

Next meetings are scheduled for Thursday, **January 18** at 4:00; Committee wishes happy holidays to ALL. Adjourned 5:41 pm.

Review of meeting - all were happy to listen to Sara. It is excellent to have input and insights from people who have been to these countries. Three more good potential sites. Look at other people we can talk to for garnering of information, we should network more for information.

Respectfully submitted,

*James O. Stupka III*

Assistant Fire Chief