



City of De Pere

Sister Cities Committee
De Pere, WI 54115

Date: June 1, 2006

Committee Meeting

Meeting called to order at 4:04 p.m. by Committee Chair Kathy Van Vonderen in the Riverview Room at City Hall.

Attending: Bill Patzke, Paul Kegel, Lynn Lee, Tracy Hopkins, Jerilyn Schad and Kathy Van Vonderen. Absent: Mayor Walsh, Larry Delo, Ben Villarruel, Christine Fossen-Rades, Jim Stupka, Fr. James Neilson, Candy Heidersheid and Ron Baeten.

In the fifth paragraph of the minutes of May 18, 2006, “environmentally conscience” should read “environmentally conscious”.

The 2005 dues have been paid and the 2006 dues need to be paid and Kathy will have Larry put that on the council agenda for approval. The dues are \$340.00 per year for a city between 10,000 and 25,000 people.

On the first page of the application they talked about principal economic activities being something that is important for the sister cities. Also important are services, tourism, technology and industries; less important is agricultural. We envision doing things in all areas with them except agricultural.

There was a discussion of the five different areas that Kathy had checked out. Every community in China except Puyang has more than one million people in it. Paul Kegel talked to someone who knows China well; there is a lot of smaller size cities in China called older industrial and are going through redevelopment. There are quite a few Chinese living and working in the valley area here that we could tie to this. Paul also talked to someone at St. Norbert College who said that we are getting more applicants for students from China to study here than we used to. Puyang is not part of a sister city yet; their strong areas are agriculture, poultry, cattle, historic relics, and tourism is growing drastically. They have petroleum, natural gas, coal and salt and a high coverage of greenery and shrubs; they are concerned with the environment. Puyang is located on the central plain of northern China, in the Henan province. They have several colleges and vocational schools. The population is between 25,000 and 50,000. Their first choice for a sister city is the United States and would like to find a city that doesn't already have a sister city. They enjoy it's natural beauty and history. They checked every activity on their application just like us.

Jerilyn questioned if there was a possibility of a computer program that would match what we checked with someone else with the same similar choices, such as they do with an online dating service. Kathy was going to look into that.

Selwyn, New Zealand – Agriculture is very important as well as technology and tourism. Dairy, sheep, pigs, deer, chicken, grapes, orchards, horse stud farms and racing are all important. It is a large area, 6,500 sq. km. There are many ski slopes in the high country and they have hydro electricity production. They want a community with small towns with agriculture and horticultural activities.

Cookstown, Northern Ireland – Agriculture, industry, technology and tourism is important. Economics is important. Their area covers 501 sq. km.. Northern Ireland is 50 miles from Belfast. It has one college, 26 primary schools. They want a town with an economic focus with an irish community or ties to an irish community.

Different cities are going to be looked at at every meeting to see what they offer or are looking for to see if one in particular appeals to us. During this meeting it was decided that both New Zealand cities did not meet our criteria enough to keep looking at them.

Kathy passed out information about the Fox Cities Kurgan Sister Cities Program. Appleton has three sister cities, Japan, Russia and Nicaragua. For more info you can look up www.foxcitieskurgan.org on the internet. Dr. Montgomery Elmer and Chuck Lauder are scheduled to come to the July 12 meeting and talk about what they have been doing with their sister cities. We should have a list of questions we want to ask at this meeting. Appleton does a lot of giving.

Kathy is going to contact Stevens Point to see if they will come and talk at one of our meetings. They have had a sister city for many years.

We only got two responses to the survey that was sent out to the area businesses. Humana suggested Costa Rica and Plan Administrators suggested Cuba. Bill Patzke will contact Megtec by phone for any suggestions because they do a lot of international business. Bill will also look at the list again and approach those that did not respond and maybe see if he may have missed someone who could help us. Kathy is going to check out Costa Rica. Bill suggested India but their communities are too large. The Philippines have some areas the same size as us. We should state that we are a green city and the environment is an interest to us. We are very wasteful with our resources and some of the other areas are very frugal with theirs.

Someone asked if we could find out how many hits our site has had and Kathy was going to see if there is a way to find that out.

Everyone can look in their spare time at general statements and philosophy statements of vision and goals; what overall are we hoping to accomplish? What is our philosophy for each activity? What are the social events we could do that would tie our systems together? Give examples of what we could do. Or you could modify something that would still fit under our philosophy.

Review of meeting – Good responses, we are keeping open views on the cities we are looking at. We are making changes as we go along. We are moving at a slow pace but it is an important process to find a city. It's nice that we are expanding our search of cities because there may be a hidden city out there that would be a perfect match for us.

Next meeting is June 15th at 4:00 p.m. in the Riverview Room at City Hall.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Diane Yashinsky
Fire Department Secretary