



CITY OF DE PERE

Sister Cities Committee
De Pere, WI 54115

Date: February 22, 2007

Committee Meeting

Kathy passed out packets of information with the agenda and meeting minutes from 2-8-07.

Meeting called to order at 16:06 by Committee Chair Kathy VanVonderen in the Riverview Room at city hall.

Attending: Mary VanVonderen, Lynn Lee, Jim Stupka, Larry Delo, Jerilyn Schad, and Jay Harris.

Absent: Fr Seamus Nielson, Ben Villarruel, Candy Heidersheid, Paul Kegel, Bill Patzke, Christine Fossen-Rades, Ron Baeten, Mayor Walsh.

Review of meeting minutes - Mary corrected that she needed the materials by that Friday in order to chart the information rather than as stated in the minutes.

Discussion on Levin, Larry made up a cover letter and had staff mail out the packet to the potential sister site. Kathy read the cover letter and the group discussed the time frame when we may expect a response. The package was mailed on February 9 and cost \$14-15 to send, the cover was placed on a city letterhead and he added some additional items he had thought of to the package prior to mailing. Mary suggested that the package may have already arrived depending on how it was sent. Jay suggested adding a few copies of the De Pere Journal to any future mailings, further discussion about whether the Journal can be accessed on-line. Mary suggested following up the package with an email. Discussions about delays between them and us, may take some time for a response. Kathy will send a follow up. Kathy would also like us to include some additional items for these countries who may not even know where Wisconsin is, a state map may be good. The group also thought stuff on service groups may be relevant, along with a list of churches, schools, etc. Larry stated that events are listed on the web site and we have the city video clips. Service groups will be incorporated into the cover letter in place of generic organization related brochures.

Mary gave out information on comparisons. Kathy read the letter from Amal; they would like to be sistered with us. Mary just happens to be going there in two weeks and would be willing to meet with the city officials on our behalf. Mary gave some additional overview on the community - they are a stand-alone city two hours from Gotenborg. Discussed information on comparison, they seem fairly similar and currently have no connections to other sisters. MEGTEC has a company connection in Amal, they feel it would be beneficial to pursue a relationship. Discussions about the potential for Mary to hand deliver a packet, what information/tasks would we expect to be set up. Extended discussions on what specifics Mary would be able to relay. Group felt that it revolved around the activities originally detailed and the goals we had previously prepared, in a recommendation that we are seeking to join with another as a sister city. It was suggested that they may want to establish their own goals and priorities as a starting point for their own discussions.

Kathy passes out copies of our current goals and priorities. Extended discussion about the process and our potential "courtship" of a counterpart. What we should do, where it should start, what are their interests, discussions on youth exchanges, etc. East side schools had previously stated that they would only work through AFS-USA group. Discussion that our potential partners may already use the same group and partners may not have a comfort level with some other unknown entity. The idea is to get that comfort level to develop and allow this group to do their part. Kathy suggested a slow start exchanges limited perhaps to pen pal letters or emails. Jay stated that initially an exchange of two weeks might give high school students the opportunity to gain comfort. National trend is to bring people face to face and could be supported by the state department. Mary suggested that she would like more information to answer questions posed by Amal officials. Discussion about how to field some specific questions and the fact she may not have immediate answers. Group suggested that members of the committee be linked to certain topics. Our priorities give the significance of the efforts on behalf of the group. Larry suggested that the interaction should be informal we are trying to ascertain their interest in this effort and we are talking with a number of different sites to that end.

Jay suggested the possibility of sharing our priorities with them to assist them in developing theirs. Discussion about the goals and that they are available on the web site to anyone that wants them, we don't want to overwhelm the relationship. Mary will take a packet to Amal and will coordinate with Larry to pick it up. Jerilyn suggested this could be a good icebreaker as a form of introduction to our city. Kathy will approach Joe Seroogy for books on the city. Committee suggested that the approach with Amal should be to show we have an interest and are looking at a number of options. Larry suggested that the city if interested may want to perform research on the sister cities program. MEGTEC has about one hundred employees in the plant there. Discussion about the positive influences from a corporate connection. Discussions about community interest and potential funding based on making a selection, currently we do not have many details because we have not made a formal choice.

Kathy presented on Nowy Sacz that it is primarily a big tourist area. Mostly Jewish largest population outside Warsaw and Krakow. They have eleven other sisters including Columbia County. Like most of the East European countries unemployment is high, manufacturing is old and the government may be somewhat harsh. Based on her review probably would not be a good match for us, they would probably expect more from us than they were willing to give. Jim gave another overview of Banska Bystrica. They have lots of Ski resorts, they are another tourist center. Their government is pushing education. They have a project to heat the homes in the area reducing pollutants. They seem to work well with their neighbors. Rail is the primary means of transport. They have several partners and are larger but may be a decent match for us. Mary stated that there may be problems with communicating on a one-to-one. Travel in the area may be difficult but it may be possible to tie with a paper company in the area. It was suggested that the paper council could help in this regard. Group felt that they would like to start a new tie with a city that does not already have a bunch of sisters. The top two choices are currently Levin and Amal but we need to keep looking in case things don't work out.

Need to continue working on our mission and vision statements. Mary suggested starting the next meeting with this item.

Assignments - find a mission and vision that you like on different sites. Highlight what you liked and bring it to the next meeting. Mary passes out some information and will email some packets. Look them over and bring in three favorites with samples. What do you like and dislike in the sister cities mission and vision. Discussions on creating our own documents.

Review of meeting - glad we are down to two, excited about someone going to one of our potential

choices, good, where's the chocolate.

It was suggested that a gift to Amal could be a box of Seroogy's Chocolates, buy it and give the receipt to Larry.

Next meetings are scheduled for Thursday, March 8, 22 at 4:00. Adjourned 5:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

James O. Stupka III

Assistant Fire Chief