CITY OF DE PERE

Date: February 8, 2007

Committee Meeting

Kathy passed out packets of information with the agenda, meeting minutes from 1-18-07, our priorities list, list of goal and activities to date. Jim put up a world map with markings for all the areas we have researched to date (map was courtesy Bill Boyle in Engineering - Thanks Bill)

Meeting called to order at 16:07 by Committee Chair Kathy VanVonderen in the Riverview Room at city hall.

Attending: Jim Stupka, Larry Delo, Lynn Lee, Jerilyn Schad, Bill Patzke, Mary VanVonderen, and Christine Fossen-Rades, Jay Harris - new member (late).

Absent: Fr Seamus Nielson, Ben Villarruel, Candy Heidersheid, Paul Kegel, Ron Baeten, Tracy Hopkins, Mayor Walsh.

Review of meeting minutes. Larry placed an exceptionally large volume of materials into different piles on the table to show what had been collected from around the city. Larry suggested not sending things like the hats and coffee cups until we have a formal sister. Discussion over which maps should be sent and what we had received from Levin.

Jay entered and Kathy started introductions around the group. Kathy stated that Jay had sent a letter to ask if we had settled on New Zealand as a site. Bill gave an overview of the efforts to date especially with regard to Levin. All members contributed commentary to bring Jay up to date.

A discussion ensued about the meaning of economic development between international cities. Jay suggested using the ICMA could assist with the economics, Larry stated we are members. Discussions about potential exchanges Larry cited several examples of current efforts - foods, dairy, alcohol, and other goods where we could develop a 'synergy' that would perpetuate the link. Jay suggested that we could survey the community; Bill stated this had already been done with dismal response. Discussions about the survey and the one response received. Jay suggested that we could compare ourselves to the prime candidates and develop a matrix as such to ascertain our level of compatibility and see if we have similar interests. Discussions ensued over similar type of places and the consensus is that we want to work with someone different enough to make the relationship interesting.

Mary stated that airfare to the City of Levin, New Zealand runs around $1600 to $2400 per person. As a comparison tickets to Prague are around $600, we could send 3-4 people to Europe for what it costs to go to the South Pacific. Discussions about the amount of time to travel as well, trip to New Zealand will take almost 24 hours as compared to 8 to Europe, may require a two week trip to accomplish anything of value. Christine suggested that the Green Bay area is not really very diverse and we could learn a lot from a culture that had incorporated a greater difference into their
Kathy reiterated our goals economic development, youth and education, and communications were our first choices of activities that we must have as part of the fundamental interaction. There was a lengthy discussion on what communications was intended to mean. Was this an English only speaking country? Larry suggested that many places have English as a second language or utilizing some other vehicle. Further discussion about development of a relational matrix that could be done as part of a school project.

Kathy read the letter sent to Levin. Discussion on where the package should be sent, decision back to sender. Further discussions on diversity and what we were looking for. Larry suggested trying the Hmong population for a connection. Discussion on maintaining focus so we are not starting over again. Larry needed to know what items to send to Levin, he write a cover letter and send off the packet this week. Jay asked about grants programs, Kathy stated that we had looked into them but not formalized anything because we had not made a decision.

Jim gave another brief overview of Banska Bystrica. Mary had a former boss that was familiar with the area and more details. The country is very poor with communist era manufacturing capabilities. The area has 16 sister cities already with one being in the US. Mary will be going to the area and offered to stop in and discuss the potential while she is in Europe. Karlovy Vary has been visited most by the people from the US connected to MEGTEC, it currently has a sister city in Karlstad, California. The city may have a name connection to the city in the US. Mary's former president said it is 'a neat old city' in an old area. History dates back hundreds of years. 100 thousand people may not wish to link with us. Nowy Sacz is linked to Columbia County and has 12-13 partners already. Amal, Sweden - Mary is going there and feels it would be an almost perfect match. Culture is similar to De Pere they learn English in grade school. 1 or more of our group should go to whatever city we decide on prior to formally establishing an official sister connection.

Discussion about the numerous cities we have looked at and where we might find a connection. Discussion about approaching the schools to develop a matrix. We could take on one place each and input the information on our matrix to develop the community profile connection. Develop two beneficial and two negative issues for each of our key areas. Get the information to Mary she will prepare a visual chart for the 22nd. Match the information against the ten goals - Jim will do Banska Bystrica, Bill will do Levin, Lynn will take care of Karlovy Vary, Kathy will handle Nowy Sacz, Mary will handle Amal.

Assignments - Put together your information.

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

Review of meeting - see continued movement; feels like we are starting over again.

Respectfully submitted,

James O. Stupka III
Assistant Fire Chief