

City of Keene
New Hampshire

PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, March 12, 2024

5:00 PM

**2nd Floor Conference Room,
City Hall**

Members Present:

John Mitchell, Chair
William Schoefmann, Vice Chair
Derek Blunt
Doris McCollester
Gregg Kleiner
Gerald Lins, Alternate
Councilor Andrew Madison (arrived at 5:17
PM)

Staff Present:

Helen Mattson, Executive Assistant

Members Not Present:

George Hansel
Michael Giacomo
Dawn Thomas-Smith
Mari Brunner

Mayor Jay Kahn

1) Call to Order

Chair Mitchell called the meeting to order at 5:08 PM. He welcomed Mayor Kahn and guests in attendance.

2) Roll Call – Appoint Alternates (if required)

Roll call was conducted.

3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting – February 13, 2024

Mr. Kleiner made a motion to accept the minutes of February 13, 2024. Mr. Schoefmann seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

Chair Mitchell stated that he is changing the order of the agenda, moving now to 4)B) Update on Student Exchange – Derek, followed by 5) Communications.

4) Board Business

A) Update on Student Exchange – Derek

Mr. Blunt reported that the student exchange was wonderful. He continued that all parties involved had an excellent time, and MC2 received great feedback from their German visitors, who are excited about this new exchange between the schools. Keene students and teachers will be going to Einbeck from June 15 to 28. They will soon receive the official itinerary from Einbeck. Chair Mitchell asked what support they need from the PCC. Mr. Blunt replied maybe transportation to the airport, but he is not sure yet; he will get back to them on that. Chair Mitchell stated that if a student is missing a needed item for travel, the PCC could help. Mr. Blunt replied there are no immediate concerns.

5) Communications

Chair Mitchell stated that Albert Thormann (from Einbeck) recently passed away. He continued that many PCC members knew him. He was an amazing person who truly believed in the idea of the exchange and worked very hard to make it a reality. Chair Mitchell spoke more about Mr. Thormann and how much he will be missed. He continued that the PCC has a message from the Einbeck committee and one from the Einbeck mayor's office, which have been translated. The PCC will send a message back, which he has drafted and would like PCC members' feedback or approval on. It will go to the Einbeck committee, the mayor's office, and Mr. Thormann's family.

Discussion ensued with approval of the message and kind words in commemoration of Mr. Thormann. Discussion ensued about sharing the news of Mr. Thormann's passing on the PCC's Facebook page, and a photo of him. Mr. Schoefmann explained how Rebecca Landry, Deputy City Manager does a lot of the social media management and can assist the PCC with this. Ms. Mattson and Mr. Schoefmann will work on this.

Chair Mitchell stated that the next bit of news is that last summer, they spent some time talking with the House of Youth, a sort of community center that caters to young people, with a kitchen, sports and exercise, music, arts, and more. He gave more information about it, and continued that the woman who runs it, Kerstin Hillebrecht, has been in contact with him about bringing a dance group over. It is modern dance and the participants are 12 to 24 years old. They want to come to Keene for about a week. He has spent a lot of time trying to find a group (in Keene) that could match up with them. Kristen Leach is interested and wants to talk more about it. It is exciting.

Andrew Madison arrived at 5:17 PM.

Chair Mitchell continued that Ms. Hillebrecht wants to bring 15 youth to Keene, but it might be best to start with smaller groups. Who knows where this will go, but it is a positive start. He

meets with Ms. Leach on Wednesday and will communicate more with Ms. Hillebrecht after that.

Chair Mitchell asked Mr. Blunt if he had information to share about the teaching assistant (from Einbeck) who is interested in coming to Keene this fall. Mr. Blunt replied that he does not have an update. He continued that he knows there was some communication between someone from MC2 but he has not been part of that correspondence. He will look into it. Chair Mitchell replied that Elizabeth Cardine might come talk with the PCC about this at a future meeting. He spoke about how multiple exchanges are picking up speed.

Discussion continued about the potential dance exchange, and the age of the students. Chair Mitchell spoke of how Ms. Hillebrecht might be working with the college (in Keene) as well. PCC members asked about the timing of the dance exchange. Chair Mitchell replied that Ms. Hillebrecht wants October 2 to 10, spending the last two days in Boston. Discussion continued.

Mr. Schoefmann asked if the Mayor wanted to say anything. Chair Mitchell added that Mayor Kahn should feel free to speak up at any time.

Mayor Kahn stated that his heritage is German and he has been to Germany many times, but not to Einbeck. He continued that if there were an opportunity for him to go to Einbeck and meet the people who are influential to the exchange relationship, he would gladly do so. He has interest in the soccer exchange as well.

Chair Mitchell stated that his one message to Mayor Kahn would be that the pace is picking up (with the exchanges/the partnership). He continued that the more people he talks with in the community, the more people have heard or have had a positive experience with it. He thinks it is exponential growth. It is something for everyone to be aware of, as this builds.

6) Board Business

A) Einbeck Exchange – Continued Discussion About Travel Plans for October

Chair Mitchell asked to double check the list of people interested in going on the trip. He asked if Ms. McCollester, Ms. Mattson, Mr. Schoefmann, and Councilor Madison are still planning on going. They all replied yes. Chair Mitchell added that Mayor Kahn and (his wife) are also on the list. He continued that the list is at 11, and they have 5 spots available. The time is coming to do outreach to potential people they think would be important to invite. Discussion ensued about potential brewers, public service/police officers, a Rotary Club member, people in Keene who hosted, someone from KSC, a dance person, and/or others. Chair Mitchell stated that if they have two brewers and one Rotary Club member, that leaves two more spots. Discussion continued and some PCC members stated that they could step back if needed.

B) Media Outreach – PCC Facebook Link to Chamber of Commerce – Dawn

C) Update (if any) - Soccer Exchange – John

Chair Mitchell stated that an email went to Councilor Kate Bosley and they are awaiting a reply. He continued that that is the only update.

D) Update – guidelines/expectations for people from Keene traveling to Einbeck – Mr. Giacomo, Mr. Lins, Ms. McCollester, and Councilor Madison

Mr. Lins stated that he wrote up the working group's ideas for guidelines/expectations. He continued that it includes what you would expect, like decorum, understanding that people put in a lot of work, refraining from complaining, letting folks know if you have restrictions, and more. These are not finalized. He did not include, but thought about including something for the travelers about timeliness, being respectful of hosts, staying in the host's space instead of at a hotel, and respecting the hosts' request for people to travel to the same place at the same time. With more time they could come up with expectations of hosts on this end, such as respecting guests' restrictions (religious, food, timeliness, and so on and so forth). It is a work in progress.

Chair Mitchell asked if the working group has another meeting planned or needs one. Discussion ensued. Mr. Lins asked the group to read the draft he wrote and send him feedback, and he will revise it. He continued that the full PCC can then look at it again.

7) Reports

A) Treasurer Report

Mr. Kleiner reported that the treasurer's report is the same as last month. He continued that the appropriations account is \$13,592. The other account has about \$14,488. They might end up with more money due to some invoices coming in.

Mr. Schoefmann made a motion to accept the treasurer's report. Councilor Madison seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

8) New Business

A) Pumpkin Fest (October 12) – further discussion/volunteers

Chair Mitchell stated that (fundraising at) Pumpkin Fest was successful last year, and the PCC expanded its outreach in the community. He continued that the challenge this year is that some PCC members will not be here for Pumpkin Fest. He asked if it is realistic to find people who can volunteer (on October 12). They will need about six people. Discussion ensued. Chair Mitchell stated that it looks like they can do it, with the combination of PCC members who are available and others. Mr. Blunt offered to gather MC2 student volunteers. Chair Mitchell stated that someone needs to start soliciting donations now. Discussion ensued about potential sources

of ingredient/supply donations, and what the PCC has received in the past. Mr. Kleiner offered to contact someone.

Chair Mitchell asked if there was any other new business.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that he will reach out to two airlines (to find out about group ticket rates). He asked which airline Chair Mitchell has already reached out to, so he does not duplicate efforts. Chair Mitchell replied and brief discussion ensued about airline prices.

Mayor Kahn asked if the PCC would like him to reach out to the Rotary Club. Chair Mitchell replied that the PCC would appreciate that, and they are particularly hoping to find a Rotary member who is interested in building an exchange with Einbeck. Brief discussion ensued.

9) Next Meeting – April 9, 2024

10) More Time

A) Fundraising Ideas/Opportunities

B) Update on other future exchange ideas – Rugby/YMCA/Youth Centers – Pickle Ball - Dance

11) Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 5:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
Helen Mattson, Staff Liaison