

City of Keene
New Hampshire

PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, May 12, 2020

5:00 PM

Remote Meeting via Zoom

Members Present:

John Mitchell, Chair
Dr. Delene White
Will Schoefmann
Mari Brunner
Kürt Blomquist
Dawn Thomas-Smith
Michael Giacomo, Councilor (arrived at 5:03 PM)

Staff Present:

Helen Mattson, Staff Liaison

Members Not Present:

George S. Hansel, Mayor

1) Call to Order

Chair Mitchell called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

2) Roll Call – Appoint Alternates (if required)

3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting – March 10, 2020

Mayor Hansel made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of March 10, 2020. Mr. Schoefmann seconded the motion, which passed by a unanimous vote.

Councilor Giacomo arrived at 5:03 PM.

4) Board Business

a. Student Exchange – Update on Postponement – John

Chair Mitchell stated that he and the teacher in Einbeck email each other weekly, just thinking about ideas for what the student exchange might look like next time or when it may happen. He continued that there is really nothing to report right now.

b. Planning for October Exchange in Einbeck

Chair Mitchell stated that the report from Jürgen Herbst is that the Eulenfest has been canceled. He continued that Mr. Herbst wants them to do the exchange as soon as they can, but of course, no one knows when that will be yet. Einbeck is under fairly severe quarantine conditions.

Chair Mitchell asked if he should have Mr. Herbst send an official letter about this, or if it is just common sense. Mr. Blomquist suggested that Mayor Hanel and Ms. Mattson write an official note to Einbeck's Mayor, saying the Keene delegation will not be coming this year but they look forward to next year. Councilor Giacomo stated that he researched the coronavirus regulations and re-opening timelines, and it looks like intra-Europe travel will resume by September, so he doubts there would be international travel from the US allowed in October. Chair Mitchell agreed that sending a formal note could not hurt.

1. Future Exchanges – YMCA, Dance, Rugby

Chair Mitchell asked if anyone had any information to report. Mr. Schoefmann stated that he has yet to pitch the rugby idea. He continued that he imagines the idea would garner interest among the club locally. When the time is right, he will plant the seed, with the understanding that everything is in a holding pattern right now and it is unknown when everything will launch again. Chair Mitchell replied yes, everyone is interested; it is just a challenging time to start new things like this.

2. Dedication of Einbeck's old synagogue meeting space to coincide with October visit – delegation from Cohen Center

Chair Mitchell stated that he was surprised to learn there was more to this than what he first heard – he has learned that this will not necessarily be a religious space for religious people. It will be more of a community space. Probably the PCC should find out more before they involve people from the community, so they know what they are pitching.

Mayor Hansel stated that he thinks the Cohen Center is in touch with someone in Einbeck, because they had information about this and already knew about the postponement of the dedication. He continued that the Cohen Center is already connected and the PCC can thus support this effort but does not need to drive it.

Mr. Blomquist stated that he will check in with Tom White, who is a friend of his. He continued that yes, the Cohen Center is involved. The point of the synagogue dedication is to commemorate the Jewish population that was in Einbeck prior to World War II.

Dr. White stated that her research trip this summer has been canceled, but she can still try and be in touch with people she knows in Einbeck who might have information about what is happening, in the informal side.

c. Discuss Promotional Activities/Media Opportunities to Help Promote PCC Events and Exchanges – Dawn

Ms. Thomas-Smith stated that she thought they could post a well wishes sentiment to their friends in Einbeck, maybe with a piece of artwork. She continued that she was also going to reach out to Wally Secord to see if he has old photos to share. She asked for others' thoughts. Mr. Schoefmann, Dr. White, and Chair Mitchell agreed with the idea.

5) Communications

Mayor Hansel stated that he received a letter, and he acknowledged that he received it, but did not see the translation. He continued that it was a commemoration of the 75 year anniversary of WWII and probably deserves a more formal response than the one he gave. Mr. Blomquist stated that he has the translation that Dr. White did. He shared Dr. Sabine Michalek's letter (original, in German) on the screen, and Dr. White read it aloud in English. The letter states that May 8 will be the 75th anniversary of the end of WWII, and Dr. Michalek will be displaying a wreath with a ribbon that says "Our common responsibility for the future, for freedom, for democracy, and for a peaceful and humane world." Dr. White stated that partner cities are listed, including the City of Keene, and Einbeck is asking for the City of Keene's recognition and acknowledgment since the City of Keene will be on the ribbon.

Mayor Hansel showed the letter that he sent (or has prepared to send) on the screen, thanking Dr. Michalek and expressing the City of Keene's agreement with the commemoration. He stated that the response includes "This is a wonderful way to remember the freedoms we all fought for to ensure democracy, liberty, and world peace." PCC members thanked him. Discussion ensued about the wording of the letter, and Mr. Blomquist and Dr. White spoke about how to Germany, this is a solemn day of atonement and it is complicated. Mayor Hansel stated that Ms. Mattson is telling him the letter was already sent. He continued that he can take the committee's advice into account in future correspondence. Chair Mitchell stated that he is sure the appropriate emotions were sent.

Chair Mitchell stated that he hopes the City/PCC are doing everything they are supposed to, in terms of communicating with Einbeck. He continued that Einbeck keeps Keene in touch with everything that is going on there, and he hopes Keene does the same for them.

6) Reports

a. Treasurer Report – Delene

Dr. White stated that there is no new information. She continued that the former balance is the same.

Mr. Blomquist made a motion to accept the Treasurer Report. Mr. Schoefmann seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

Mr. Blomquist stated that tonight is the budget cycle for the City. He continued that under the Mayor and City Council's cost center of unclassified expenses, the PCC appropriation of \$5,000 is part of that budget submission at this point. They may want to keep an eye on it just in case there are questions or concerns during the budget review process.

7) New Business
a. Fundraising Idea

Chair Mitchell asked if anyone had fundraising ideas to discuss. Mayor Hansel stated that it is tough to think about right now with everything else going on. He suggests they revisit this in a couple months.

b. Review Rules of Order

Mayor Hansel stated that they can do this next month. Mr. Schoefmann asked for a reminder of what they are doing. Mayor Hansel replied that they were going to compare this committee's Rules of Order with those of other committees, to see if the PCC wants to make changes. For example, do they have to go through the formality of accepting every report with a vote?

Chair Mitchell asked if this should be on next month's agenda. Others agreed. Chair Mitchell asked if Mayor Hansel could talk about it at the next meeting. Mayor Hansel agreed and stated that Ms. Brunner's input would be valuable too. Ms. Brunner replied yes, she would be happy to share examples from other committees. She will send information to Ms. Mattson to put in the next agenda packet.

8) Next Meeting: June 9, 2020

Chair Mitchell stated that he assumes the next meeting will be held via Zoom as well. Ms. Mattson replied yes.

9) More Time:
10) Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 5:29 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker