

City of Keene
New Hampshire

PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, November 9, 2021

5:00 PM

**3rd Floor Conference Room
City Hall**

Members Present:

John Mitchell, Chair
Will Schoefmann, Vice Chair
Mari Brunner
Dawn Thomas-Smith
Gregory Kleiner
George Hansel, Mayor

Staff Present:

Helen Mattson, Staff Liaison

Members Not Present:

Michael Giacomo, Councilor
Kürt Blomquist, Public Works Director
Lena Kridlo
Dr. Delene White

1. Call to Order

Chair Mitchell called the meeting to order at 5:03 PM.

2. Roll Call – Appoint Alternates (if required)

Roll call was conducted.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting: June 8, 2021

Mr. Schoefmann made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of June 8, 2021. Mayor Hansel seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

4. Board Business

a. Appoint new treasurer to replace Delene who has resigned

Chair Mitchell stated that new member Greg Kleiner has offered to be the new treasurer.

Mr. Schoefmann made a motion to appoint Mr. Kleiner as treasurer. Ms. Thomas-Smith seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

b. Student pen-pal ideas – High School 16-18 year olds (place on more time)

Chair Mitchell stated that because of COVID he would like to place this item on more time.

c. Fundraising Ideas/Opportunities

i. Survey Gmail address for sharing (donate button has been created)

Chair Mitchell asked for confirmation that the “donate” button has been created. Ms. Mattson replied yes, and it is working, although there have been no donations yet. She continued that this committee has not gathered in a long time.

Ms. Brunner asked if it is correct that they have not put the survey out yet. Ms. Mattson replied that is correct. She continued that she believes they were waiting for more PCC members’ suggestions for edits. Discussion ensued.

Ms. Mattson stated that Dr. White created the survey originally, but she will not be back until January. She continued that the problem currently is that there is no PCC email account. The IT Department cannot create one. Mr. Schoefmann replied that he will connect with Dr. White, and he will create a PCC Gmail account. Chair Mitchell asked if that would be through the City. Mr. Schoefmann replied yes, administered by Ms. Mattson, himself, and probably the PCC Treasurer.

ii. Update on Holiday Market (place on more time)

Ms. Brunner stated that Dr. White was the driving force for the holiday market. She continued that however, they were stalling anyway because they were looking for someone to take the lead. She thinks there may be someone, not affiliated with the PCC, who is willing to take the lead. She is a local business owner who separately had the same idea for a holiday market and found out that the PCC had also been talking about it. She is hoping to do it not this year, because it is too big to plan in a short amount of time, but next year. It would be great if this committee could support that effort and help promote it.

Ms. Mattson stated that she heard that the Food Festival will be happening again on June 4. She continued that because that was lucrative for the PCC, they might want to get on the list for that. Mr. Kleiner replied that they are already on the list. He continued that he is the Treasurer for the Keene Young Professionals Network (KYPN), and the topic of Monday’s meeting is starting the ball rolling on the Food Festival.

Chair Mitchell stated that he wonders if there is any connection between the Food Festival and the Holiday Market. He continued that the Holiday Market might have room for a Food Festival

experience, like the one that was held this summer. Ms. Brunner replied yes, part of the idea was to have a mix of vendors - food, crafts, and retail, and non-profit organizations.

d. Future Exchange Ideas – YMCA, dance, rugby

Mayor Hansel stated that working with the YMCA is a great idea. He continued that once international travel is possible, the PCC will probably have a surge of interest. Mr. Schoefmann replied that different countries have different quarantine and travel rules. Mayor Hansel stated that the YMCA would be great to focus on youth. Teenagers for the past two years have not been able to do any of this and will be ready to do this kind of stuff.

Mr. Schoefmann asked if anyone wanted to talk to the YMCA. Mayor Hansel replied that he will do that, but not right now. He talks with the CEO quite regularly. Mr. Schoefmann asked if they should flesh out what kind of focus the exchange should have. Chair Mitchell replied that maybe it could be just a general sports exchange. Through the high school exchange, they have two or three sports groups. One is a gym/fitness training center (in Germany) that would like to do an exchange. Mayor Hansel replied that he will ask the YMCA.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that the rugby group is talking about plans for travel opportunities. He continued that he will probably know more after the group's general meeting, which will happen in the winter. He will probably have more information to report out in the future.

Chair Mitchell asked if he thinks it would be about four or five people who would want to go to Germany, or if it would potentially be a team. Mr. Schoefmann replied that they would set up a tour, staying somewhere in Einbeck, then there are some lower division teams that he thinks are in ["our club's" – insert name? Is it Monadnock Rugby Football Club?] realm of competition. He would contact people and try to set something up. Einbeck does not have rugby but there are many grassroots things all around the area.

Mayor Hansel stated that when the Germans were here, they had talked about doing a hiking/adventure exchange. He continued that he could imagine they could take a group up into the White Mountains, for a hiking and camping type thing, or go to the coast of Maine. The older Germans who were here thought that would interest the younger people in Einbeck. Ms. Thomas-Smith agreed; she spoke with someone who was interested in hiking when she was here. Discussion continued about the possibilities. Ms. Mattson stated that some of the people from Einbeck were very interested in going to the ocean/coast.

5. Discuss Promotional Activities/Media Opportunities to help promote PCC events and exchanges

6. Communications

Chair Mitchell stated that he received an email from Jürgen Herbst yesterday, congratulating Mayor Hansel on his success. He continued that the next thing Mr. Herbst wanted to get to right away is to talk about when to start up some exchanges. He is eager to move on that. The news media make it sound like Germany is shut down, but Mr. Herbst says that in this region, they are doing sports groups, restaurants are open, and there has not been a strong follow-up on masks and distancing. Mr. Herbst thinks it is opening up more, and that is causing him to think more about exchanges.

Chair Mitchell continued that Mr. Herbst also reminded Keene to keep a spot open on the calendar. Maybe in the second weekend of October 2022 a Keene delegation would go to Einbeck. That probably would match up to the trip they did not take a year ago. He (Chair Mitchell) suggests the PCC put that on the calendar or agenda for next time.

Ms. Brunner asked if the trip is usually for a week or ten days. Chair Mitchell replied that it depends. It can be a week or two. There is a large festival in the region during this time, and representatives from Einbeck's other two partner cities will be there. Einbeck has not held the festival for two years, so this one should be big.

Ms. Mattson stated that she believes the festival is October 14 and 15 or maybe October 7 and 8. Discussion ensued about the dates. Chair Mitchell stated that he will clarify the dates with Mr. Herbst.

Chair Mitchell asked if there are other communications they should be aware of. Mr. Schoefmann asked if they should plan on a social media post for Christmas like the one they did last year. Ms. Brunner replied that that is the most popular post on their social media page. She continued that Lena Kridlo did the German translation. Maybe she would do it again. Mr. Schoefmann replied that they can ask her.

Ms. Thomas-Smith stated that just before the meeting started, she shared (with Ms. Mattson) an SD card that Wally Secord gave to the PCC. She continued that it was a multi-month effort for Mr. Secord and his wife to go through several years' worth of photos (and choose some to share with the PCC). The photos are in the PCC's Google drive and on the SD card. They can potentially use these photos for promotions.

Mayor Hansel asked how old the Einbeck/Keene partnership is. He asked if there is any kind of anniversary coming up. Ms. Mattson replied that it started in the summer of 2000. Mayor Hansel asked if there have been exchanges every year. Ms. Mattson replied that she thinks it was every other year. Ms. Thomas-Smith replied that they have a list somewhere. Discussion ensued. Mayor Hansel stated that they could say this is the 20th year of exchanges, discounting the pandemic year when there were none. Discussion continued and Chair Mitchell stated that it will be easier for the PCC to promote its history once they themselves are sure of it. Ms. Mattson replied that she will print out the list.

7. Reports

a. Treasurer Report

Ms. Mattson reported that the balance in the main account is \$19,103.43. She continued that the last deposit they made was the funds from the Taste of Keene fundraiser, which was \$452.95. The PCC has \$5,000 in its appropriations account. That is the amount of money that goes into the account each July if the City Council approves it. The PCC has not yet spent any of that. Most expenses that come out of the appropriations account could be for a fundraiser but it is also for exchanges when Keene has people from Einbeck here.

Ms. Brunner stated that the money in the appropriations account could be used for, for example, renting a bus to bring people to the coast. Ms. Thomas-Smith stated that she thinks it could also be used for travel to and from the airport, when people from Keene go to Einbeck. She continued that when people from Einbeck come here, the PCC spends more of this money, on welcome events, farewell events, and so on and so forth. Ms. Mattson replied yes, and it really does accumulate. She continued that they usually spent about \$10,000 for all the events when people came to visit. Ms. Thomas-Smith stated that transportation is usually the biggest portion of it. Ms. Mattson agreed.

Ms. Brunner asked if the Parks, Recreation, and Facilities Department would let them borrow the bus. She asked how many people from Einbeck generally come. Mayor Hansel and Ms. Mattson replied somewhere between 8 and 10. Ms. Thomas-Smith replied that they have had upward of 25 people, however, for things like chorale groups. Discussion continued, and Chair Mitchell stated that they have to be a little bit careful, like if people's spouses and children come. He continued that of course the PCC would want to host them all, but [it might not be possible]. Transportation worked well with student exchanges; three or four responsible people with minivans can move many people. Something the PCC will have to look into is what is appropriate and what is not, regarding private drivers and private vehicles, because yes, the travel costs accumulate quickly.

Mr. Schoefmann made a motion to accept the treasurer's report. Ms. Thomas-Smith seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

8. New Business

Mr. Schoefmann stated that by the next PCC meeting, a draft of the social media post will probably be ready for everyone to look at.

Chair Mitchell asked if someone will be looking for the PCC's history for when the exchanges have happened. He continued that that could be on the agenda. Ms. Mattson replied yes, she will add "look at exchange ratios," for new business. She has the document of the timeline, but just does not have it printed yet.

Ms. Mattson continued that that “greeting” is another item of new business for next time. She asked if there is anything else. Chair Mitchell replied that considering Keene’s October 2022 trip to Germany could be an item of new business. Ms. Mattson agreed.

9. Next Meeting – December 14, 2021

10. More Time

a. Review Rules of Order and Compare with Other Advisory Boards

Chair Mitchell asked Mayor Hansel about this. Mayor Hansel replied that he can remove it from the more item agenda.

b. Student Exchange – Update on Postponement

Chair Mitchell stated that they can remove this from the more time agenda as well. It is already covered under “Board Business.”

c. Planning for Future Exchanges with Einbeck 2022

Mr. Schoefmann stated that this will be an actual agenda at the next meeting, (so this can come off the more time agenda as well.)

11. Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 5:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute-taker

Reviewed by,
Helen Mattson, Administrative Assistant