

City of Keene  
New Hampshire

PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, September 20, 2022

5:00 PM

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room  
City Hall

**Members Present:**

John Mitchell, Chair  
William Schoefmann, Vice Chair  
Mayor George Hansel  
Councilor Michael Giacomo  
Dawn Thomas-Smith  
Mari Brunner

**Staff Present:**

Helen Mattson, Executive Assistant

**Members Not Present:**

Kürt Blomquist, Ex-Officio  
Doris McCollester  
Gregg Kleiner

1) **Call to Order**

Chair Mitchell called the meeting to order at 5:06 PM.

2) **Roll Call – Appoint Alternates (if required)**

Roll call was conducted.

3) **Minutes of the Previous Meeting – August 9, 2022**

Mayor Hansel made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of August 9, 2022. Mr. Schoefmann seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

4) **Board Business**

A) **Discuss Stonewall Farm Octoberfest - opportunity to participate – past member’s availability for Saturday, October 8<sup>th</sup> – John**

Chair Mitchell stated that he met with Rebecca Todd and Gina De Santis at Stonewall Farm. He continued that they are in the early stages of [planning an event for] October 8, 2022, from 1:00 to 5:00 PM, and expect to have a beer garden, live band, and more. They put out a general request for “anything the [PCC] thinks would be an appropriate food” for them to be offering.

They want the PCC to donate swag, and they are offering the PCC a booth. He hopes to have the booth staffed. In the future, the PCC would be open to do some sort of fundraising and other participation. In addition, Stonewall Farm is planning a winter festival of some sort. They are not sure if it will happen this winter, but it will at least happen next year.

Discussion ensued about Stonewall Farm's request of the PCC. Members determined that the PCC is "low on swag" at the moment. Ms. Brunner noted that the posters for the Octoberfest event mention Einbeck as the partner city to Keene. Discussion continued about who is available on October 8. Ms. Thomas-Smith stated that she can drop stuff off in the morning but is unavailable in the afternoon to staff the table.

Chair Mitchell stated that Ms. De Santis approached him about doing a soccer exchange. He continued that she has coached and played at significant levels, and has participated in exchanges with England. She and Wally (Secord) know each other and plan to meet this week to discuss some specifics. Chair Mitchell gave more information about Ms. De Santis's interest, ideas, and plans, and continued that he will meet with her again before leaving [for Einbeck]. She seems to have done some research and has already addressed some of Mr. Secord's questions. He believes this will be a positive experience.

#### **B) Planning for Keene Delegation to Einbeck – October 7-15, 2022**

Chair Mitchell stated that there will be a meeting on Friday, and he and Mr. Schoefmann will be there. He asked that they brainstorm five or six topics they think should be brought up [while they are in Einbeck] for future exchanges. Discussion ensued, and members listed soccer, chorale, brewery, Keene State College, MC2, rugby, City departments (Police, Fire, Parks & Rec, Public Works), YMCA combined with Parks & Rec, and agriculture.

Ms. Thomas-Smith stated that "Future Exchange Ideas – Rubgy, YMCA, dance" has been on the "more time" agenda for a long time. She asked if dance is still a possibility. Ms. Brunner replied that that referred to a dance community she had been a part of during the COVID-19 pandemic, but that group/her participation has ended. Ms. Mattson asked if they want to take that off the agenda. Discussion continued about other local dance communities. Chair Mitchell stated that they have plenty of topics on the list.

Councilor Giacomo asked if the PCC had confirmed who will be at the PCC's booth at Octoberfest at Stonewall Farm. Mr. Schoefmann replied that he is working on it. Discussion continued, and members noted that there are potentially former PCC members who could help.

#### **C) Discuss "Taste of Keene" for next year. Brats and Kraut sales – potential free use of grill and donation for brats and kraut**

Mr. Schoefmann stated that they were talking about selling brats and kraut like they used to. Discussion ensued about the possibilities and logistics. Regarding how much money the PCC

might make, Councilor Giacomo spoke about the range of restaurants' profits and stated that potentially, the first year, the PCC could make about \$100 to \$1,000 if the weather is nice. Discussion continued about people's ideas, and about insurance. Councilor Giacomo stated that the first year, the organizers misunderstood and thought that because Machina Arts was hosting the beer garden, their insurance covered everyone in the beer garden, but that is not the case. Machina Arts' insurance covers food vendors, but not beer vendors. Ms. Mattson stated that the City Attorney does not want the liability on the City. Discussion ensued about the possibility of a local company sponsoring the PCC at this event.

Chair Mitchell asked if someone can be in charge of this. Councilor Giacomo replied that although he is no longer affiliated with the Keene Young Professionals Network (YPN), he would be happy to do it, although Gregg Kleiner would be the obvious choice because he is still on the YPN board. Ms. Thomas-Smith stated that if a subcommittee is formed she is happy to participate. Mr. Schoefmann and Ms. Mattson stated that if it is called a "working group," that is great. Chair Mitchell asked the Taste of Keene working group to report back in two meetings with some general ideas.

**D) Pumpkin Fest participation for next year**

Councilor Giacomo stated that he is the interim president of the Let It Shine board, and there is a lot going on – the Keene Sentinel had a headline saying "Pumpkin Fest is Back," and everyone who read just the headline and not the article thinks that Pumpkin Fest is back *this* year, when it is not. People are asking the Let It Shine board many questions, but they do not have information yet about next year, and will not have any new information for at least a couple months.

Chair Mitchell replied that they will move this item to "more time."

**E) PCC Exchange Survey/Facebook updates – provide access to Facebook page**

Ms. Brunner stated that they have not pushed the survey in a long time. Mr. Schoefmann replied that it probably should be repeated every couple of months. Ms. Brunner replied that when they initially were talking about the survey, they were talking about trying to collect stories and photos that they could use in their efforts to continue to get funding. Mr. Schoefmann agreed and continued that it was both about the feel-good factor and about potentially getting donations. Discussion ensued about how combining the request for stories and photos with a request for donations was not so effective, and about possibly creating a list of people to reach out to individually to ask for donations. Chair Mitchell stated that this could be another working group, to look at what the ask would be.

Ms. Brunner asked what the group wants to do about the survey. Do they want to continue trying to collect stories and photos? She does not know if they actually received any yet. Ms. Mattson replied that she put Mr. Secord's photos up. Discussion continued.

Ms. Brunner asked if the PCC received funding this year. Ms. Mattson replied that she has not been able to get into the software yet to find out where they are at. Councilor Giacomo replied that he is fairly sure the PCC got the funding. Discussion continued about the PCC's balance and funding, and how the PCC will need more funding if there are multiple exchanges. Mr. Schoefmann spoke of how the PCC wants to support all the exchanges but it will depend on the people/groups making presentations to the PCC to explain what they have in mind for the exchange and what their needs are, so the PCC can determine how to best use its funding, sort of like a grant process. Chair Mitchell replied that it is as the Mayor has been saying, they need direct asks; the people coming to the committee will need to present what their needs are, and it is up to the committee to balance what those needs are versus what people have accomplished on their own. Hopefully there will be a lot of organizations interested in exchanges, and doing their own work. Mr. Schoefmann asked if there should be deadlines. Chair Mitchell replied that that would be tough and might stifle groups too much. Mr. Schoefmann replied that he meant for budgeting purposes for the PCC. Discussion continued. Ms. Brunner asked if it is correct that most of the PCC's money is used when they host. Ms. Mattson replied yes. Ms. Brunner asked if the PCC has ever helped fund people going on exchanges. Others replied yes and gave examples. Chair Mitchell replied that mostly, the PCC funds people who are hosting [Einbeck people] here. Ms. Brunner asked if this means only people who can afford to go to Einbeck get to participate. Councilor Giacomo replied that other organizations can do their own fundraising to help offset the costs; it is just that the *City* was not providing that funding. Chair Mitchell stated that regarding students who were short on money, there was never a case where someone who came to all the meetings and participated in everything did not find a way to go on the trip.

Ms. Thomas-Smith stated that she knows there was a question a while ago about whether the PCC was properly using its funds and they went through this whole process. She continued that there must be a document of this somewhere, but basically they said that what they approved would be appropriate use of funds, such as travel to and from the airport, taking care of official delegations, welcoming, goodbyes, gifts, and so on and so forth. They have a structure for what they typically provide that falls within the purview of the committee, and then the group that is participating typically handles anything that falls outside of that. Others agreed.

Councilor Giacomo stated that something else to consider is that some of the types of exchanges/groups that might do exchanges would be larger than others, people-wise. For example, a brewery exchange would probably be four or five people, not twenty, whereas a soccer team would be larger. Ms. Thomas-Smith replied yes, and on some exchanges there are also family members. Councilor Giacomo stated that they should make some estimate for what the cost is per person. Discussion continued.

Ms. Thomas-Smith stated that regarding the Facebook page, she saw in the meeting minutes that Mr. Blomquist had asked about getting access to the Facebook page so people could post content while visiting Einbeck and she thinks she saw her name attached to that. She continued that she is happy to do that, but there are multiple admins. Ms. Mattson replied that she, Ms. Thomas-

Smith, and Ms. Brunner are admins. Ms. Brunner asked if she is the only one on the trip who is an admin. Ms. Mattson replied yes. Ms. Brunner asked if someone else going on the trip could be an admin as well. Councilor Giacomo suggested Danya Landis. Ms. Mattson stated that she thinks she has her email address.

**F) Brewery and Rugby connections – Will**

Mr. Schoefmann gave some information about people he will be talking with. It is in the works. Councilor Giacomo shared some ideas as well. He spoke of how microbreweries have not really taken off in Einbeck, but they have a big brewery. Ms. Brunner asked how many breweries are in Keene. Councilor Giacomo replied four in Keene proper, and three or four others in surrounding towns. Discussion ensued.

**5) Communications**

**A) Email Communication to Michael Klug, Head Chocolatier, L.A. Burdick’s – John**

Chair Mitchell stated that his wife was picking up some items at L.A. Burdick’s for the Einbeck trip and got into conversation with the person behind the counter, who expressed interest in this and shared that the chocolatier is from Germany. He continued that he sent the chocolatier a cold letter and hopes to hear back.

Chair Mitchell stated that he got a communication from Karen Salzer. A few months ago he reported that a youth choir in Einbeck was looking to come to Keene for three or four days. He continued that this group has made several trips to the US and in the past, they have paid their way, including hotels. During the PCC’s previous conversation, they had thought Keene could host them for at least a night. Karen Salzer emailed him and would like to meet with the Keene delegation while they are in Einbeck. He thinks it would be close to 30 people needing host families, or a hotel if necessary, but they would like to stay with host families to build community. Discussion ensued.

**6) Reports**

**A) Treasurer Report**

**7) New Business**

**A) Discussion about gift ideas for Einbeck’s mayor from the PCC to be presented by acting mayor**

Chair Mitchell asked if it is correct that they have gifts. Ms. Mattson replied yes. Chair Mitchell asked about a thank you note for Judy Rogers. Ms. Mattson replied yes, that is on her list of things to do. She showed the gifts to the PCC, and thanked Councilor Giacomo for offering to take them to Einbeck.

8) **Next Meeting – Next Meeting is October 11, 2022 (should we cancel or reschedule?)**

Mr. Schoefmann noted that they might not get a quorum on October 11 if half the committee is in Einbeck. Chair Mitchell replied that they will cancel the October meeting and meet again in November. Discussion ensued about the Einbeck trip.

9) **More Time**

- A) **Discuss Keene Sentinel's James Rinker, digital community engagement journalist – Media Opportunities to help promote PCC events and exchanges**
- B) **Fundraising Ideas/Opportunities**
- C) **Future Exchange Ideas – YMCA, Dance, Rugby**
- D) **KSC Music Department – interest in exchange for 2023 (KSC to Einbeck)**

10) **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 5:49 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
Helen Mattson, Staff Liaison