

City of Keene
New Hampshire

PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, May 14, 2024

5:00 PM

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

Members Present:

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

Staff Present:

Helen Mattson, Executive Assistant

Members Not Present:

George Hansel
Dawn Thomas-Smith
Gregg Kleiner

Mayor Jay Kahn

1) Call to Order

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

2) Roll Call

Roll call was conducted. Chair Mitchell welcomed guests Gerald and Bernadette Kuhn.

3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting – April 9, 2024

Mr. Giacomo made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of April 9, 2024. Mr. Lins seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

Chair Mitchell brought item 7.B) forward and asked to hear from Mayor Kahn.

7) New Business

**B. Juliana Dodson – letter of invitation to attend Hannah Grimes Center’s
*Radically Rural – Mayor Kahn***

Mayor Kahn reported that he invited the German delegation to invite the Radically Rural event this year, but no one is able to attend this time. Discussion ensued. Chair Mitchell spoke about his conversation with Jürgen Herbst, who told him the German delegation would be very interested, as they, too, are facing the same issues (that Radically Rural addresses). He continued that there will be an opportunity, this visit, for people to connect with a likeminded group. It will be a good connection and might even lead to an agricultural exchange in the future. Mr. Giacomo spoke about how Radically Rural could be incorporated into the schedule during this year’s visit, if they are intentional about it and if there are individuals from Einbeck with a genuine interest in it. It could be expensive to have the whole group go to it. Chair Mitchell asked about the cost. Mayor Kahn replied that Radically Rural is willing to waive the fee for a couple of people this time, not necessarily the whole group. Discussion continued about how it would probably not be of interest/relevant to the whole group.

Chair Mitchell thanked Mayor Kahn and returned to the regular agenda order.

4) Board Business

A) Einbeck Exchange

i. Einbeck Exchange – continued discussion about travel plans for October 10-19.

Final confirmation of attendance for those planning to participate – for group ticket purchase.

Chair Mitchell asked Mr. Schoefmann for an update. Mr. Schoefmann reported on how he has looked into the group travel options for booking 16-18 plane tickets, the information he has received from airlines, and the complications. One has a good price but flights do not land in the preferred location. He continued that they probably will not be able to meet the group travel request. He asked Chair Mitchell to speak to the alternative – giving people the directive to arrive in Hanover on Thursday morning (October 10).

Chair Mitchell stated that the other option is for people to travel individually. He gave information about costs and schedules. He continued that it would simplify the process in terms of not needing to have the City buy the tickets and then reimburse the City and go through all those hoops. They can follow Mr. Schoefmann’s research, which Mr. Schoefmann has worked hard on. People traveling to Einbeck would need to commit to arriving on the same day, and give Ms. Mattson their arrival information. Ms. Mattson would make a list of arrival times, which would then be given to Einbeck. If everyone arrives in Hanover within a certain timeframe, they would wait a few hours for the ride. Einbeck folks would probably be able to make two trips on that day to pick people up. This would be more convenient. He spoke of the problems with train travel.

Chair Mitchell stated that he hopes by the end of this meeting Ms. Mattson will have a list of who will be traveling. He continued that he hopes they can help her put out the message to all travelers that they need to send her a photograph of themselves, a short biography, and the details of their travel plans/arrival times, so all of that can be relayed to Einbeck.

Mr. Giacomo asked if they can come up with a list of two or three recommended flights for individuals to book tickets on. Others agreed. Chair Mitchell stated that he can send out some flight information.

ii. Further Discussion – Einbeck contingent and the final number of individuals traveling.

Andrew Madison arrived at 5:17 PM.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that sometimes there are more people interested in traveling than there are available spots, and how the PCC has handled this in the past is to compile a list of everyone who has been invited and then talk about who fits the PCC's engagement strategies and the plan for increasing the exchange bandwidth. For example, there is interest in a Rotarian exchange, dance exchange, and more. They have a list of 19 people who are interested in traveling, and 18 spots. He continued that he believes he has solved the situation this time because as he mentioned last time, he himself probably would not be able to go on this trip. He is withdrawing from the trip. Chair Mitchell replied that he is sorry to hear that. He continued that Mr. Schoefmann was instrumental to the last trip and he was looking forward to his help with this trip.

Ms. Mattson asked why the list includes three Rotary Club members instead of two. Chair Mitchell replied that there are actually four. He continued that two were nominated by the committees from the two Rotary partnerships. One is Kristen Leach. Chair Mitchell spoke positively about Ms. Leach's strong interest in a dance exchange and the work she is already doing for that. She has already organized to host Germans in Keene this fall and to go to Germany next year. She will be a great addition to the trip. He continued that hopefully, Rotary club members can make good connections in Einbeck this year that lead to a Rotary exchange in coming years.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that Mr. Giacomo was able to coordinate the brewery outreach that they have been talking about for quite some time. Mr. Giacomo reported that he spoke with six of the nine brewers the committee had identified within a half hour of Keene. He continued that many are very interested in doing an exchange in the future, but cannot do it this October. The owner of Modest Man Brewing agreed that if another brewery did not step up, he would be happy to send the general manager of the Keene location and the brewer. The general manager would be focused more on the logistics of the exchange itself, and the brewer would be able to "talk shop" about the brewing. He gave more information about his conversation with Modest Man,

including clarifying that the goal is representing brewers in the Keene region and working to start a brewery exchange. Mr. Schoefmann thanked Mr. Giacomo. Discussion continued.

Discussion continued about the list of 18 people. Chair Mitchell named and spoke briefly about each person on the list and the rationale for including them. He stated that each traveler needs to write a brief biography, not like a resume, but more of a social thing, including details that would assist the Einbeck committee in matching travelers with hosts. For example, any needs regarding health, mobility, food, issues with pets, and so on and so forth.

Mayor Kahn left at 5:30 PM.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that he also included the spreadsheets proposed to do their planning with. He asked if Mr. Giacomo could send that to Eric Weisenberger at Modest Man Brewery.. Mr. Giacomo replied yes, and he will touch base with him soon about the travel information and the bios.

Chair Mitchell gave brief information about what he knows of the itinerary so far. He continued that much of the itinerary will be based on who is coming and what the bios are. Einbeck is trying to steer the itinerary based on what people express in their bios, so getting those bios to Ms. Mattson is critical.

Chair Mitchell spoke about having meetings for the travelers in the time leading up to the trip. Discussion ensued about how many meetings to have, when, and where. Chair Mitchell, Mr. Lins, and Ms. Mattson expressed willingness to host a meeting. Chair Mitchell asked Mr. Giacomo to look into the possibility of having a meeting at Modest Man. Mr. Giacomo agreed. Discussion continued about planning the meetings.

Mr. Schoefmann made a motion to accept the list of nominees as the traveling official delegation for the fall exchange. Mr. Giacomo seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

Ms. Brunner noted that Mr. Schoefmann's name needs to be taken off the list, if it has not already been.

Chair Mitchell stated that he wants to say, again, for the record, that when they go to Einbeck, each of them has the responsibility to really be driving toward making these exchanges happen. He continued that they have not had a stronger year than this one. Ms. Mattson agreed. Chair Mitchell continued that as it is going, it is going to get stronger. There is excitement on both sides. This is the time for travelers to really focus on making and strengthening connections.

B) Update on Student Exchange taking place June 15-28 – *Derek*

Mr. Blunt reported that he just received the itinerary for the student exchange coming up in Einbeck, which has a lot of great stuff. He continued that that has been shared with students and

families. Chair Mitchell asked him to share the itinerary with Ms. Mattson, who can share it with the PCC. Mr. Blunt replied yes.

Mr. Blunt gave information about the group's travel plans on June 15th. He continued that there are three committed drivers, but he is looking for a backup driver to call upon in case one of those three cannot do it. He could let the person know by June 8 whether they will be needed. Mr. Lins replied that he can be the backup driver. Mr. Schoefmann stated that Mr. Blunt can put him on the list as a backup driver, too.

Mr. Blunt stated that one of the students going on this exchange will be giving a presentation this Friday on why he is ready to move to the next grade, which is how it works at the MC2 School. He continued that the student will be talking about his involvement in the Einbeck exchange. The PCC members are invited to the presentation.

C) Media Outreach – Dawn

Chair Mitchell stated that Ms. Thomas-Smith could not make the meeting.

D) Update on Future Exchanges – Soccer, Dance, and Youth Exchange – John

Chair Mitchell stated that they talked about dance and youth exchanges. He continued that regarding soccer, he has not heard back (from Kate Bosley).

Mr. Schoefmann stated that he has not talked with Councilor Bosley, but he has talked with folks who run some of the Cheshire United Soccer Club. He spoke about a group he is becoming involved with, which includes players who know Wally (Secord).

5) Communications

6) Reports

A) Treasurer Report - Gregg

Chair Mitchell stated that he imagines the treasurer's report is fairly stable. Ms. Mattson replied yes, no changes to report.

7) New Business

A) Pumpkin Fest (October 12) – further discussion/volunteers (have established 6) and need C&S contact for donation of Bratts, knockwurst, etc.

Chair Mitchell stated that they have strong support with Mr. Blunt and students and other people. He continued that he is working on a connection with C&S to see about donations. Mr. Schoefmann replied that Chair Mitchell can pass that off to him at some point, since Chair Mitchell will not be in the country at the time of Pumpkin Fest. Chair Mitchell agreed. Mr.

Giacomo stated that the vendor form is live and someone will need to fill it out. Mr. Schoefmann replied that he will. Discussion continued.

Chair Mitchell asked if there was any other new business.

Gerald Kuhn stated that at the last meeting, the PCC talked about coming up with swag. He continued that he has an idea for stickers, and he brought a sketch that he made, to show the PCC today. The design is based on the idea that Keene and Einbeck begin with the same letter that Einbeck ends with. It is a design he is playing around with. PCC members thanked Mr. Kuhn and complimented his design. Mr. Kuhn continued that he has ideas for other designs as well, which could be stickers or buttons. The MC2 School can make these stickers and will give them to the PCC as a donation. Brief discussion continued about other swag ideas.

- 8) **Next Meeting – June 11, 2024**
- 9) **More Time**
 - A) **Fundraising Ideas/Opportunities**

10) **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