

City of Keene
New Hampshire

PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, November 12, 2024

5:00 PM

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

Members Present:

John Mitchell, Chair
William Schoefmann, Vice Chair
Doris McCollester
Gerald Lins
Derek Blunt
Eric Weisenberger

Staff Present:

Nicole Howe, Executive Assistant

Members Not Present:

Gregg Kleiner
Councilor Andrew Madison
George Hansel
Michael Giacomo
Mari Brunner

Mayor Jay Kahn

1) Call to Order

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

2) Roll Call – Appoint Alternates (if required)

Roll call was conducted.

3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting – October 8, 2024

Mr. Blunt noted a correction to the October meeting minutes: he is a full member, not an alternate.

Mr. Schoefmann made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of October 8, 2024 as amended. Mr. Blunt seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

4) **Board Business**

A) Pumpkin Fest Review – Sales, Discuss Ideas/Improvements for Next Year

Mr. Blunt stated that they had a great turnout. Ms. Howe stated that the total profit was \$1,556, which is more than last year. Mr. Blunt replied that there is an additional \$500, from MC Squared's card reader. Ms. McCollester stated that it was great, and spoke of her experiences of the event. Discussion ensued about the supplies, the volunteers, and ideas for next time. Chair Mitchell asked if Mr. Blunt could write down at least an estimate of the amount of supplies they had, and the amount they used, so they have a record to refer to for next time. Mr. Blunt replied yes. Ms. Howe asked him to send it to her, too, to keep on file. Ms. McCollester stated that she thinks they need to find a different way of handling money for next time, to keep it safe. Mr. Schoefmann thanked Mr. Blunt and everyone who volunteered at this event.

Mayor Kahn stated that the event for Jumanji's 30-year anniversary will be in April. He continued that maybe the PCC would want to be present for that. Brief discussion ensued about that event.

B) Review of October's Keene/Einbeck Exchange with Travelers

Chair Mitchell asked for feedback on the October exchange. Mayor Kahn praised the organizers' work. Mr. Lins stated that he thought everything was great and his wife enjoyed the trip, too. He continued that sometimes, some people wished they had a little more time for shopping. That is something for Keene folks to keep in mind, too. The Mayor spoke positively about the four cities their Einbeck hosts brought them to. Discussion ensued. Chair Mitchell stated that their Einbeck hosts worried about not including Berlin, but the other cities were great, which is something for Keene organizers to think about – maybe trips do not need to be to Boston or New York. Discussion ensued about how Concord is a good location. Mr. Kuhn spoke about the differences between traveling with family, traveling as a tourist, and traveling as a delegate, as the latter comes with unique responsibilities. Discussion continued about how the trip was busy and tiring but in a good way, and how everyone was engaged and connected, and about what activities travelers especially liked. Discussion continued about ideas for activities when Einbeck travelers come to Keene.

Mr. Schoefmann asked when they should start discussing planning for the next exchange. Chair Mitchell replied that last time, Einbeck travelers came September 22 to 30. He continued that he suggests they try to match up with those dates. Discussion ensued about the dates, the events and holidays in Keene in the fall, the weather, the fall events in Einbeck to be aware of, the length of the visit, and so on and so forth. The PCC decided to suggest September 19 to 29 to the Einbeck group. Chair Mitchell stated that he will contact Einbeck to see what they think of those dates. Discussion continued about some benefits of those dates, such as the marathon, the Keene International Festival, and Pickle Festival.

Chair Mitchell asked the PCC how many Einbeck guests they should plan for. He continued that Einbeck offered spots for 16 travelers from Keene. Mr. Schoefmann replied that he thinks they should match that. Others agreed. Brief discussion ensued about vehicles/transportation options.

Chair Mitchell asked what the PCC thinks about including children when hosting. Discussion ensued. Mr. Schoefmann stated that he thinks the threshold would be about middle school-aged, not younger.

Chair Mitchell asked if there was anything else to discuss related to the exchange. Mr. Kuhn stated that he had conversations with people in Einbeck about visiting the Cohen Center in Keene. Mr. Blunt stated that Tom White at the Cohen Center spoke with the students (visiting from Einbeck), and it was fantastic. Discussion ensued about the importance of the topic. The Mayor stated that Sonja Kreibich, the German consulate general from Boston, spoke recently at Kristallnacht (in Keene), and it went well. He continued that she would likely return to Keene for other events.

- C) PCC Exchange Survey/Facebook Updates**
- D) Future Exchange Ideas**

Chair Mitchell stated that they have talked about many potential ideas for future exchanges, and it is great that there is so much enthusiasm. He continued that he would like to address the five that have been around for a while, which the Germans are on board with: ballroom dancing, soccer, marathon, police, and fire. The latter two have strong interest and the next visit from Einbeck will include a police officer and a firefighter.

Mr. Schoefmann asked if these five topics/exchanges would be independent from the September visit from Einbeck. Chair Mitchell replied that he thinks these are committee projects that they hope to find people to hand them off to, similar to how Kristin Leach took off with the modern dance exchange once she figured it out and got on track. Mr. Schoefmann replied that typically, fire and police are part of the official delegation, whereas soccer would take more fostering and connecting with other groups. The marathon one, too, needs a little more structure and fostering. Discussion continued. Mr. Blunt stated that he knows there is interest, from both Keene and Einbeck, in some sort of horse/equestrian exchange. He continued that he himself knows little about the topic but can look into it. Mr. Schoefmann spoke about another one to add to the list is connecting potential educators or people looking to do work exchange with opportunities locally. Discussion ensued about the role the PCC could play, such as helping find information.

- 5) Communications**
 - A) Peace Fountain at Central Square**

Ms. Howe stated that Andy Bohannon, Deputy City Manager, reports that the fountain at Central Square is getting a redesign. She continued that the current fountain has plaques commemorating the partner city, which will be incorporated into the new design. This is being

done through Monadnock Family Services, the Rotary Clubs, and the Monadnock Interfaith Project. The new fountain will revolve around the partnership between the two cities. Details are still being worked on.

6) **Reports**

A) **Treasurer Report**

Chair Mitchell stated that the report is that Gregg Kleiner has resigned from the PCC. Ms. Howe replied yes. Mr. Schoefmann stated that they need a new treasurer now. Mr. Weisenberger replied that he will do it.

7) **New Business**

Chair Mitchell asked if there is new business that should be moved to the Board Business agenda item. Mr. Schoefmann replied the exchanges, and probably a beginning discussion about hosting duties and what that will look like, for the September visit. Brief discussion ensued.

8) **Next Meeting: December 10, 2024**

9) **More Time**

A) **Fundraising Ideas and Opportunities**

Mr. Schoefmann suggested moving this item to the next meeting's agenda so they can talk about ideas.

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,
Nicole Howe, Executive Assistant