

City of Keene
New Hampshire

PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, October 17, 2023

5:00 PM

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

Members Present:

John Mitchell, Chair
Dawn Thomas-Smith
Mari Brunner
Doris McCollester
Derek Blunt
Gerald Lins, Alternate

Staff Present:

Helen Mattson, Executive Assistant

Members Not Present:

William Schoefmann, Vice Chair
Mayor George Hansel
Councilor Michael Giacomo
Kürt Blomquist
Gregg Kleiner

1) Call to Order

Chair Mitchell called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM.

2) Roll Call – Appoint Alternates (if required)

Roll call was conducted.

3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting: September 12, 2023

Mr. Lins made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of September 12, 2023. Ms. Thomas-Smith seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

4) Board Business

A) Pumpkin Fest

Chair Mitchell gave an update about the PCC's participation as a food vendor at Pumpkin Fest this coming Saturday, regarding the timing, location, setup, and materials needed. Discussion ensued. Chair

Mitchell asked if anyone could bring coolers, ice, grills, and/or a fire extinguisher. Discussion continued. PCC members offered to bring items.

Ms. Mattson asked how much petty cash they will need at the event. Discussion ensued about how much it was in previous years and how it will work, and about what types of payment the PCC can accept (such as Venmo), and how. Discussion continued about the materials the PCC has or needs for the event, such as tents, tables, signs, banners, and so on and so forth; and about how much food is needed and what that might cost.

Chair Mitchell asked who is available to help at the event, and what time. PCC members replied with their availability.

Ms. Brunner made a motion to authorize the PCC to spend up to \$700 in purchasing food for Pumpkin Fest and to get \$250 in petty cash to have at the event. Chair Mitchell seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

Discussion continued about Pumpkin Fest logistics, such as ice, coolers, cooking tools, fire extinguishers, the food and where to buy it, pricing, and the logistics of transporting everything to the site and unloading it.

B) PCC Exchange Survey/Facebook Updates, Media Outreach

5) Communications

Chair Mitchell stated that they received a message from Einbeck. He continued that the good news is that everyone had fun (on their visit to Keene), and the PCC/Keene visitors are invited back to Einbeck next year. They will receive the official invitation in late January. They have already met with the Mayor. He, Mr. Schoefmann, Jürgen Herbst, and Wulf (Miessling) met, concerning some exchange issues and things they are trying to grow. The Einbeck folks mentioned it to their Mayor and it turned out to be very positive; she is very supportive of the next exchange. There was a proclamation given for Mr. Herbst.

Chair Mitchell continued that they talked about a soccer exchange and dance exchange. House of Youth is very interested in having a modern dance exchange. Everyone in Keene who has anything to do with dance is supportive of the idea but no one is prepared to be the supervisor/host of a dance exchange in Keene. None of the dance groups are set up to organize housing, insurance, transportation, and that sort of thing. That is something for the PCC to think about going forward. In the past, for example, soccer was a very successful exchange. Wally (Secord) would bring 20 youth to Germany and bring 20 German youth here, and it was a wonderful experience. The difficulty was that it was all on Mr. Secord's shoulders. If anything had ever gone wrong, Mr. Secord would have been the one to handle it alone. He did not have a support system. When he (Chair Mitchell) did the school exchange, it was a function of the school and it was part of his job as a teacher, and thus he was protected by the school system. The PCC needs to think about how to find the appropriate organization to shepherd these

exchanges, particularly with young people, with dance and soccer. The interested parties are all there, but the PCC needs to think about how to support them so they are not at personal risk. Discussion ensued. Ms. Thomas-Smith spoke about how sports teams are able to buy their own insurance for practice gyms, and how similar structures/groups like that probably exist, for practice, liability, and health insurance.

Chair Mitchell stated that another suggestion is to do video meetings four times a year, with four members of the PCC and four members of the German committee. He continued that they are looking for PCC members to volunteer for that, an hour on Zoom every three months. They hope to start in January. The members could rotate; it does not need to be an official subcommittee/working group. It will be casual.

Chair Mitchell stated that Mr. Schoefmann has been working on rugby plans. It seems to be coming along. The hope for the new official exchange next year is to involve someone who has experience with either golf, tennis, martial arts, or the Rotary. Ms. Brunner replied that Yves Gakunde is involved with the Rotary and martial arts.

Chair Mitchell stated that lastly, the hope is that both the Einbeck group and the PCC can expand their webpages to include travel links, for Airbnbs, for example, events in the region, and so on and so forth. Ms. Thomas-Smith spoke about adding a link to what the Chamber of Commerce has put together. Discussion continued.

6) **Reports**

A) **Treasurer Report**

Chair Mitchell stated that there is no treasurer report today.

7) **New Business**

A) **Discuss Additional Guidelines/Expectations and Visa Requirements to be Added for People from Keene Traveling to Einbeck**

B) **German Language Group and German Language CDs Offering**

8) **Next Meeting: November 14, 2023**

9) **More Time**

A) **Fundraising Ideas/Opportunities**

B) **Update on other future exchange ideas – YMCA/Youth Centers – Pickle Ball – Dance**

C) **Review of Student Exchange with MC2 – October 9-22, 2023**

D) **Review of September's Keene/Einbeck exchange with Hosts**

10) **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 5:53 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
Helen Mattson, Staff Liaison