

City of Keene
New Hampshire

PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, April 8, 2025

5:00 PM

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

Members Present:

John Mitchell, Chair
William Schoefmann, Vice Chair
Councilor Andrew Madison
Doris McColleston
Gerald Lins
Eric Weisenberger
Mari Brunner (arrived at 5:05 PM)
Derek Blunt

Staff Present:

Nicole Howe, Executive Assistant

Members Not Present:

Gerald Kuhn

Jay V. Kahn, Mayor

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. Chair Mitchell asked Mr. Blunt to introduce his guest. Mr. Blunt introduced Dylan, a student from MC2, who was present at the last PCC meeting. He continued that Dylan will be part of the German student exchange and he is the chair of the student version of the PCC committee at MC2.

3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting: March 11, 2025

Councilor Madison made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of March 11, 2025. Mr. Schoefmann seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

4) Board Business

A) Exchange Itinerary – 10/22 Morning Activity, Pumpkin Fest Day, etc.

Chair Mitchell stated that today he hopes they can come up with a firmer framework than they have had previously. He continued that he thinks the days are well filled, but now is the time to double check what they are doing and make any significant changes they think they need. Otherwise, they can move toward looking at budgets and specifics for the days. He asked Mr. Schoefmann to talk about the schedule.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that arrival is Wednesday, October 15, and he assumes they are flying into Logan Airport in Boston. He continued that not much is going on that day other than logistics for transportation. Thursday, October 16, is the City Hall welcome, and a welcome dinner and reception at The Showroom. Ms. Howe stated that she does not think there is anything planned in-between the City Hall welcome and the dinner. Discussion ensued about the day and the timing of activities. The group determined it would be good to have the City Hall welcome with the Mayor in the morning and have the rest of the day be low-key.

Mr. Schoefmann asked if Mr. Weisenberger had updates/information about the welcome dinner at The Showroom. Mr. Weisenberger replied yes and spoke about the dinner plans, and discussion ensued.

Mari Brunner arrived at 5:05 PM.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that Friday, October 17 is busier. The Mayor has arranged for some activities in Concord, followed by shopping in Merrimack. Discussion ensued about that, meals, and the travel route. Ms. Howe stated that they had talked last time about whether it would be a dinner out or dinner with hosts, and it sounds like dinner with hosts. Mayor Kahn stated that anyone interested can go to the synagogue Friday night.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that Saturday, October 18 is Pumpkin Fest, followed by the dinner with the Choral Exchange at KSC. Chair Mitchell stated that the dinner is something for the PCC to discuss. He continued that Sandra Howard invited the PCC/Einbeck guests, with the PCC paying for their tickets. It would be a good time to invite the German Consulate as well. Discussion ensued about the dinner and Pumpkin Fest.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that Sunday, October 19 is another “host day,” and they will have some ideas for activities, and hosts will have some activities planned as well. Discussion ensued, and Chair Mitchell stated that he does not want to have too many things booked, so that people have options.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that Monday, October 20 is where his notes dwindle. He asked if that was the local manufacturing day. Chair Mitchell replied that Monday is the trip up Rt. 12, including Bensonwood, the American Precision Museum, Saint Gauden’s, and lunch. Discussion ensued about the activities, and about whether these activities are for Monday, October 20, or Tuesday,

October 21. Ms. Howe asked if the local manufacturing day is Tuesday. Others replied yes. The Mayor gave information about local manufacturers to visit/tour on Tuesday. The group noted that the intent was to return from the Rt. 12 trip in time to have dinner with hosts. Monday night is an optional contra dance.

Mr. Schoefmann asked what they should do for lunch and dinner on Tuesday. The group discussed potential restaurants for dinner, like the Shattuck. Ms. Brunner suggested possibly having lunch at the cafeteria at Lehn Design's learning lab, and discussion continued about what the learning lab is, and about other lunch options, such as getting sandwiches/food and bringing it somewhere else.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that for Wednesday, October 22, the main feature will be the cruise on Lake Sunapee. Councilor Madison stated that he talked with the cruise lines, and they would be happy to have the group. He gave more information about the details and costs, and the group discussed it. Councilor Madison proposed Mt. Sunapee as a morning activity, with the option of hiking up or riding the chairlift up. Others talked about Mt. Kearsarge and the nearby Indian Museum. Discussion continued about those options and about lunch possibilities, such as a restaurant or doing the cruise at lunchtime instead of sunset. The group decided the preference was the cocktail/sunset cruise, followed by dinner at a restaurant. Lunch could possibly be basket lunches put together by hosts.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that Thursday, October 23, will be some shopping and the farewell dinner at Mr. Lins's house. Ms. Howe added that they had talked about either a Historical Society tour or a Wall Dogs murals tour, too. Ms. Brunner and the Mayor spoke of how the Einbeck visitors from a previous exchange found it helpful to have the Wall Dogs tour early on during the visit, to get oriented to Keene. Discussion continued about Thursday possibly including the Cohen Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies. Mr. Blunt stated that he will soon be reaching out to Tom White of the Cohen Center, who has (talked with) students with great tact and sensitivity. He spoke positively about including this in the exchange. Ms. McColleston replied that in this political climate, she thinks it is not a good idea. She does not think people will want to go. Brief discussion continued, and Chair Mitchell stated that they will talk more about it/Thursday later.

Chair Mitchell asked Mr. Lins what time he would like people to arrive at his house on Thursday for dinner. Mr. Lins replied that he and his wife are flexible; it is up to the PCC. Discussion ensued about the timing and details, such as the food. Chair Mitchell stated that the PCC appreciates Mr. Lins providing the venue and Mr. Lins does not have to be responsible for the planning, food, and organizing – that is on the PCC. He continued that he visited the Lins's home and it is a beautiful, spacious, ideal venue. Discussion continued about the Lins's home and how it will work well no matter the weather, as there is indoor space as well. Chair Mitchell stated that they will eventually need a PCC member to work on organizing the grills, grill masters, food, and coolers, but there is time.

Councilor Madison stated that the Sunapee cruises are filling up fast, so he should probably book it before the next PCC meeting. Mr. Schoefmann stated that if Councilor Madison sends the

information to him and Ms. Howe, they can put a deposit down. Discussion ensued about the number of people and the price. Chair Mitchell stated that at this point, he would give the go-ahead for the Sunapee cruise. He asked what others think. PCC members agreed. Chair Mitchell stated that he thinks the group would also commit to the Colonial Theater (Showroom). Others agreed. Discussion continued.

The Mayor stated that if it does not complicate things too much, there is a City Council meeting on October 16 that the group could attend. He continued that the Council would be glad to welcome the Einbeck guests. Someone could stand up and say a few words, if they want. Discussion ensued about who might speak, and what they might say, such as a proclamation from the Mayor. Chair Mitchell stated that they will see what the schedule looks like, and maybe people could go to the meeting for half an hour or so. Discussion continued.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that continuing with the schedule, Friday, October 24, is drop-off at the Blastos Room and departure for Logan Airport. Chair Mitchell stated that they are all traveling individually on the way home, so the PCC will need to think about how that will work. Mr. Schoefmann stated that he will get some quotes from different companies on van rentals.

B) Begin Exchange Budget – Assign Research for Trips, Transportation, and Meals Cost

Mr. Schoefmann stated that he and Ms. Howe need budget items, so it would be great if anyone who is in charge of coordinating activities could send them any emails they are receiving with cost information, to help document this.

C) MC2 Student Exchange Support – Review and Discuss Requested \$3,024.00

Chair Mitchell stated that at the last meeting, the PCC talked about the MC2 Student Exchange's support request. He asked if anyone had thoughts about how to move forward with this item. Ms. Howe stated that in the agenda packet, she included the handout from the MC2 students.

Chair Mitchell asked Dylan if the MC2 Student Exchange has any other financial resources for this or any other options. Dylan replied that their other options would be fundraising themselves, such as holding yard sales.

Discussion ensued about the PCC's finances, such as the account balances, what the accounts are used for, what expenses the PCC has, and what the PCC has given to the KSC Choral Exchange. Ms. Brunner suggested the PCC give the same amount to MC2 that they gave to the Choral Exchange. Others agreed.

Ms. Brunner made a motion for the PCC to give \$2,100 to the MC2 School for their Student Exchange. Mr. Schoefmann seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 7-0. Mr. Blunt abstained.

Chair Mitchell stated that the PCC wishes they could do more. He continued that he thinks that historically, the youth portion of the exchange has been the most important part. The PCC is very positive about the students and their instructors, very supportive, and they appreciate Dylan and other students being here.

D) Council Report – Discuss What to Share

5) Communications

Chair Mitchell stated that he heard more news from Germany yesterday and today. He continued that they have unfortunately lost a couple of travelers, one for health reasons, others for work reasons. He shared the names, continuing that the group is down to 14 people. Two police officers want to come, but only if they can stay with police officers; they want a professional exchange. Chief Stewart (of the KPD) supports the idea and has shared this with his officers, but so far has only had one reply. If any PCC members have connections with KPD officers, he encourages them to talk with them about what a positive experience it is to host Einbeck visitors. Maybe they could try to draw in a state trooper who lives in Keene, if not a KPD officer. Ms. Brunner suggested an officer from a nearby town. Chair Mitchell replied that would be the next option. Discussion continued. Councilor Madison asked if the Mayor could reach out to Eli (Rivera, Cheshire County Sheriff).

6) Reports

A) Treasurer Report – Eric

7) New Business

8) Next Meeting: May 13, 2025

9) More Time

A) Fundraiser – Cookbook

Ms. Howe asked if Mr. Lins needs any help with the cookbook fundraiser. Mr. Lins replied that he needs recipes. Discussion ensued. Ms. McColleston asked if they want it to be in German and English. Mr. Lins and others replied yes.

10) Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 6:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
Nicole Howe, Executive Administrative Assistant