

City of Keene
New Hampshire

PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, May 13, 2025

5:00 PM

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

Members Present:

John Mitchell, Chair
William Schoefmann, Vice Chair
Gerald Kuhn
Mari Brunner
Gerald Lins
Derek Blunt, Alternate

Staff Present:

Nicole Howe, Executive Assistant

Members Not Present:

Doris McColleston
Eric Weisenberger
Councilor Andrew Madison

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. The PCC welcomed Dylan, a student from MC2 School.

3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting – April 8, 2025

Mr. Schoefmann made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of April 8, 2025. Mr. Lins seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

4) Board Business

**A) Exchange Itinerary – Continued Discussion/Activity Planning for October
15–24, 2025**

Chair Mitchell stated that they are at the point where they should be firming up the calendar. He continued that they can spend some time now doing that. Mr. Schoefmann shared his screen to show the calendar he made. He stated that it needs some updating, but he plugged in most of the

major things with the dates and activities. Einbeck travelers arrive in Boston on October 15, and they will need to pick them up.

He continued that Thursday, October 16 is the official delegation/visit with the Mayor and probably the City Manager. Also on Thursday is the Colonial Theater tour and the welcome dinner. Mr. Schoefmann asked if there were any other activities planned for Thursday yet. Ms. Howe replied no, that was all they had so far. Brief discussion ensued about how there is some time to fill there.

Ms. Brunner asked how many travelers there are. Chair Mitchell replied that currently it is looking like 15. Ms. Brunner asked how many are people who were here in 2023. Chair Mitchell replied that he does not know, but probably about half. Discussion ensued about who is coming. Regarding Thursday activities, PCC members talked about maybe the Wyman Tavern or a Walldogs Mural tour.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that Friday, October 17 is the State Capitol, Concord, and Merrimack shopping. He continued that there are many details still to be determined, which will get fleshed out when they understand more from the Mayor. Ms. Howe stated that the Capitol starts at 9:45 AM. Discussion ensued. Mr. Schoefmann stated that someone mentioned last time that there was an optional invite to temple that evening at the synagogue in Keene. He will get more information about that.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that Saturday, October 18 is Pumpkin Fest. He continued that the idea was to meet up around 2:00 PM. There is a meet & greet with the German Consulate, presumably at the PCC's tent, where some PCC members and MC2 folks will be working. After that is the dinner with the Choral Exchange at Keene State College (KSC) from 5:30 to 8:00 PM. Chair Mitchell reminded everyone that the expense of the Einbeck visitors will be on the PCC, and PCC members who want to participate will pay for themselves. Discussion ensued. Chair Mitchell spoke about how there will be close to 60 Germans there, and it is a nice connection between the two groups.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that Sunday October 19, the hosts will have their activity day. He continued that last time, the PCC talked about coming up with some ideas for activities people could choose from. There is still plenty of time to do that, and he thinks they will know more about those options once they determine who the hosts are.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that Monday, October 20 is the Upper Valley/Rt. 12 day trip. He continued that Mr. Kuhn had been looking into a bunch of that. He asked Mr. Kuhn if he could do some of the bookings. Mr. Kuhn replied yes and spoke about how he had been doing some research about costs and other details. Mr. Schoefmann replied that he will touch base with him about those. He asked Mr. Kuhn to keep whatever contact numbers he has. Discussion continued about the Monday plan. Mr. Schoefmann stated that he will have to look at a map and see what makes sense, for what order to do the activities in, such as Saint Gauden's, the

Precision Museum, and Bensonwood in Walpole. Discussion ensued about the order of activities, and lunch. Mr. Schoefmann stated that the plan was to have lunch at the Harpoon Tap Room.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that Tuesday, October 21 is Local Business day. He continued that many things have been mentioned, maybe even too many. He thinks someone has talked with Precitech. Ms. Howe replied yes. Mr. Schoefmann continued that then they have Unity Homes/Lehnen Labs, and Optical Precision at KSC. Chair Mitchell replied that KSC is flexible. Mr. Schoefmann asked if Chair Mitchell is (the contact) for that. Chair Mitchell replied yes. Ms. Brunner stated that she had proposed Lehnen Labs as a possibility for lunch, but it looks like lunch is going to be at the Summit Winery. Mr. Schoefmann replied that is up in the air. Ms. Brunner suggested they could skip Lehnen Labs.

Mr. Schoefmann continued that the October 21 plan still needs some work, but the idea was Harrisville Designs in the afternoon and the Dublin Tap Room for dinner, which the Germans enjoyed in the past. Someone will need to talk with the person at the Tap Room; he has the contact information.

Ms. Brunner asked if any of these days are bag lunches. Discussion ensued. Ms. Howe stated that they will do bag lunches on Friday, the Concord day; Monday, the Rt. 12 day; and Tuesday, the Local Business day. Discussion ensued about how the Mayor had talked about possibly a restaurant in Concord or the cafeteria if it is open. Mr. Schoefmann suggested they get the big ticket items budgeted first and then see what days they might need bag lunches for. A PCC member suggested seeing if a Keene bakery would donate a few bags of bread or something similar.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that Wednesday, October 22 is the “capstone” of the trip with the Lake Sunapee Cruise featured as the mainstay. He continued that he thinks that it launches at 10:45 AM, but he will have to check with Councilor Madison. He thinks lunch is on the water. There is also the Mt. Kearsarge Indian Museum, with room for an activity between the cruise and dinner. One idea is the Flying Goose Brewpub, which he could look into.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that Thursday, October 23 is a free day/farewell. Optional morning activities could include pickleball. Also, they wanted to make sure the Germans had enough free time in the morning. Then, they were talking about a pre-dinner rendezvous at Copper Cannon Distillery, and dinner at Mr. Lins’s house from 4:30 to 8:00 PM if that timing works for Mr. Lins and his wife. Discussion ensued. Mr. Lins stated that arrival at 4:30 or 5:00 PM would be good and people can stay as late as they want.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that Friday, October 24 is the departure. He continued that last time, they did some site-seeing in Boston with the group that was leaving that day, so that is a possibility. They do not have people’s departure details.

Mr. Schoefmann asked for people's initial thoughts on the schedule.

Chair Mitchell stated that for the free day on October 23, some of the hosts might not be around. He continued that the PCC might want to have activity ideas, so no one is left sitting at home by themselves if the hosts are not available. Mr. Schoefmann replied that last time, the Germans wanted free time to shop or do their own things. Chair Mitchell stated that that is the only potential weak spot he sees, but otherwise, this looks like a good calendar.

Ms. Brunner stated that she thinks one of the host day activities should be a trip to Boston or Portland or something. Mr. Schoefmann asked if she wants to spearhead that. Discussion ensued about potential cities to visit, and the group noted that this idea is something to keep in their pocket as they learn more about the host group. Chair Mitchell stated that once they have this calendar firmed up, they can work on a "shadow calendar" with alternative items like the Monday night contradance. Mr. Schoefmann replied yes, this calendar is the "spitball version," so if anyone has items for him to add, they can email him.

Chair Mitchell stated that last time, some people were concerned when they saw the calendar because they thought the activities were required. He wonders if they could have a required calendar and an idea calendar. Mr. Schoefmann agreed and spoke of how the planning document has many more things than the more straightforward calendar that gets shared.

Mr. Kuhn asked about a document that is like a guide for the hosts, explaining what is involved with becoming a host. He continued that he was thinking of something that would let the hosts know things like which days they are expected to help with a meal or provide transportation. Discussion ensued about such a document and PCC members agreed that it is a good idea for hosts to have this information. Chair Mitchell suggested they schedule a few host meetings over the summer in preparation for the visit, like they did last time. There were about three last time and it was very helpful. Others agreed.

B) Exchange Budget – Updates from Committee Members' Research on Costs

Chair Mitchell stated that he does not think they are ready to discuss the exchange budget yet. Mr. Schoefmann stated that as people get costs for things, they can email him, and he will start compiling the information. He continued that by July or August, they should probably approve the budget.

5) Communications

Chair Mitchell stated that on behalf of the PCC, he sent a letter expressing their sympathies to Albert (Eggers) for the passing of Gundi. He continued that he was talking with Jürgen Herbst, who mentioned that the Einbeck committee sent 50 Euros to the German cancer society in Gundi's name. He wonders if the PCC has any interest (in doing this, too).

Chair Mitchell made a motion for the Partner City Committee to authorize him to send \$50 in the Partner City Committee's name.

Chair Mitchell continued that anyone who wishes to contribute more, personally, can let him know.

Mr. Lins seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

Chair Mitchell stated that the PCC received a video from Mr. Herbst (of the Keene visit to Einbeck), and it is wonderful. He continued that it brings back lots of fun memories. Mr. Schoefmann has the file and will make it available to everyone in the next few weeks. Discussion ensued.

Chair Mitchell asked Mr. Blunt to (re)introduce Dylan. Mr. Blunt stated that Dylan, who has been to a few PCC meetings now, will be part of the MC2 School's student exchange, going to Germany. He continued that Dylan is the Chair of the MC2 School's PCC. He is here to give a student presence in the PCC, because what the PCC does affects MC2's exchange, and vice versa. Dylan comes to the PCC meetings to stay informed, learn how everything works, and bring information back to the student group. Mr. Kuhn stated that it is interesting to watch the student PCC, seeing how much control the students have over the process. He continued that he student PCC meetings are set up similarly to the City's PCC. Mr. Schoefmann asked if those meetings are during the school day. Mr. Blunt replied that it changes by quarter, and currently they are after school on Wednesdays. He spoke positively about how Dylan runs the meetings modeled after these. Mr. Schoefmann asked Mr. Blunt to send him an invite to one of those meetings, so he can try to come.

Chair Mitchell stated that he and Mr. Schoefmann started talking with Albert and Jürgen about Zoom meetings for committee members. He continued that they have some dates now and look forward to getting started. Anyone who is interested can contact him or Mr. Schoefmann. The first thing they would like to go over is the exchange policy. They would like to look at a Fire exchange, a golf exchange, and other possible visits. He thinks the first couple (Zooms) will be times for everyone to get comfortable with it, so it could perhaps be a regular occurrence. Maybe they could even share a meeting at some point. They are building connections.

A) Stonewall Farm "Flocktober" Festival, September, 2025 - Committee Participation Requested

Ms. Howe stated that Gina from Stonewall Farm emailed Ms. Brunner and would like the PCC to participate in the "Flocktober" Festival. She continued that the PCC has participated in Oktoberfest before. Stonewall Farm is running this one the same way but calling it Flocktober. Discussion ensued about how the PCC participated in the past and what they could do this year. Ms. Howe clarified that there is no firm date yet; it will be sometime in September. Discussion continued. Chair Mitchell stated that he thinks this is an opportunity for the PCC to fundraise

and sell food. Ms. Howe stated that she will let the PCC know if she gets more details about the event.

6) **Reports**

A) **Treasurer Report – Eric**

Chair Mitchell stated that they will pass on this (since Eric is not present).

7) **New Business**

A) **Pumpkin Festival 2025 – Begin Discussion of Plans, Budget, Donations, and Volunteers**

Mr. Schoefmann stated that there is no news yet. He continued that he has asked Mike (Giacomo). He is sure the vendor applications will come out at some point.

8) **Next Meeting: June 10, 2025**

Chair Mitchell stated that the next meeting is June 10. Ms. Brunner replied that she is unable to be there. Chair Mitchell stated that historically, the PCC has taken off a couple months in the summer, but he thinks they should continue meeting, especially since they are hosting this year. He will not be present in July and August. Mr. Schoefmann replied that he can run the meetings in Chair Mitchell's absence. Discussion ensued and Ms. Brunner and Mr. Schoefmann noted that Chair Mitchell could participate remotely, as a voting member, but would not count toward quorum.

9) **More Time**

A) **Fundraiser – Cookbook**

10) **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 5:42 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
Nicole Howe, Executive Secretary