

City of Keene
New Hampshire

PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, August 12, 2025

5:00 PM

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

Members Present:

John Mitchell, Chair
William Schoefmann, Vice Chair
Councilor Andrew Madison
Gerald Kuhn
Mari Brunner
Doris McColleston
Gerald Lins
Derek Blunt, Alternate

Staff Present:

Nicole Howe, Executive Assistant

Members Not Present:

Eric Weisenberger

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: July 9, 2025

Mr. Blunt stated that he has a correction to the July 9 minutes – he is a full member, not an alternate. Ms. Howe replied that she thinks that on the website, he is still listed as an alternate member, too, so she will look into that.

Mr. Schoefmann made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of July 9, 2025. Mr. Lins seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

4) Board Business:

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

October 15

Mr. Schoefmann stated that guests are arriving on October 15, in Boston. Flight times are not known yet. He continued that he should know by next week whether the Parks and Recreation Department's van will be available to use.

October 16

Mr. Schoefmann stated that this is "local orientation day." He spoke about the day's schedule. Discussion ensued about whether it was too full and what could be removed, such as possibly the Historical Society visit and self-guided mural walk.

October 17

Mr. Schoefmann stated that there will be a visit to the State Capitol, and outlet shopping on that side of the state. He gave more details about the Concord schedule and activities. He asked if Councilor Madison would be following up on the plan of having lunch at the Barley House. Councilor Madison replied yes, he will follow up on that.

October 18

Mr. Schoefmann stated that Saturday is Pumpkin Festival, followed by dinner with Sandra Howard and the Choral Exchange group. Discussion ensued about details. Chair Mitchell encouraged any PCC members interested in attending that dinner, with the understanding that they would be paying for their own meal, to email or text him in the next few days, because Ms. Howard needs that information.

October 19

Mr. Schoefmann stated that Sunday is "host activity day," meaning hosts figure out fun activities for their guests to do. Ms. Brunner stated that she would like to reach out to the people she will be hosting ahead of time to get a sense of what activities they might want to do. Brief discussion ensued about who is hosting, and the need to schedule a meeting for hosts soon.

October 20

Mr. Schoefmann stated that this day is the planned trip to the Upper Valley/Rt. 12. He listed the destinations/activities of the day, and discussion ensued about the order in which to do them and how late certain places are open. Mr. Schoefmann stated that he will double check the hours for the American Precision Museum. He continued that he recommends they book tickets to Saint-Gaudens park soon. Mr. Kuhn replied that he will look into it. He continued that he needs to get back to the Precision Museum with a number (of how many people will be in the group). Mr. Schoefmann replied that they should know that by next month.

October 21

Mr. Schoefmann spoke about the tours of local businesses planned for this day. He spoke of the ideas the PCC had tossed around for lunch, such as a bag lunch at the Summit Winery.

Discussion ensued. Mr. Schoefmann stated that Ms. Howe confirmed the Harrisville Design tour.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that he and Chair Mitchell were talking about getting at least a small amount of catering for the farewell dinner [at Mr. Lins's house on October 24], although it is a potluck, to reduce the work for hosts who will have already spent the week hosting and driving people around. Discussion ensued.

Returning to the topic of lunch, the group decided a bag lunch is good for this day, noting that people can stop into a general store for refreshments if needed. Mr. Schoefmann stated that the plan for dinner is the Dublin Taproom.

October 22 – Lake Sunapee

Mr. Schoefmann spoke about the day's plans for the Kearsarge Museum and the cruise/appetizers on Lake Sunapee from 4:15 to 6:15 PM. Discussion ensued about what to do for lunch. Councilor Madison stated that he could bring a grill and/or they could use the grills in the state park. Others agreed and spoke about bringing food in coolers. Mr. Schoefmann asked if they need an activity between the museum and the cruise. Councilor Madison replied they could go to the Lake Sunapee resort and hike up or take the chairlift up. Discussion continued, and Mr. Schoefmann stated that he will work with some people on fleshing out this day, and they will have something ready to go for September. He continued that for dinner after the cruise, he will reach out to the Flying Goose.

October 23

Mr. Schoefmann stated that there will be free time in the morning, per the Germans' request for more free time, and the farewell dinner in the evening at Mr. Lins's house, with a pre-dinner rendezvous at Copper Cannon. He asked if Councilor Madison can help with that. Councilor Madison replied yes.

Discussion ensued about whether the German guests are leaving On Friday, October 24, or Saturday, October 25. Chair Mitchell stated that October 25 is the new departure date the Germans gave him. Mr. Schoefmann asked if they should move the farewell dinner to October 24. Others replied no, it is okay to keep it on the 23rd.

Chair Mitchell thanked Mr. Schoefmann and others for their work on the itinerary. He continued that he has a few things to share, starting with the news that Jürgen Herbst has not been well. Mr. Herbst has handed over his responsibilities (regarding the exchange) to others. He (Chair Mitchell) met with the House of Youth, who said they had a very good exchange. They would like to continue the dance exchange, and want to make it bigger and maybe last longer. He also spoke with the young person running the (Einbeck) golf course, who seems very interested in a

golf exchange for people approximately 25 to 40 years old. He has spoken a little bit with people at the (Keene) golf courses who agree that is a good age range.

Chair Mitchell stated that the idea of the cookbook exchange went over very well. He continued that people in Einbeck are collecting recipes and are ready for someone from the PCC to start interacting with them. Mr. Lins replied that they are ready to start collecting and collating the recipes, although there is not enough time to finish the project by Pumpkin Fest.

Chair Mitchell stated that Fred Parsells offered to host, and to drive Germans to and from the Boston airport. He continued that the vans are a big expense. He asked if any PCC members can drive to or from Boston. Discussion ensued. Mr. Lins stated that he might be able to if the flight arrived in the evening. Chair Mitchell replied that they will talk more and see if they have enough people who can drive. He and Mr. Schoefmann stated that they can drive. Mr. Kuhn stated that he can if it is after 4:00 PM.

Mr. Lins stated that he can host one of the meetings for hosts at his house, if the PCC determines a date. Discussion ensued about scheduling those three meetings. The group decided to have a host meeting at Chair Mitchell's house on Tuesday, August 26, at 6:00 PM. Chair Mitchell stated that if needed, they can plan the next meeting on that date.

Chair Mitchell stated that he assumes they (the PCC) will do a radio visit, which he assumes everyone is in favor of, as they have done it in the past. Discussion ensued about including German guests, and doing it on the Thursday or Friday at the end of the visit. Chair Mitchell stated that he will get it arranged.

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

Chair Mitchell stated that they are still working on the budget.

C) Pumpkin Festival 2025 – Continued Discussion of Plans, Budget, and Donations

Chair Mitchell stated that he thinks they are in good shape with this. He asked if anyone has leftover materials from last year's Pumpkin Fest. Discussion ensued, and PCC members spoke about items they believe could be donated or easily acquired, and about who has a tent and how to protect it from wind.

5) Communications:

Chair Mitchell stated that the only communications he is aware of are the ones about how the dance exchange went so well, which is great. A golf exchange would be great to have. They (the Einbeck committee) are still holding their breath for a soccer exchange. Mr. Schoefmann stated that there is still hope for a brewery exchange, too.

Mr. Kuhn stated that Mr. Blunt's committee had an interesting fundraising situation arise this month. Mr. Blunt stated that the Cheshire Fair did not give them the contract for doing the parking, due to a mix-up, which put the (MC2 Committee) in a \$4,000 hole, since they had been anticipating getting that money.

Chair Mitchell stated that people have brought up the topic of (somehow fundraising through) gambling. Discussion ensued about how the casino gives a certain amount of its proceeds to registered non-profits, and what the law is, and how non-profits can sign up for it. Mr. Schoefmann stated that he will talk with the City Attorney about this and get her take on it.

Ms. Howe asked if Ms. Brunner has heard anything from Gina DeSantis about the "Flocktober" event that was supposed to be happening in September. Ms. Brunner replied no. Ms. Howe replied that she will follow up on that.

- 6) **Reports:**
 - A) **Treasurer Report – Eric**
- 7) **New Business**
- 8) **Next Meeting: September 9, 2025**
- 9) **More Time**
 - A) **Fundraiser – cookbook/any other opportunities**
- 10) **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 5:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
Nicole Howe, Executive Secretary