

City of Keene
New Hampshire

PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

5:00 PM

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

Members Present:

John Mitchell, Chair
Councilor Michael Giacomo
Councilor Andrew Madison
Dawn Thomas-Smith
Doris McCollester
Gregg Kleiner
Gerald Lins, Alternate

Staff Present:

Helen Mattson, Executive Assistant

Members Not Present:

William Schoefmann, Vice Chair
Mayor George Hansel
Mari Brunner
Kürt Blomquist

1) Call to Order

Chair Mitchell called the meeting to order at 5:21 PM.

2) Roll Call – Appoint Alternates (if required)

Roll call was conducted.

3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting – October 17, 2023

Mr. Lins made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of October 17, 2023. The motion was seconded by Councilor Giacomo and passed by unanimous vote.

4) Board Business

A) Pumpkin Fest Review – Sales – Volunteers/Ideas for next time

Chair Mitchell asked for people's thoughts on how it went (selling food) at Pumpkin Fest. Councilor Giacomo replied that he has heard nothing but good feedback about the PCC's booth. Ms. Mattson stated that the PCC made about \$850 from this fundraiser. Discussion ensued about

how it went, and about the PCC's plans to apply again next year. Chair Mitchell expressed appreciation for all of the PCC members, volunteers, and family members who helped with the event. Ms. Thomas-Smith expressed appreciation for all that Chair Mitchell did as well.

B) Review of Student Exchange with MC2 (Oct. 9 to 22)

Chair Mitchell stated that Derek Blunt is not here to report out on this. He continued that he himself had some informal emails with folks from Einbeck, which expressed that everyone was very happy with the exchange and the students enjoyed themselves. They are looking forward to Keene students going to Einbeck at the beginning of next year.

C) Review of September's Keene/Einbeck Exchange with Hosts

Chair Mitchell asked for feedback from hosts, regarding how the exchange went and what the PCC can learn from it for next time. Discussion ensued. Councilor Giacomo spoke of how the negatives they heard about were mostly out of the PCC's control, such as a venue canceling the group's reservation, and some card payments not working during their trip to the seacoast. He continued that other than those two bumps in the road, all the folks they hosted and spoke with had a good time. He spoke about how the PCC could have done better with the trip to the seacoast. Ms. McCollester stated that she thinks the visit was very good overall. Others agreed.

Chair Mitchell stated that he thinks the hosting went well. He continued that he did not hear any concerns from any of the German guests. Discussion ensued and Ms. McCollester spoke about how one person had to switch hosts after one day.

Councilor Giacomo stated that it would be good to send a note to the hosts to get their feedback, because some of the hosts are not on the PCC.

D) PCC Exchange Survey/Facebook Updates, Media Outreach

Ms. Thomas-Smith stated that she does not have any updates about Facebook. She continued that she does not have access to the survey - Mr. Schoefmann and Ms. Brunner do.

Ms. Thomas-Smith asked what "media outreach" refers to, and if that is something they want to plan for going forward. Ms. Mattson replied that she thinks it was something the PCC was going to try to consider on a regular basis. Discussion ensued about education and awareness, having links to the Chamber of Commerce and NH Tourism Board, and other links of interest to people visiting Keene or NH. Ms. Thomas-Smith stated that she can put together something for review.

5) Communications

Chair Mitchell stated that as touched on at the last meeting, he received a communication from Jürgen Herbst. He continued that in January, Einbeck will send Keene an official invitation for next year's visit. The PCC should start planning as best they can.

Chair Mitchell stated that Wally Secord is planning to visit Einbeck for Jorg Meisret's 80th birthday, traveling in a couple months. He continued that maybe they should consider traveling as a group. That is something to discuss at the February meeting. Discussion ensued.

6) **Reports**

A) **Treasurer Report**

Mr. Kleiner reported that the PCC cleared \$850.80 (at Pumpkin Fest). He continued that the appropriation account balance is \$7,116, and the other account's balance is \$13,666. Ms. Mattson stated that some things may have been posted to the wrong account, but she and Mr. Schoefmann will get together and try to figure that out.

7) **New Business**

A) **Discuss additional guidelines/expectations and Visa requirements to be added for people from Keene traveling to Einbeck**

Chair Mitchell stated that he thinks Ms. Mattson said that for (travel to Einbeck that is) under 90 days, they do not have Visa (requirements). Ms. Mattson replied that is correct.

Chair Mitchell asked if the PCC is interested in creating a (working group) to discuss and put together guidelines and expectations for hosts and travelers. He continued that he will be in the working group but does not need to be in charge of it. Discussion ensued. Others agreed with the idea of creating a working group, and Councilor Giacomo, Councilor Madison, Ms. McCollester, and Mr. Mitchell volunteered to join it. The working group members will determine when to meet, sometime the first week of January.

8) **Next Meeting – January 9, 2024**

9) **More Time**

A) **Fundraising Ideas/Opportunities**

Chair Mitchell stated that they will skip this item for now.

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

Chair Mitchell stated that he had been putting this off while the PCC was focused on the visits from Einbeck, but now it is time to really think about soccer again. He continued that he has talked with several people, but has not found a person who can lead the soccer exchange.

Everyone he has talked with thinks it is a wonderful idea but cannot be in charge of it, for one reason or another. He needs the PCC's help in finding someone who can take this on. Discussion ensued. PCC members suggested people to talk to. Chair Mitchell spoke of how Einbeck is very much ready to go with the youth soccer exchange, and how getting it reestablished will be an important task for the PCC this year.

Chair Mitchell asked Ms. Mattson to make the soccer exchange an agenda item under "Board Business." They can drop the "review of September's exchange." Councilor Giacomo replied that (before they drop "review of September's exchange"), they really should email the hosts who are not PCC members and ask for their feedback. He continued that that would really have value, especially in light of the PCC's conversations about guidelines and expectations.

Councilor Giacomo stated that he does not know when his membership term on the PCC officially ends, but after this month, he will no longer be the representative from the City Council. He continued that he will apply to continue as a regular member, and Councilor Madison will be the ex officio member. Discussion ensued about PCC membership terms.

10) Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 5:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker