



City of Kennesaw
2529 J.O. Stephenson Avenue
Kennesaw, GA 30144

Leslie Steinle - Chair
Dana Johnson – Vice Chair
James Auld
Neil Brunetz
Travice Obas
Sheb True

KENNESAW SISTER CITIES COMMISSION (KSCC)

February 23, 2022 – 6:00 P.M.

Meeting Minutes

Council Chambers

I. Call to Order / Roll Call

Leslie Steinle called the meeting of the Kennesaw Sister Cities Commission to order at 6:03 P.M. in the City Hall Council Chambers, 2529 J.O. Stephenson Ave, Kennesaw, GA.

Commission Members Present: Neil Brunetz, Dana Johnson, Travice Obas, Leslie Steinle

Commission Members Absent: James Auld, Sheb True

Commission Liaisons Present: Andrew Gasparini, Luke Howe

Guests in Attendance: Paulina Guzman, Teri Simmons, Dr. Yvonne Smith, Andrea Hall

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

1. January 26th Minutes

- Neil Brunetz motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Travice Obas. Vote taken, motion passed unanimously.

III. Financial Report

IV. New Business

1. Atlanta Sister Cities Commission

- Paulina Guzman, Deputy Director of the Atlanta Mayor’s Office of International Affairs, shared a presentation on the history, composition and efforts of the Atlanta Sister Cities Commission and provided recommendations for the KSCC in its early endeavors.
- Dana Johnson asked if selection priorities change over time depending on administration. Paulina Guzman said yes and shared that sometimes relationships form organically or symbolically rather than one based on established objectives.
- Dana Johnson asked if the recommended “one activity per year” was reciprocal for both sister cities. Paulina Guzman said it depends on the sister city relationships but recommends having an annual event per sister city relationship.

**The next scheduled meeting of the Kennesaw Sister Cities Commission will be
Wednesday, March 23, 2021 at 6:00 P.M.**

- Teri Simmons, former Atlanta Sister Cities Commission Chair and current board member of Sister Cities International, and Dr. Yvonne Smith, Chair of the Montego Bay-Atlanta Committee Chair, introduced themselves to the board and shared their experiences working on Atlanta’s sister cities initiative.
- Dana Johnson asked what is the one piece of guidance the guests would give the KSCC at this stage. Teri Simmons recommended finding the people who are engaged with the potential sister cities. Paulina Guzman recommended utilizing social media as a marketing tool and start building connections with people in the community interested in international relations. Dr. Yvonne Smith recommended engaging young people.
- Leslie Steinle asked if the City of Atlanta ever matched finances for metropolitan global efforts. Paulina Guzman said they don’t match costs for efforts outside of Atlanta and are not currently looking for more sister cities, but she offered support in connecting the KSCC with resources when selecting a sister city.
- Dr. Yvonne Smith asked what was the impetus of forming the KSCC. Andrew Gasparini shared Kennesaw’s background of underutilizing international resources and previous attempt to form a sister city relationship with Xinchang, China. Dr. Yvonne Smith recommended tapping into the previous efforts of connecting Kennesaw globally.
- Andrew Gasparini asked what was Atlanta’s most active sister city relationship and why that is. Paulina Guzman said that the Montego Bay-Atlanta sister city relationship is their most successful and active relationship based on community support, proximity. She also recognized Toulouse because of its entrepreneurial exchange and Taipei because of its relationship to another organization in Atlanta. Teri Simmons said that the Nuremberg relationship relied on private-public partnerships to support its program.

V. Old Business

1. Selection Criteria

- Andrew Gasparini shared the selection criteria ideas submitted by the absent commissioners.
- Leslie Steinle asked if Andrew Gasparini could compile. She recommended diversity of community members, local sports teams, historical/cultural parallels, business trade opportunities and equal commitment to pursuing a successful sister city relationship. She suggested setting a timeline to review a relationship before formalizing or renewing sister city partnership. She mentioned also potentially pursuing sister cities based on personal relationships.
- Neil Brunetz recommended including population size, suburb of metropolitan area and presence of university.

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- Dana Johnson asked if the KSCC could receive demographic information of the city and county and a contact list of existing educational relationships, international organizations and other resources available to leverage.
- Travice Obas said she'll compile information regarding study abroad programs and international relationships
- Leslie Steinle asked if the City could publicize what the KSCC is doing. Luke Howe agreed.
- Andrew encouraged commissioners to think of what makes Kennesaw unique as part of the criteria so that those aspects can be utilized.
- Dana Johnson asked if the KSCC's agenda could space out every other month to better digest the information and have enough time to work on developing criteria. Leslie Steinle agreed.
- The commissioners agreed to send Andrew Gasparini their selection criteria ideas to be put into a working document and shared with the commissioners to continue working on over the next month.
- Leslie Steinle asked about the status of full membership to the KSCC. Andrew Gasparini said the KSCC still had one vacancy that could be filled by a community member and asked the commissioners to publicize the opening to people they think would be a good fit.

VI. Public Comments

1. Andrea Hall introduced herself.

VII. Staff Comments

1. Internet Use and Email Policy

- Andrew Gasparini reminded the commissioners who choose to use their City emails to sign the Internet Use and Email Policy.

VIII. Adjourn

Dana Johnson motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Neil Brunetz. Vote taken, motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:26 PM.