

City of Keene
New Hampshire

PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, April 13, 2021

5:00 PM

Remote Meeting via Zoom

Members Present:

John Mitchell, Chair
William Schoefmann, Vice Chair
Mari Brunner
Lena Kridlo
Councilor Michael Giacomo
George Hansel

Staff Present:

Helen Mattson, Staff Liaison

Members Not Present:

Kürt Blomquist
Dr. Delene White
Dawn Thomas-Smith

1) Call to Order

Chair Mitchell read a prepared statement explaining how the Emergency Order #12, pursuant to Executive Order #2020-04 issued by the Governor of New Hampshire, waives certain provisions of RSA 91-A (which regulates the operation of public body meetings) during the declared COVID-19 State of Emergency. He called the meeting to order at 5:05 PM.

2) Roll Call – Appoint Alternates (if necessary)

Roll call was conducted.

3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting: March 9, 2021

Mr. Schoefmann made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of March 9, 2021. Mayor Hansel seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

4) Board Business

a. Planning for Future Exchanges with Einbeck

1. Future Exchange Ideas – YMCA, Dance, Rugby

Chair Mitchell stated that things will become exciting soon, as we can all return to normal behavior. He is sure the exchanges will do the same. He asked if anyone had an update on the YMCA, dance, or rugby ideas.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that the rugby club is aware of the opportunity. He continued that they will begin training soon. It is a matter of travel returning to a certain degree of normalcy, to assess what that might look like. It would be beneficial if anyone has contacts in Einbeck, regarding athletics. He would be happy to start reaching out to people in Einbeck about this and see what their expectations are for an athletic club that comes to visit, because it is not just about playing rugby. Maybe they would be introducing the game of rugby to Einbeck. Chair Mitchell replied that there are a couple people he could put Mr. Schoefmann in touch with right away; they can talk about it.

2. Student Pen-pal Ideas

Chair Mitchell reported that he has had some correspondence with Einbeck and the pen-pal idea has been picked up – however, it is teachers of 16-18 year old students who are interested, and in Keene the pen-pals are middle school students. He is not sure why they are hearing from the high school group, but Einbeck is as anxious as Keene is to do something, so although they are not completely lined up, at least it is a positive response.

b. Discuss Promotional Activities/Media Opportunities to help promote PCC events and exchanges

Chair Mitchell asked if anyone had discussion. Hearing none, he moved on to the next item.

c. Fundraising Ideas – Survey with donate button

Chair Mitchell stated that most of the fundraising ideas and activities are on hold right now. He asked if anyone had discussion.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that there is the Google Doc survey that Ms. Thomas-Smith sent out. Ms. Mattson replied that she sent the link out today. Mr. Schoefmann replied that there is a little confusion regarding the survey. To recap: they had a draft, and gave feedback. He asked Ms. Mattson if Ms. Thomas-Smith put a draft together as well. Ms. Mattson replied yes, that is what she emailed the link to. She continued that Ms. Thomas-Smith had done a survey a while back and then Dr. White put a survey together. After discussion in earlier PCC meetings, Ms. Thomas-Smith sent out her comments on it. She (Ms. Mattson) copied the comments, on all of the questions, and emailed it to everyone in a document. If everyone is okay with it, she can go in and make those changes and the PCC can look at it again. Mr. Schoefmann replied that it would be good to get the survey out sooner than later; it seems like they have been spinning their wheels a bit.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that tying in to the survey discussion, they had talked about starting a Gmail account for the PCC; that was on his list of things to do. He got confused about the conversation happening with the IT Department. He asked Ms. Mattson for clarification. Was someone from IT going to start that account? Or should he just do it? Ms. Mattson replied that that was the original plan, but she decided to wait until this meeting and see. If the PCC wants her to contact IT to have that set up, she will. Mr. Schoefmann replied that he will just set that Gmail account up and they can put the survey up through that.

Councilor Giacomo stated that regarding fundraising, the Keene Young Professionals Network (KYPN) is working with the City of Keene to put on a food festival June 5. He continued that part of that will be a Beer Garden. The PCC had talked about beer tasting, and Brewtopia has the potential to get kegs or cans of Einbeck beer, if the PCC is interested. The point of the event is to support local restaurants and breweries and 100% of the proceeds go to the restaurants and breweries. If the PCC was interested in doing a booth at the Beer Garden to support the PCC, since the PCC also lost all funding this year, this is something to talk about. The potential for money-making is unknown right now; the KYPN is promising the restaurants and breweries that all net proceeds will go to them. Fundraising for the event is going well. The PCC participating in the event would require buying cans or kegs and a special tap, and someone would have to be licensed to serve, and would sit out there collecting tickets and it would work like your typical beer festival. German-style beer might be a welcome change for folks who are not into the beers that are heavy on hops, like New England is known for.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that he thinks this is a good idea. He continued that it would just take a couple volunteers to pull off. He will be there and could help. Discussion ensued. Ms. Mattson stated that she can take tickets but cannot pour beer. Mr. Schoefmann asked if anyone is a licensed pourer. Discussion continued about people's interest in and willingness to be trained and licensed, and what that would entail, or if they could find someone who is already licensed and would be willing to volunteer at this. Chair Mitchell stated that it sounds like he, Ms. Kridlo, and Mr. Schoefmann are all willing and available for this event. Councilor Giacomo added that the event is from 12:00 to 5:00 PM on June 5, and then breakdown, and breweries at 10. The event will provide ice. The PCC would need to bring a table, and while they could do cans or a keg, the cans are simpler although more expensive. Mr. Schoefmann asked if Councilor Giacomo had an idea of how much beer they would need to have. Councilor Giacomo replied that he is not sure – maybe one 20-liter. They also need a custom tap handle for about \$50 or \$60. Cans would be easier.

Mr. Schoefmann asked if anyone has contacts at the brewery (in Einbeck). Free swag would be great to draw people in. Chair Mitchell replied that he has a lot of things they could use. He suggested a raffle. Discussion continued about logistics. Ms. Kridlo stated that the shipping times from Germany are very slow right now, which is something to keep in mind.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that it sounds like this is something they can pull off. Councilor Giacomo stated that he will put the PCC's logo up on the website for this event. Discussion continued about items that can go on the table and who has what.

5) Communications

Chair Mitchell asked if anyone had communications to bring up. Hearing none, he moved to the next agenda item.

6) Reports

a. Treasurer Report – Delene

Chair Mitchell stated that he assumes the Treasurer Report is stable.

7) New Business

a. Holiday Market in Keene

Ms. Brunner stated that she, Mr. Schoefmann, and Dr. White have been meeting with Beth Wood to discuss the idea of doing a Holiday Market in Keene. She continued that they want to do something similar to the popular Holiday Markets in Germany, Scotland, Switzerland, and other European countries. They are set up in pedestrian areas, typically for the month of December, with entertainment and food, and vendors set up in specially-built and decorated wooden huts. The German Studies program at Keene State College (KSC) is fully on board with doing this. It would be nice to have the PCC have a role in it, not an organizing role; more of a sponsorship role. The PCC could have a booth that promotes the exchange and it could be an opportunity to fundraise. The idea would be that different businesses and non-profits could sell items in the downtown area during the holiday season, for a weekend or even just a day.

Ms. Kridlo stated that in Germany the City provides the huts for businesses or craft vendors to rent. Discussion ensued about the huts, and the logistics. Ms. Brunner showed the two-page proposal they put together for this, including photos of the decorated wooden huts, as examples. She continued that the idea is still preliminary and they have not yet reached out to a lot of the people on their list. They wanted to run it by the PCC and see if the PCC is supportive. They hope it could become an annual event that draws in tourists, and that the event increases awareness and support of the Partner City program.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that they met with Andy Bohannon, Parks, Recreation, and Facilities Director, who was all for it, and Kürt Blomquist, Public Works Director, who gave them some constructive feedback on the logistics. He continued that he thinks it is a matter of trying to piece more organizations together to lead the charge. He asked Ms. Brunner what she thinks the next step is.

Ms. Brunner replied that she would love feedback from the PCC members. She continued that she is not sure if this would be able to happen this year, or if it would debut in 2022, but they would really like to have the PCC's support because the idea grew out of the PCC trying to think of ways to help promote the Partner City program.

Ms. Mattson stated that she thinks it is a great idea. Ms. Kridlo stated that she thinks this event could run itself, once there are huts, because then you only need vendors in the huts. She continued that of course there are issues of licensing, insurance, and so on and so forth. In Germany these Holiday Markets basically run themselves and are huge money-makers. Councilor Giacomo stated that a first step would be to identify the organizations that would be interested in partnering to run this. In order for the event to run itself it has to become an established entity that people pay attention to. Marketing is a big task. These Holiday Markets are common in Europe but people are not familiar with them here.

Ms. Brunner asked if people think this is in line with the PCC, and if the PCC is willing to be a sponsor. She continued that by "sponsor," she means putting the PCC's name on it. Ms. Mattson replied yes, it's definitely something to consider. She continued that the PCC participated in the Pumpkin Fest, but now this event has lapsed. Chair Mitchell replied that the Pumpkin Fest is a reminder that there really is support for this type of event; the community is obviously interested. Discussion continued about event logistics.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that maybe the next step is to create a Google Doc for this, once he starts a Gmail account for the PCC. He continued that will share a link and people can start putting in ideas for groups to contact, and even better, specific people to contact at the groups. Ms. Brunner replied that they already started brainstorming a list of partners, which she will send out. She continued that they need actual contact information/names of people at the organizations.

Ms. Kridlo asked if the PCC would be running this event, or another group. Mr. Schoefmann replied that the PCC would not be the best entity; it takes a larger conglomerate of people. Ms. Brunner stated that they do not want the PCC to be the lead organizer, because the committee structure is not the best format to organize an event like this. Having to have the numerous planning and organizing meetings be publicly-posted committee meetings would be difficult. But they definitely want the support of the PCC. She, Mr. Schoefmann, Dr. White, and Ms. Wood will continue reaching out to organizations to see who is willing to help out and run with this idea. It is great to have the German Studies Department at KSC fully on board. Ms. Kridlo stated that she is glad to help. Councilor Giacomo stated that the food festival idea came out of the City's reopening committee, and then the KYPN stepped up to run the event, with the City sponsoring and helping promote it but not organizing it, and a similar structure could work well with this if they identify an organization wanting to take this on.

8) **Next Meeting: May 11, 2021**

9) **More Time**

a) **Review Rules of Order and Compare with Other Advisory Boards**

Chair Mitchell asked Mayor Hansel if they should keep this item on more time. Mayor Hansel replied yes.

b) Student Exchange – Update on Postponement

Chair Mitchell stated that the high school principal has put the exchange in the parent newsletter; that is the only update.

10) Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 5:51 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Edits submitted by,
Helen Mattson, Staff Liaison