

City of Keene
New Hampshire

PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, August 9, 2022

5:00 PM

**2nd Floor Conference Room
City Hall**

Members Present:

John Mitchell, Chair
William Schoefmann, Vice Chair
Councilor Michael Giacomo
Mari Brunner
Kürt Blomquist, Ex-Officio
Doris McCollester
Gregg Kleiner

Staff Present:

Helen Mattson, Executive Assistant

Members Not Present:

Mayor George Hansel
Dawn Thomas-Smith
Lena Kridlo

1) Call to Order

Chair Mitchell called the meeting to order at 5:05 PM.

2) Roll Call – Appoint Alternates (if required) – Introduce New Member Doris McCollester

Vice Chair Schoefmann conducted roll call, welcoming new member Doris McCollester, and guest Rebecca Todd from Stonewall Farm.

3) Minutes of Previous Meeting – June 14, 2022

Mr. Kleiner made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of June 14, 2022. Councilor Giacomo seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

Ms. Mattson stated that she has a clarification to make, regarding this portion of the June 14 meeting minutes:

Line 165: Discussion ensued about whether the PCC should meet in July and/or August, or if just the people planning to travel to Einbeck should meet unofficially. The group decided to

have an official PCC meeting on Tuesday, July 12, in addition to a separate, private meeting of the people traveling. PCC members noted that the private meeting of people who are traveling to Einbeck cannot have a quorum of PCC members present. There will be no official August meeting of the PCC.

Ms. Mattson stated that not as a correction to the minutes, but as a point of clarification, it should be noted that the official meeting scheduled for July 12th was canceled. She continued that an unofficial meeting was held July 20th for travelers only, at the home of John Mitchell. The August meeting proceeded as scheduled.

4) Board Business

A. Discuss Stonewall Farm Oktoberfest - opportunity to participate – Rebecca Todd, Executive Director

Chair Mitchell asked to hear from Rebecca Todd.

Ms. Todd stated that Stonewall Farm is planning an Oktoberfest, a family-friendly event that includes games and a beer garden. She continued that it will be modeled on a true, German Oktoberfest. Stonewall Farm would like to highlight the relationship between Keene and Einbeck, Germany. They are trying to source beer from Einbeck and would welcome the PCC's assistance, suggestions, and contributions. She spoke with the Mayor, who suggested the PCC might want to have a table at the event or do some educational work around the partnership.

Councilor Giacomo asked if it is separate from the event the Sentinel is hosting at Stonewall Farm. Ms. Todd replied yes, and the Sentinel's event has changed locations.

Discussion ensued about the PCC's possible involvement, and who from the PCC will be in Keene at the time, since the event will be at the same time as the Keene delegation will be in Einbeck. Chair Mitchell asked if Stonewall Farm hopes it will be an annual event. Ms. Todd replied yes. Chair Mitchell questioned whether it could be a potential fundraiser for the PCC. Ms. Todd replied yes, possibly. Discussion continued. Chair Mitchell stated that he is sure the PCC can be involved in some way, but probably their involvement could be greater *next* year, considering that several PCC members will be in Einbeck this year at the time of the event.

Mr. Blomquist suggested maybe Mr. Schoefmann and someone else could take the PCC's fact sheet that Ms. Mattson has, reproduce it on poster board, and have it displayed at the Stonewall Farm event. Chair Mitchell added that Ms. Thomas-Smith probably has information to use as well, and photos. Discussion continued.

Ms. Brunner asked if Stonewall Farm is planning a Holiday Market event for the winter. Ms. Todd replied yes. Mr. Blomquist replied that the PCC might be able to be more involved in that event. Ms. Brunner stated that the Holiday Market event might be a better target for the PCC this year, given the timing, and in future years, the PCC would be more prepared for Oktoberfest. Ms. Todd agreed and stated that she likes the idea of the PCC having informational materials at

Octoberfest this year; the PCC does not have to have someone sitting at a table this time. Chair Mitchell replied that he is confident the PCC *can* arrange to have someone sitting at the table. Discussion continued. Chair Mitchell thanked Ms. Todd for coming to them with this opportunity and continued that they are happy to work with her and Stonewall Farm.

Councilor Giacomo gave Ms. Todd advice about potential local sources of Einbeck beer for the event. Discussion ensued about the logistics of Einbeck beer. Councilor Giacomo asked Ms. Todd to let the PCC know if there is anything specific Stonewall Farm would like the PCC members/Keene delegation to get from Einbeck, for next year's Octoberfest, so they can coordinate that.

B. Planning for Keene Delegation to Einbeck – October 7-15, 2022

1) Discuss a list of people the committee would like to connect with in Einbeck and topics

Chair Mitchell stated that the only update he has is that anyone going to Einbeck who has not heard from their host family should be patient, because the Einbeck Committee will be meeting on the 26th and everything will be finalized then. Everything is on track with the Einbeck Committee and going well. Einbeck has emphasized that they will slightly tone down the pace of the visit. Discussion ensued regarding the number of people going in the Keene delegation, which Ms. Mattson reported is 12.

Chair Mitchell briefly interrupted the agenda and asked PCC members to introduce themselves to new member Doris McCollester, and for Ms. McCollester to introduce herself as well.

Councilor Giacomo asked if the Einbeck Committee plans to release the full itinerary when they meet on the 26th. Chair Mitchell replied that he does not know. Discussion ensued.

Chair Mitchell asked if anyone had general questions about planning. Mr. Kleiner asked if Elizabeth Cardine and the other person from the charter school are still going. Chair Mitchell replied yes.

Brief discussion ensued about flights, transportation, and other logistics.

C. Discuss “Taste of Keene” for next year. Brats and Kraut sales – potential free use of grill and donation for brats and kraut

Chair Mitchell asked if there was anything to discuss now about next year's Taste of Keene event. Mr. Kleiner stated that it will definitely be happening. Chair Mitchell stated that he knows the PCC cannot sell beer anymore. He asked if the PCC will be able to sell brats and kraut. Mr. Kleiner replied that he does not see why not, as long as they follow the same rules as the other food vendors, regarding the Health and Fire inspections. Chair Mitchell replied yes,

they have done that in the past, while selling at Pumpkin Fest. Ms. Mattson stated that Fire and Health will need to inspect the grill.

Chair Mitchell asked if there is support from the PCC, and if PCC members feel they can show up to do this event. Discussion ensued. Mr. Blomquist stated that it sounds like there is PCC support, and around January, they will need to start gathering a list of volunteers to help. Chair Mitchell stated that they need food donations as well. He continued that donations of food and supplies might be challenging, and it is not too early to start working on this. He will talk with people who used to sell at Pumpkin Fest on behalf of the PCC, to see who they got donations from in the past. Ms. Mattson stated that insurance should fall under the City umbrella plan – same as Pumpkin Fest - or under the event’s insurer.

D. PCC Exchange Survey/Facebook Updates – if any

Mr. Blomquist suggested the PCC ask Ms. Thomas-Smith to give one or two PCC members who are going to Einbeck the ability to (post to) the PCC’s Facebook page, with a few photos and blurbs about what is happening.

E. Brewery Connections – Discuss the last two membership slot(s). Branch and Blade or Elm City – Will

Mr. Schoefmann stated that this is something for PCC folks to discuss with Einbeck folks when they are in Einbeck, as Mr. Blomquist was saying – what do they want to focus on, in terms of discussion points? He would be happy to talk with someone about a potential brewery exchange.

Chair Mitchell asked PCC members to email him regarding potential conversations they want to have, such as the brewery connections, or golf, or anything else. He continued that he will forward those emails (to Einbeck), and that will start Keene’s conversations with Einbeck about how to broaden the connections. Mr. Blomquist replied that they might want to follow up with Parks & Rec, because the last time Einbeck folks came here, the delegation included the Director of Recreation from Einbeck and two staff members, and the idea was for it to be a YMCA sort of connection. He continued that one of the things Chair Mitchell will be doing is sitting down and going over, like they used to do with Albert Thormann, [the list of topics and ideas]. Einbeck wants to continue that YMCA/Parks & Rec/Youth connection. That is something that has been lost, with the loss of the soccer exchange. Chair Mitchell agreed but asked everyone to please email him with these topics and ideas. He continued that he knows of at least two sports/fitness groups in Einbeck that are eager to do exchanges with Keene. Ms. McCollester asked about music as a potential connection. Chair Mitchell replied absolutely. Ms. McCollester replied that Germans are very into classical music in particular. Chair Mitchell replied that Keene State College does a chorale group exchange. Discussion continued.

5) Communications

Chair Mitchell stated that he has no communications to report, beyond what he already reported in agenda item 4.B.

6) **Reports**

A. Treasurer Report

Mr. Kleiner reported that per Ms. Mattson's email, the figures have not changed; there is \$19,000 in the PCC account and \$5,000 from the City allocation. However, they are not in the new system yet, because the Finance Department is still migrating over, so the PCC cannot access the money right now.

Mr. Schoefmann made a motion to accept the treasurer report. Mr. Blomquist seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

7) **New Business**

A. Discussion about gift ideas for Einbeck's mayor from the PCC to be presented by the acting mayor

Mr. Schoefmann reported that his visit to an artisan's fair introduced him to the work of an artist in Westmoreland, which would go with the PCC's discussion of a gift of Walldog art. Mr. Blomquist replied that that sounds good. He continued that they need to keep transportability in mind. Discussion continued. Chair Mitchell stated that he has an idea, which would not be for this October trip, but for future trips when sports groups and school groups from Keene are going to Einbeck – what if the PCC came up with a certain theme, and each group gave Einbeck an art piece that fit the theme? He continued that if each art piece given goes together, Einbeck could have a wall (say, in the new town hall) dedicated to this collection that would continue to increase. That would be easier for Einbeck folks, rather than continuing to search for wall space for multiple, individual pieces. He continued that in the meantime, it would be great if Mr. Schoefmann could follow up with this Westmoreland artist. Mr. Schoefmann replied yes, and added that Ms. Brunner can talk with Prime Roast about a lead on another artist as well, who may have something like what Chair Mitchell is talking about, on a more consistent basis. Discussion continued.

Ms. McCollester asked if Keene has ever given Einbeck a city key. Usually that is done mayor to mayor. Mr. Blomquist replied that they have done that in the past, but possibly not since Kendall Lane was mayor. Ms. McCollester stated that it could be on a plaque. Discussion continued. Councilor Giacomo stated that there is also a book of Walldog murals, as possible gift. Mr. Blomquist spoke in favor of the Walldogs book and one or two mural prints at a time. He asked if he should make a motion to authorize a certain amount of PCC funds for that.

Mr. Kleiner stated that the PCC already did two different motions – one for \$500 for fundraising items, and one for \$500 for the official gift from the PCC. Ms. Mattson stated that she will find out how much it would cost to have a city key made. Ms. Brunner stated that she is looking at

the meeting minutes, and it seems like the PCC had said that they *should* make a motion to authorize funds for the gift, but never actually did.

Chair Mitchell stated that it seems like they have competing gift ideas. He asked if that is accurate. Mr. Schoefmann replied that he thinks they should look at both gift ideas. Chair Mitchell asked if he means bringing this back to the next meeting. Mr. Schoefmann replied no, they could do this via email.

Ms. Brunner suggested they authorize Chair Mitchell to make the final decision. She continued that they can authorize him to spend up to a certain amount, and he can make the decision based on what is actually possible based on the time period and the budget. Discussion ensued about the potential cost of the key/plaque and the book and prints, and the transportability of them, and the options, including which Walldog print to use.

Ms. Brunner made a motion to authorize Chair John Mitchell to spend up to \$300 to purchase a gift for the PCC's trip to Einbeck. Councilor Giacomo seconded the motion.

Discussion ensued about the amount. Other PCC members advocated for "up to \$500" instead, just in case.

Ms. Brunner stated that she will amend her motion to "\$500" instead of \$300. Councilor Giacomo seconded the amendment. The amended motion passed by unanimous vote.

Councilor Giacomo stated that he can get the book, and asked Ms. Brunner if she can talk with Judy Rogers at Prime Roast. Ms. Brunner replied yes. Ms. Mattson asked, for clarification, if the idea is to get the book, a print, and perhaps a key. Chair Mitchell asked if the PCC is comfortable with their ability to accomplish this in time for traveling in October. Others replied yes.

8) Next Meeting – September 13, 2022

Chair Mitchell stated that the next meeting is September 13, 2022. Discussion ensued about whether a quorum is likely to be present. Ms. Mattson stated that Ms. Thomas-Smith is planning on coming.

9) More Time

- A. Student pen-pal ideas – high school 16-18 year olds**
- B. Discuss Keene Sentinel's James Rinker, digital community engagement journalist – media opportunities to help promote PCC events and exchanges**
- C. Fundraising Ideas/Opportunities**
- D. Future Exchange Ideas – YMCA, dance, rugby**
- E. KSC Music Department – interest in exchange for 2023 (KSC to Einbeck)**

Chair Mitchell asked if anyone has anything to say about any of the items that are on more time.

Ms. Brunner stated that the student pen-pal idea was an idea the PCC had thrown out there due to COVID-19 restrictions, as a way to maintain connections when it was not possible to do in-person exchanges. Others replied that it is okay to take it off the agenda now. Chair Mitchell stated that now the charter school is getting involved, and the high school has expressed an interest in continuing the exchange.

Councilor Giacomo stated that regarding fundraising ideas and opportunities, he was elected as Interim President of Let It Shine. He continued that this year there is not much happening; Let It Shine is trying to get together with the downtown group and the Chamber, to see if they can get something small put together for this year. Next year they have more planned for Pumpkin Fest. They will keep the PCC in mind and in the loop.

Chair Mitchell asked Mr. Schoefmann about rugby. Mr. Schoefmann replied he will be in Einbeck and they could find a place to meet perhaps. He continued that he may try to find an opportunity to link up with some of the local clubs by reaching out ahead of time, telling them he will be in Einbeck. Chair Mitchell replied that they can email the mayor in Einbeck, who has a wide sports connection. He asked if he can give the Bürgermeisterin Mr. Schoefmann's name. Mr. Schoefmann replied yes he could.

Mr. Kleiner suggested taking James Rinker of the Keene Sentinel off of the more time list, because Mr. Rinker has not responded. Others agreed. Ms. Mattson stated that she thinks Mr. Rinker got overwhelmed, because there were so many non-profits wanting to work with him.

Ms. Brunner stated that she talked to Gina De Santis who is really into soccer, and told her that the PCC used to have a youth soccer exchange and wondered if she would be interested in helping start it up again. If anyone is interested, they could reach out to her to talk about it. Discussion ensued.

10) Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 6:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
Helen Mattson, Staff Liaison