

City of Clearwater

*City Hall
112 S. Osceola Avenue
Clearwater, FL 33756*



Meeting Minutes

Thursday, July 27, 2017

4:00 PM

Council Chambers

Sister Cities Advisory Board

Roll Call

Present 5 - Chair Sallie Parks, Vice Chair Terrence Gourdine, Board Member Candace Hays, Board Member Pamela Gene Benton, and Board Member Desaray Dilday

Absent 1 - Board Member Hoyt Hamilton

Also Present - Christopher Hubbard - Cultural Affairs Specialist, Patricia O. Sullivan – Board Reporter

Awaiting approval

1. Call To Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. at City Hall.

To provide continuity for research, items are in agenda order although not necessarily discussed in that order.

2. Approval of Minutes

2.1 Approve minutes from April 27, 2017 meeting

Member Benton moved to approve minutes of the April 27, 2017 Sister Cities Advisory Board meeting as submitted in written summation. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.

3. Citizens to be Heard Regarding Items Not on the Agenda

Anthony Davis urged the Sister Cities Board to recommend the City Council recognize the CSCI (Clearwater Sister Cities, Inc.) sponsored Young Ambassadors' Program as an official sanctioned program of the City's Sister Cities program.

James Wallace recommended the City recognize the Young Ambassadors' Program, which has operated continuously for many years while providing great benefits to the community and the Nagano-Clearwater Sister City relationship.

Cultural Affairs Specialist Christopher Hubbard said CSCI was one of the City's Sister Cities program's two pillars. The citizen organization CSCI was an important asset; CSCI dutifully continued Middle School exchanges with Nagano while the City's High School exchange program was on a temporary hiatus, beginning in 2008.

Support was expressed for the request. It was noted CSCI was not asking the City to take over its program.

Member Hays moved to advise and encourage the Clearwater City Council to recognize the Clearwater Sister Cities, Inc. sponsored Young Ambassadors' Program as an officially sanctioned program of the City of Clearwater Sister Cities Program. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.

4. New Business Items

5. Old Business Item

5.1 Update on High School Exchange Program

Mr. Hubbard presented photographs of High School Exchange participants in Nagano. The new program was successful. He complimented the high caliber students who represented the City and Sister Cities program in Japan and reviewed student activities, which included visiting schools, meeting the Mayor, participating in a festival as American representatives, attending a tea ceremony, and touring. It was hoped the exchange experience will encourage students to pursue careers in world politics and international relations and business.

Board members were encouraged to attend the High School Exchange participants' presentation to the City Council on September 7, 2017.

Mr. Hubbard said details were being worked out for the Nagano exchange student visit to Clearwater.

6. Director's Report

Board Member/CSCI Representative Hays said the Young Ambassadors trip to Japan from June 6 – 21, 2017 was a success and the students had a wonderful time. She said they looked forward to making a presentation to the City Council. More than 100 people attended CSCI's Tanabata festival in July. A presentation was scheduled for Pinellas County teachers re the Young Ambassadors program to attract new chaperones for the 2018 trip. The Japanese Tasting Event was planned for September. She thanked Clearwater Library staff for displaying photographs of festival attendees who dressed in Okato style clothing and for listing the event on its website.

Member Hays recommended the City start planning for its next Sister Cities delegation visit to Japan which may coincide with the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo.

Mr. Hubbard suggested the 2020 High School Exchange Student, Young Ambassador, and City delegation trips could be coordinated. He congratulated CSCI for their excellent efforts and successful Tanabata festival which attracted a large number of residents, including City

Councilmembers.

7. Board Members to be Heard

Member Hays said it was important to encourage additional Clearwater students to be more involved in the Sister City exchange programs.

Member Hays moved to advise and encourage the Clearwater City Council to, during its next City Budget appropriations meeting, to establish 2 permanently sustained Special Hardship Funding Components, in the amount of \$3,700 each, for the purpose of providing financial aid to cover costs, for up to 2 economically distressed Clearwater families to send their middle school aged children on a Clearwater Sister Cities student exchange to Nagano, Japan – a cultural and learning opportunity that would otherwise be beyond the economic means and abilities of these families to offer to their children.

It was also moved that, in the event that 2 children, residing within the same qualifying family unit, should become eligible to participate in the same student exchange to Nagano, Japan, that qualifying family shall be eligible to receive both of the \$3,700 Special Hardship Funding Components.

The total requested funding for these 2 sustained Special Hardship Funding Components, for the families of eligible middle school aged students, equals \$7,400.

It was further moved that the City of Clearwater Council appoint an official entity or specific designee to determine the eligibility of each recommended family requesting to receive Special Hardship Funding, and then, upon qualifying, each family's eligibility to receive such financial assistance, subsequently distribute these funds to Clearwater Sister Cities, Inc. to be used solely for the selected qualifying family or families. The motion was duly seconded.

Member Hays said funds would cover travel throughout Japan for a 14-day trip along with lodging, airfare, and \$300 in spending money to cover assorted expenses.

Upon the vote being taken, the motion carried unanimously.

Member Benton reported the teacher exchange participants had returned from Nagano and reported having a wonderful time. The final report was not yet available. Next year, participation in the exchange will be open to any teacher in the district. Nagano provides exchange teachers with a stipend almost large enough to cover expenses, including the purchase of gifts. Teachers stay with host families. Some travel independently around Japan before or after the exchange.

Mr. Hubbard reported Japan was represented at the WBSC Junior Women's World Championship tournament underway in Clearwater.

8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Chair - Sister Cities Advisory Board

Attest:

Board Reporter