

Sister Cities Commission of the Town of Hartford, VT

Meeting is called to order 5:25 pm

Present: Joan Ponzoni, Brett Mayfield, Havah Walther, Pat Stark, Brenda Lamphere, Leo Puller

Update from commission about local interest between area schools and Cenon.

Thatcher Hinman from HHS had wanted to attend but had a conflict. He sent word that he will be contacting Cenon school contacts and that his students will be working on a project centering on the Bordeaux region.

In Cenon, our main contacts for educational liaison are Mr. Guendez and Laila Merijou (sp?). They are interested in exchanges for HS, MS, and elementary school ages. This might look like a facetime/skype relationship between classes, or maybe travel/exchange opportunities. Joan recounted her experience meeting with Cenon school children and reported high interest and excitement about speaking English.

Sports involvement may have an overlap in hockey teams. Both cities have regional teams that are well ranked.

Chamber of Commerce ED, PJ Skeehan has expressed strong support of the arrangement and is eager to support business exchanges or informational exchanges as appropriate.

Rotary club member Gayle Ottman voiced potential overlap with their youth exchange program.

Pat recommended researching how other US cities are engaging with their sister cities.

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Possible connection for a cancer awareness group, Elle Pluerelle (sp?) who organize 5K style marathons in international forums. Joan expressed that the group had strong interest in organizing an event in Vermont. Brett brought up other organizations currently in our area who host marathons for cancer, "Dirty Girl" in Killington and The Prouty which is area wide. Brett is to follow-up with links for those websites for the Elle group.

The group felt it was time to begin planning an invitation to a French delegate. Discussion included 3-5 delegates, in either home stay or local hotel accommodations. Cenon will host another 3 Hartford residents this November, Joan will reach out to get this year's dates.

Pat began a conversation about increasing membership of the commission in light of the real work that will have to begin soon. Ideas for this included: Hartford list-serv, town website, facebook, flyers in the libraries, post offices, and Town Hall. The hope is that now that a 2 year relationship with Cenon is ongoing and healthy, more people (perhaps local French speakers) will be more interested in joining the commission.

In the Bordeaux region, 6 major US companies have a significant presence with very little ex-pat community. Cenon will be celebrating our fledgling Sister City relationship by naming their next new train car (on the Cenon-Bordeaux line) after our town and the Hartford car will don our name and an image of our seal.

Brett moves to review the new bylaws as homework and to review again at next meeting. Havah seconds. All approve.

Pat asks if payments are current to Sister City International. Joan feels sure that they are but will follow up. SCI has requested copies our formal agreement paperwork with Cenon. Joan will follow up with this too.

Next meeting 5:15 February 28th at Town Hall, room TBD.

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Brett moves to adjourn, Havah seconds.

Adjourned 5:00pm.