



Minutes

International and Multicultural Advisory Committee (IMAC) Meeting
December 7, 2016 7:00-8:30
Vision Room, CA Headquarters

In Attendance: Valerie Montague, Magdalena Castro Lewis, Pat Fisher, Marcy Gitt, Alex Hursky, Kathleen Martin, Linda Potsiadlo, Arna Rubman, Suzanne Walker, Bob Anantua,
Subcommittee Chairs: Momina Malik (Haiti), Hui Dong (China),
CA Staff: Laura Smit, Grace Chang, Erin Cutroneo

Welcome and Introductions - Everyone in attendance introduced themselves.

Chair's Report - Valerie Montague

- Reported that thousands of books have been collected for the Ghana book drive. Ghana committee has received some shipping quotes and that enough funds (approximately \$2500) have been collected to cover the costs of shipping the books to Ghana.
- Announced that the CA and Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) have signed the partnership agreement last week with BOE members and CA staff on November 30, 2017. The agreement outlines the objectives of CA and HCPSS, including the facilitation of the school staff getting involved in CA's multicultural programs and in marketing CA's programs to the schools. Suggestion was made to enlist the involvement of the PTAs and parents to obtain these objectives.

Program Manager's Report - Laura Smit

- Announced that the Sister Cities High School Exchange program now currently has four opportunities to travel to sister cities. Stated that the new Tema, Ghana exchange program is being promoted through usual marketing channels, but is also targeting special interest groups within the high schools. Explained that the Haiti exchange is a program led by Bob Anantua through the Global Leadership Program.
- Reported that six students attended the information session for the European exchange program. There were not any students who attended the Ghana information session held on December 5, however, the meeting was a good opportunity for the committee members to discuss the issues of the public's perceptions of Africa, the myths, the dangers. These issues will be addressed at the high school presentations.
- Announced the Central American CultureFest held on October 16 went extremely well. Laura thanked everyone who helped out with the festival.

Approval of Minutes - motion was passed to approved the minutes of the October 5, 2016 meeting.

Reports from Sister City Committees

Cergy-Pontoise (CP) - Laura Smit.

- CP program coordinator sent an email asking about an adult exchange program, possibly in April, 2107. Due to the busy schedule planning for CA's 50 Birthday celebration, it was suggested that the French guests visit in June for the CA 50th celebration. The fall was also suggested as a possible visit timeframe.
- Recommendation was made to draft a letter to the CP committee outlining date options for the exchange.

Tema - Laura Smit

- Ghana is currently holding their national elections tonight, and addressed the possibility of a change in Tema's mayoral office as this position is appointed by the national administration
- Tema is looking to send librarians to Columbia in 2017, although timing needs to be considered due to the numerous CA 50th birthday events.

Cap-Haitien - Momina Malik

- The Haitifest is scheduled for Jan 22, and a request was made for volunteers to help out with the event. Guests speakers, entertainment, Haitian artwork for display and for sale are being finalized for the event. Committee is seeking Haitian authors.
- The Haitifest will also have a donation table during the event, as well as an online site for people to make donations for Hurricane Matthew relief.
- Valerie reported that three to four people from Delta Sigma Theta Sorority would be able to help out during the event
- Language concerns were discussed when hosting people from Cap-Haitien. Bob Anantua stated that while Creole is the spoken language, Haitians are also learning English, and that the Global Leadership Program (GLP) provides translators.
- Bob Anantua described the GLP as a ten-day program that has in the past four years sent a group of students, adults and professionals to engage culturally with a Cap-Haitien suburban community to work around different topics and issues, including, education, environmental sustainability, and public health. He reported that great benefits have been achieved through the program, where he has witnessed the visible changes in the Columbia participants' perceptions of the Cap-Haitien community within days of their visit.

Tres Cantos - Pat Fisher, Chair

- Reported no changes since last report, communication has been slow between the two parties.
- Due to a very bad economic situation, including unemployment and high crime, this program is not a high priority within the Tres Cantos community

China Sister City Planning Committee (Liyang, Jiangsu Province) - Hui Dong, Vice Chair

- Jun Han held a meeting at the Chinese School that meets at HCC on December 4, with 17 attendees to discuss Liyang's Sister City status.
- A Letter of Intent required by the Chinese government to establish a new sister city relationship has been submitted (in Chinese and English) to the *National Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries* for approval.
- Liyang is interested in developing an international school in Liyang, and the planning committee would like to request the help of CA and HCPSS to help develop the program. Hui Dong asked that CA help facilitate communication between all parties.
- IMAC made the following recommendations:
 - Await the approval of the Letter of Intent from China, and continue to seek CA Sister City status
 - Advised that Liyang committee thoughtfully consider how CA can help facilitate their goals, also emphasized that a lot of the work will need to be done by Liyang members.
 - Present a well-prepared presentation to the CA Board when all has been considered and upon receipt of the Letter of Intent. April was suggested to make the presentation, as a new board will be established at that time.
- Inquired about CA's response to the invitation by Liyang to visit the city in China. Laura stated that the earliest date in consideration would be in October.

Columbia's 50th Birthday Celebration (50th) - Art show and Dance Performance - Laura Smit

- A draft Invitation to the Sister Cities of the 50th anniversary Art Show was distributed for review.
- Requested volunteers to serve on the Art committee, to help with the artwork received from Sister Cities for display during the 50th Birthday celebration, and to ensure adherence to the artwork specifications outlined by CA and the Columbia Art Center.
- A recommendation was made that the invitations should clearly state that CA will not incur the cost of travel for artists to attend the celebration. A suggestion was made to establish a live online chat for artists during the event for those who could not travel to Columbia.
- Concerns were raised on the high \$10,000 deductible stated in insurance policy provided by CA to artists as outlined in the invitation.
- Question was raised whether artwork displayed can be from non-sister cities.
- Hui Dong asked whether Liyang could submit artwork. No recommendation was made to include artwork from Liyang.
- The 50th Birthday committee has asked CA to acquire performers/entertainers for three events: Columbia Mall on March 2017, outside the Rouse Company Foundation Gallery (HCC) on June 11, and the Columbia lakefront on June 24.

Discussion of Columbia's Values

- Copies of emails written by Sister Cities Committee members, requesting CA to make a public statement about tolerance and inclusion following election results and racially-biased incidents within HCPSS and the community, were distributed.
- Copies of a compilation of statements made post-election by leaders of Columbia, Howard County, the State of California and City of San Francisco reaffirming our/their community values were distributed.
- Several members expressed their deep disappointment in the lack of initiative on CA's part to issue a strong statement. It was noted that President Milton Matthew's column published in the Dec 5, 2016 issue of *Business Monthly* is a not clear statement reaffirming CA's values.
- It was discussed that, although CA is a private entity, that should not be a deterrent from CA putting out a values statement.
- Pat Fisher, a long standing IMAC member and resident of CA, expressed that she is deeply offended that CA is not taking a stand, and as an immigrant, she feels that CA is not standing up for her and other minorities who live in Columbia and pay CA fees. Pat stated that, due to CA's lack of response to the current issues, she is resigning from IMAC as of this meeting.
- A motion was passed by the committee to request the CA Board to make a strong and clear statement, restating the principles and founding values of Columbia.
- Suggestion was made to discuss the IMAC Committee's name change from Multicultural to Intercultural upon review of the IMAC charter which is to be included in the next meeting's agenda

Ghana Book Drive - Tema Public Library & Narh-bitu Nursing College

- Volunteers are still needed to help sort and pack books on Dec 10 and Dec 17

The next IMAC meetings will be held on February 1 and April 5, 2017