



Minutes

CA International and Multicultural Advisory Committee (IMAC)

March 7, 2018 * 7:00-8:30 pm

Vision Room (Boardroom) @ CA Headquarters

Present: Valerie Montague, Marcy Gitt, Sue DiPaula, Lucie Geinzer, Farida Guzdar, Jun Han, Alex Hursky, Barbara Kellner, Linda Potsiadlo, Carol Jo Roeder, and Arna Rubman

Sub-committees: Jean Salkeld (Chair, Cergy-Pontoise), Magdalena Castro-Lewis (Chair, Tres Cantos), Bob Anantua (Chair, Cap-Haitien), Gabriel Pomary (Chair, Tema), Hui Dong (Chair, China Planning Committee – Liyang)

Guest: Laurie Liskin

CA Staff: Laura Smit, Grace Chang

1. **Welcome and Introductions** – Members introduced themselves and indicated which Columbia village they live in.
2. **Chair’s Report:** Valerie Montague thanked Jean Salkeld, Chair of the Cergy-Pontoise Subcommittee for providing her subcommittee’s report in advance. She also encouraged those present to volunteer for upcoming events.
3. **Program Manager’s Report:** Laura Smit reported that she visited Cap-Haitien and the village of Camp Coq in Haiti with Bob Anantua from The Build Haiti Foundation and 3 others, along with her Program Assistant, Grace Chang, from January 21- 28, 2018 (at their own expense). She mentioned that that over the past two years she has visited Ghana, China and Haiti, getting to know Columbia’s sister cities and sister city “in the works”.
4. **Approval of January 10, 2018 Minutes**
 - There were some corrections. Page 2, line 20 – “Valerie added that photos that we already have...”; Page 3, line 3 – “...and those who went on past Cuisine Exchanges.”
 - Page 3, line 8 – “...Jean and Linda Potsiadlo...” Page 3, line 18 – “...at the Central Library.”
 - Page 3, line 29 – “...will be realized in 2019.” Page 3, line 39 – “Suzanne Waller...”
 - Magdalena Castro-Lewis moved that the minutes be approved as amended. Sue Di Paula seconded. The Minutes were unanimously approved.

5. Presentation by China Sister City Planning Committee - Marcy Gitt and Jun Han

- The China Planning Committee made a slide presentation and showed a six-minute promotional video about Liyang, China to IMAC members requesting their approval to develop a sister city relationship with the city of Liyang in Jiangsu province, China.
- Marcy reminded IMAC members that the first China presentation was made in January of 2016. Since then, the China Committee has been researching and discussing the proposed relationship between Columbia and Liyang. In October 2017, a delegation of 21 people visited Liyang. Members of the delegation did a slide show for IMAC on their trip in Dec 2017.
- During the presentation, Valerie and other IMAC members asked questions and made suggestions to improve the presentation that will be made to the CA Board.
- Following the presentation, Valerie asked if IMAC members were in favor of supporting the Liyang presentation to the Board. IMAC members voted unanimously to recommend that the China Sister City Planning Committee proceed to present to the Columbia Association Board of Directors asking for their approval to sign the sister city agreement with Liyang.
- The presentation to the CA Board has been tentatively scheduled for April 12. Laura will let IMAC members know when the date has been confirmed, so that IMAC members can attend the presentation to show their support.
- Jun Han reported that the Mayor of Liyang and a delegation of 3-5 people will visit Columbia in May to, hopefully, sign the official sister cities agreement, assuming that CA Board approves Liyang as a 5th sister city for Columbia, and that Liyang gets approval to proceed from the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC). The Chinese delegation plans to visit other cities during their trip to North America, including their sister city in Canada.
- Given that the presentation to the CA Board can be only 15 mins, there was some discussion as to whether to show the entire Liyang promotional video to the CA Board on April 12, whether to send it via email ahead of time or show just a few minutes of it. While it was agreed that the video gives a good feel for the beauty of the surrounding environment and the cultural amenities of Liyang, some felt that it was perhaps enough to show just a few minutes of the video, and send the Board members the rest of the video via email. Others felt that the whole video should be shown. After a series of motions and votes, the final decision was to allow the China Planning Committee's presentation team to decide how much of the video to show, given the time constraints imposed by the Board for the entire presentation, including Q&A.

6. Reports from Sister City Subcommittees

a. Cergy-Pontoise – Jean Salkeld, Chair

- Jean reported that she had received very nice New Year's greetings from the CAJA and translated the card.
- The Cergy-Pontoise subcommittee does not meet on a monthly basis, but Jean has confirmed the membership of the committee at +/- 18 people.
- The subcommittee is collecting items for the Cergy-Pontoise table on April 22, 2018 at the Explore Columbia's Sister Cities event at the Columbia Mall.
- The subcommittee met for an hour before the IMAC meeting today to discuss a CAJA-organized Artist Exchange from September 14-21, 2018 in France. The CAJA is inviting artists from their four sister cities to exhibit their work at the Chateau de Grouchy in Osny,

one of the Cergy-Pontoise villages (Erkrath, Germany; Lancashire, UK; Tres Cantos, Spain: and Columbia). Laura will request the marketing materials for the Artist Exchange - including a flyer, Artist Application, Art Specifications and Art Form – and it is hoped that Claudia Lafuse, a member of the committee and a CA graphic designer will create them. The CAJA indicated that they would like the applications no later than April 30, 2018, but preferably by April 12, which means we need to have the materials to send to the artist community asap.

b. Tres Cantos – Magdalena Castro-Lewis, Chair

- Magdalena reported that she has not received a response to the email she sent a few months ago to the heads of various departments in Tres Cantos expressing interest in developing the Cuisine & Wine Exchange that was first discussed a few years ago, under the leadership of Pat Fisher.
- Laura explained that our sister city relationship has always been with the Casa de la Juventud (Youth Center) since 1990, and that this adult exchange would need to be run by another department of the city of Tres Cantos that works with culture or adult activities. It is the directors of these departments that seem to be unwilling or uninterested in getting involved in an adult international exchange. The head of the Casa de la Juventud had given us introductions to the other two departments a few years ago.
- The two Spanish artists, Flor Orjales and Emma Lomoschitz, who were here in June 2017 for the Sister Cities Art Exhibition at HCC, have expressed great interest in the Cuisine Exchange but said that finding host families for adults would be difficult.
- Laura advised Magdalena to follow up on her email with the directors she had contacted, as well as Flor and Emma, who might be able to facilitate communications in Tres Cantos.

c. Tema, Ghana – Gabriel Pomary, Chair

- The subcommittee has not met since the last IMAC meeting, but has a meeting scheduled for March 21.
- A 10-day tour of Ghana has been developed by Gabriel Pomary's travel agency (September 13-23, 2018) to encourage Columbia/HC adults to visit and get to know Ghana. This tour was organized as the committee was unable to recruit students to sign up for the 2017 summer student exchange and it appears that parents are nervous about sending their children to Ghana (despite it being safer than traveling to Europe). People have many preconceived notions about Africa. Committee members were encouraged to let their family and friends know about the trip, which is on the CA website (ColumbiaAssociation.org/Multicultural). Laura sent out the itinerary for the trip earlier, but will resend to IMAC members.
- Gabriel reported that the Tema Committee had agreed at their last meeting to adopt the Tema Public Library as their project. This is the library that we collected 262 boxes of books for in the fall of 2016 (along with medical books for the Narh-Bita Nursing School library). Gabriel visited the Tema Public Library in October 2017 with Frank Asante, the PR officer from the Tema Mayor's office. He found that it was undergoing renovations and needed more shelving to accommodate the books we sent, as well as needing other infrastructure renovations.

- It seems that renovations have halted due to a lack of money. Laura explained that the Tema Public Library is a Tema Metropolitan Authority facility, so funding comes from the Mayor's office. There is a new Mayor in Tema and priorities may have shifted. Gabriel stated that he would like to see the Tema Committee raise funds for the Tema Library. Various fund-raising ideas were discussed. Valerie suggested that Tema Committee members could visit Rotary groups and approach Ghanaian organizations in the U.S. Laurie Liskin, who has experience with development projects, recommended that a business plan be in place before approaching anyone for donations.
- Bob Anantua, Chair of the Cap-Haitien Sister City Committee, stated that any plan to help the Tema Library must have input and buy-in from the librarians and citizens of Tema. He said that it cannot be a plan developed by Americans outside Ghana without having "boots on the ground". Gabriel, who is Ghanaian-American, responded that he understood that, and said that he would like to form library project subcommittees both here and in Tema to coordinate the efforts. He also mentioned that one of the newer Tema Committee members, Nana Owusu, is the Director of Howard Community College's Library and Learning Commons and is Ghanaian-American. He is interested in supporting the Tema Library project.
- The Tema Public Library project will be discussed at the Tema Committee's next meeting.

d. **Cap-Haitien – Bob Anantua, Chair**

- The subcommittee met on January 8, 2018 and held elections. Bob is the new chair, Greta Swanson is the Vice-Chair and Momina Malik is the Secretary. Only seven of the 23 members were in attendance. Bob is working on contacting committee members who have not been heard of for some time, and finding new committee members.
- A team of 6 people traveled to Cap-Haitien, Haiti in January: Bob, David Weeks (Glenn Country School teacher and Build Haiti Foundation Board Chair), Oletha Devane (McDonough art teacher) and her husband, Laura Smit and Grace Chang. The purpose of the trip was to get to know Columbia's sister city, experience Haiti, and prepare for the Build Haiti Foundation's Global Leadership Program that will be held from July 7-16, 2018. The team stayed in the home of Bob's uncle in the small village of Camp Coq where the Build Haiti Foundation runs its Global Leadership Program every summer.
- In Camp Coq, they worked on various projects with the Visione Moderne school and delivered school supplies and money collected by Folly Quarter Middle School, which covered the tuition for 32 students at the school. They met with Visione Moderne high school students who will participate in this summer's GLP and filmed videos with the principal for a fundraising movie that David Weeks is preparing to help raise funds for the school. They also delivered used soccer cleats, balls and uniforms the team had collected in Columbia and taken to Haiti to the schools that participate in the GLP summer soccer tournament.
- In Cap-Haitien, the team explored the city and surroundings, visited the impressive World Heritage Site - the Citadelle fort, met with the Mayor of Cap-Haitien, visited a Universite St Christophe and Notre Dame high school, held a productive meeting with representatives from Cap-Haitien's two other American sister cities, Ft. Lauderdale, FL and Portland, ME, and got to see some early carnival street parades.

- Bob would like to show photos from the trip at the next IMAC meeting as there wasn't time to do so today.
- Bob reported that the Cap-Haitien Committee is preparing materials for the Cap-Haitien table at the Explore Columbia's Sister Cities event on April 22, 2018. Its next meeting is on March 13, 2018.

7. **“Explore Columbia’s Sister Cities” Event Planning**

- The event will be held on Sunday, April 22, 2018, from 1 – 5pm at the Columbia Mall. The Mall in Columbia is the sponsor and providing the use of the Lord & Taylor court free of charge.
- There will be six tables: one for each sister city, a China table (Liyang), and a CA International Exchange & Multicultural Programs (IEMP) table. Laura needs help from each subcommittee chair to provide information for the handouts and signs for each table.
- Each sister city will have two music or dance performances of 15 mins each. Laura is working to confirm the performers. Each needs to have a CA contract and will receive a stipend of \$200.
- Laura passed around a volunteer sign-up sheet so that members could sign up to volunteer at either or both the IEMP table and at individual sister city tables.
- Laura confirmed that Haitian and Ghanaian artwork can be sold at the event.
- Individually wrapped packaged food will be allowed.
- Magdalena suggested sister city give-aways like magnets, pens, etc.
- Jun Han said the China Committee would like to sell small things to raise money for the Liyang subcommittee, like a calligraphy bookmark for \$1.00.
- Arna reminded us to think of ways to connect the event to Earth Day which is April 22.

8. **Ideas for Fundraising for Alex Waters Fund at Community Foundation of Howard County**

- A culinary institute could donate food and charge \$50 a plate to raise money.
- Ask a restaurant to donate a certain amount of money from a specific day.
- Get students involved who may want to go on the exchange by having a car wash.

9. **Next IMAC Meeting Dates are May 8 and July 10.**

Valerie said that the next two IMAC meetings will NOT be on our usual 1st Wed of the month. Laura will be out of the country on May 2 and July 4 is a holiday. The May meeting will be on Tuesday, May 8. The July meeting will be on Tuesday, July 10.

Upcoming Programs and Events

- China Committee Presentation to CA Board, April 12, 7:30pm
- Explore Columbia's Sister Cities: April 22
- World Languages Café: March 27, April 24, May 22
- International Book Club: March 14, April 11, May 9

Respectfully submitted, Susan DiPaula, Secretary