



## Minutes

**CA International & Multicultural Advisory Committee (IMAC) Meeting**  
**February 5, 2020 7:00-9:00 pm**  
Vision Room (Board Room) @ CA Headquarters

### 1. Welcome & Introductions

**IMAC Members:** Marcy Gitt (Chair) welcomed the IMAC members and visitors from the Rockville Sister Cities Corp. In attendance, IMAC: Bob Anantua, Kim Banks, Magdalena Castro-Lewis, Hui Dong, Renee Dubois, Marcy Gitt, Farida Guzdar, Joan Halloway, Alexandra Hursky, Kathie Martin, Valerie Montague, Jean Salkeld, Arna Rubman

**CA Staff:** Laura Smit, Grace Chang

**Visitors:** Rockville Sister Cities Corp members, Steve Fisher, Kuan Lee, Drew Powell

**2. Chair's Report** – Marcy Gitt spoke about attending the Annual Meeting of Baltimore Sister Cities, Inc. on January 10 with Laura Smit, Farida Guzdar, Hui Dong and Jun Han of the Liyang Committee and Bob Anantua of the Cap-Haitien Committee. The Annual meeting itself was formal and not especially relevant to IMAC, however, the potluck dinner presented a good opportunity to network. Baltimore has eight Sister Cities; their newest is in Changwon, South Korea. <https://baltimoresistercities.org/>

**3. Program Manager's Report** - Laura Smit reminded IMAC members that she will be retiring as Program Manager of CA International Exchanges and Multicultural Programs in August. Laura said that it has been a great job for the past ten years and asked members to think of people who may be qualified and interested in applying for the position. The search for her successor will formally begin on March 16. Laura reported that there has been an inquiry of interest from a city outside of Seoul, South Korea, to form a Sister City relationship with Columbia. The request came to her from visitors who were originally in Maryland meeting with Howard County Executive Calvin Ball. Laura put forward the need to create a formal *Memorandum of Understanding* between CA and the Howard County Government for further cooperation in such matters. Laura passed out a worksheet on "How Do the Best Leaders Avoid Miscommunication".

**4. Approval of December 9, 2019 Minutes** - Jean Salkeld, Co-Secretary The minutes

were reviewed and approved on a motion by Magda Castro-Lewis and seconded by Joan Halloway.

**5. Presentation by Rockville Sister Cities President - Drew Powell** After introducing the two other visitors from Rockville, Steve Fisher and Kuan Lee, Drew gave a brief history of the Rockville Sister Cities Corporation, which was incorporated as a 501c3 nonprofit corporation in 1986. Rockville began its first formal relations as a Sister City with Pinnenberg, Germany, in 1957. Their newest Sister City (2019) is Yilan City, Taiwan and they have Friendly Relations City status with Jixiang, China. Drew noted that Montgomery County has a very diverse population--approx one-third of its inhabitants were born outside the USA. He described some of the events that take place on the Sister Cities Calendar of Events for 2020, including the Lantern Festival and the Taiwan Bubble Tea and Food Festival, which draws 3,000 people. There was a discussion including Marcy, Magda, Bob and Valerie regarding the financial aspects involved: fundraising, membership dues, scholarships, corporate sponsors. Drew put forward his suggestion that there be a citizen-to-citizen committee formed on each side of the ocean.

**6. Chinese Cuisine Demonstration & Dinner - Fri, Feb 21** - Grace Chang Grace reported on the upcoming fourth event in the series of cooking demonstrations and dinners. This will feature renown local chef and restaurateur, Peter Chang, at the River Hill Community Center. She stated that this will be the second money-making event and that there are still a few seats available.

### **7. 3rd Annual *Explore Columbia's Sister Cities* Event**

- Sun, March 22, 1-5pm at Columbia Mall - Lord & Taylor Ct Marcy said that we will be repeating this successful event where we honor our five Sister Cities.
- Laura Smit agreed to act as MC for the event
- Laura is getting in touch with the Performers (dancers and instrumentalists) who performed at the last events, as well as reaching out to new ones.
- A sign-up sheet was passed around for volunteers for the Sister Cities tables & IMAC table.
- Laura asked that each committee make suggestions for packaged food samples at the tables
- We reviewed the six Sister Cities handouts. Changes included: moving Liyang's marker on the global map and removing bullet-train information. Removing Youth and Adult Travel to Haiti, and changing it to Cross-Cultural Leadership Program.

### **8. Reports from Sister City Advisory Committees**

- **Cergy-Pontoise, France** – Jean Salkeld Jean brought copies of a Draft October 2020 Itinerary for the French Adult Cultural Exchange for the IMAC members to look over. The itinerary includes visits to Washington, Annapolis, Baltimore and Mt Vernon. She is pleased with how it is coming together and asked for suggestions and volunteers to host the visitors from France. (Oct 17 - 26, 2020)

High School Exchange (June 27 - July 30) Laura reported that she has received 8 applications to date.

- **Liyang, China** - Hui Dong Hui reported on the successful visit of the Liyang Delegation to Columbia, MD. (Dec 18-19). This was a more casual visit, but they also met with CA Board members, as well as CA President Milton Matthews and Program Manager Laura Smit

The Liyang Sister City Committee had a table at the Lunar New Year Celebration at the Columbia Mall on January 25, and received a Certificate of Recognition from Howard County Executive Calvin Ball.

The Committee held an urgent meeting on February 4 to discuss possible support for Liyang during the coronavirus outbreak in China. Hui noted that there are only 2 confirmed cases and Liyang is a far distance from the epicenter of Wuhan, but is under strict restrictions, including no schooling for students. Medical supplies to prevent coronavirus are difficult to procure.

Plans for the first Youth Ambassadors Trip to Liyang in July are on hold due to the uncertainties surrounding the coronavirus outbreak.

- **Tema, Ghana** – Gabriel Pomary (Gabiell was absent, report given by Laura Smit) Laura reported on the successful pre-screening of the *Black N Black* documentary which was held at HCC on Jan 16 and attended by 45 people. Bob and Valerie, who both attended the event, contributed to the discussion. A draft flyer with event information for three future screenings and discussions was passed around for review by members.

Laura said there is a possibility of a visit to Columbia by the new Mayor of Tema in April.

Laura reported that the April 2020 HCC Spring Break Ghana Study Abroad Program being led by Nana Owusu and Rick Leith has filled with 18 participants. Farida suggested having some of the participants give a talk to IMAC after the trip. Marcy noted the value of collaboration with a partner such as Howard Community College.

- **Cap-Haitien, Haiti** - Bob Anantua Bob reported that the Cap-Haitien Committee's initiative to teach English via Skype at College Notre Dame ran into a roadblock when it was revealed that the Haitian school does not have appropriate camera equipment.

Bob gave a brief description of the political and social upheaval that has been going on in Haiti since 2018. Because of the unrest and uncertainty, trips to Cap-Haitien

have for the moment been suspended. Instead, there will be a Cross-Cultural Leadership Program, July 20-24, at the Glenelg Country School. The program will be open to all Howard County high school and college students.

- **Tres Cantos, Spain** – Magdalena Castro-Lewis Magdalena said that there is nothing new to report for the Tres Cantos Committee High School Exchange (June 28 - July 31) Laura noted that she has 2 applications.

**Next IMAC Meetings, 7pm: April 1, May 27 (Please note the date change from June 3).**

### **Upcoming events and programs**

- **Chinese Cuisine Class** - Feb 21, 6:30pm, River Hill Village Center, \$60
- **3rd Annual Explore Columbia's Sister Cities event**, Sun, March 22 @ Columbia Mall, Lord & Taylor Ct, 1-5pm
- **Youth Artist Competition**, Sister Cities International, Ages 13 - 18yrs, entries Feb 1 - March 9; Award ceremony, March 29
- **Celebrating Aspiring Young Women In Song and Dance**, Sun, March 29, 2-4pm - part of **Visionary Women Paving the Way** during the month of March organized by Columbia Art Center. Laura asked IMAC members for any suggestions or contacts they may have with dancing troupes of young women.
- **Black N Black** Movie Screenings and Discussions
  - Howard Community College, DH100, Wed, March 11, 11am-1pm
  - HCLS Miller Branch, Sun, March 29, 1:30 - 4:30pm
  - Bridgeway Church, Nexus Youth Theater, April 18, 2 - 5pm

### **Ongoing Multicultural Programs**

- **World Languages Cafe**: Feb 25, March 24, April 28, May 26  
50+ Center, East Columbia Library
- **International Book Club** Columbia Association Headquarters, Room 2002  
**February 12 - *The German Club*** by Patrick Oster (Germany) **March 11 - *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*** by Ocean Vuong (Vietnam) **April 8 - *Drive Your***

***Plow Over the Bones of the Dead*** by Olga Tokarczuk (Poland) **May 13 - *The Neighborhood*** by Mario Vargas Llosa (Peru); Original version in Spanish is called *Cinco Esquinas*. **June 10 - *Disappearing Earth*** by Julia Phillips (Kamchatka Peninsula, Eastern Russia)

● **Youth in Conversation:** 2/10, 2/24, 3/9, 3/23, 4/27, 5/11  
Oliver's Carriage House, Kittamaqundi Church

Respectfully submitted, Alexandra  
O. Hursky, Co-Secretary