

Minutes of the Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board Meeting of January 4, 2023

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chairperson Margaret Saavedra called the meeting to order at 12:03 pm.
2. **ROLL CALL:** Members present: Margaret Saavedra, Chair; Lucile Vea, Vice-Chair; Mark Philibosian, Secretary; George Lilly - Kotor, Montenegro; George Pepazacharioudakis - Patras, Greece; Bonnie Carroll - Puerto Vallarta; Linda Matthews - Toba, Japan; Peter Haslund - Weihai, China; Randy Rowse, Mayor; Linda Gunther, Staff Representative
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** On a motion duly made by George Lilly and seconded by Peter Haslund, the minutes of the meeting held on November 2, 2022, were approved.
4. **ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Margaret Saavedra announced that Pat Fallin had not renewed her position on the board. The new board members and positions are Margaret Saavedra, Chair; Lucile Vea, Vice-Chair; and Mark Philibosian, Secretary.
5. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.
6. **REVIEW CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR 2022/2023:** Margaret Saavedra explained that the calendar was meant to be a list of all Sister City committees events. The events are open to all members. Upcoming events include a Dim Sum lunch the first Sunday of every month (delayed by one week in January due to the holiday) at noon at the Chinese Pavilion. There will also be a Chinese New Year celebration there on January 27th. That event will be limited to 50 people on a first come, first serve basis.
7. **SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL (SCI) REPORT:** Margaret Saavedra reported that Sister Cities International is planning an event in South Africa in February. You can reach out to Pat Fallin for more information.
8. **SCI'S SOCIAL REGIONAL MEETING REPORT:** Margaret Saavedra reported that they are planning a virtual Youth Leadership Summit this year and an online Young Artists Expo.
9. **REPORT FROM COMMITTEE ON REQUEST FOR NEW SISTER CITY – MIRAFLORES, LIMA, PERU:** Committee: Georgia Gastounitis, Lucile Vea (Margarita Zaske)

Margarita Zaske reported that Miraflores has a new mayor. He is progressive and is focused on health, safety and tourism. They are planning a trip to Miraflores, Cusco and Macchu Picchu once the political situation in the country calms down. They are ready to move forward with the recognition process. The next step is to get on the Santa Barbara City Council agenda.

10. **REPORT FROM COMMITTEE ON REQUEST FOR NEW SISTER CITY–KINSALE, COUNTY CORK, IRELAND:** Committee: Georgia Gastounitis, Margaret Saavedra, Linda Gunther–ex-officio (Tom McCool)

Margaret Saavedra reported that not much progress has been made.

11. **SCI - YOUNG ARTISTS AND AUTHORS SHOWCASE FOR 2023:** Margaret Saavedra reported that the theme this year is “Peace by Piece: Food security in my community.” Gil Garcia has spoken with Kai Tepper of the Children's Creative Project and she is very interested in supporting this program. They may be able to do school outreach and provide some of the local prizes. Lucile Veal will reach out to the MAD Academy and VADA at SBHS and the Santa Barbara Independent to see if they can do a public service announcement. Mark Philibosian will reach out to Providence and Noozhawk. The deadline for submissions is March 23, 2023.

12. **CHAMBER OF COMMERCE:**

Margaret Saavedra reported that it is time to renew our membership if we are using the membership. Linda Matthews reported that she has used it to advertise their student exchange program. Peter Harland added that their committee is planning an interactive program between the Santa Barbara Chamber of Commerce and the Weihei Chamber of Commerce. George Lilly suggested that we invite a representative from the Chamber of Commerce to present at our next meeting in March. We decided to delay the decision on whether to renew our membership until after we hear the presentation.

13. **REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS:** (Limit 3 minutes each)

Kotor, Montenegro: George Lilly, Representative, reported that they are planning on sending 2-4 students from the SBCC Culinary Institute as interns this summer. They also plan to bring over two interns from an institute for the deaf in Kotor as they have done in the past. They are also working with the mayor of Kotor to create a small business, a kiosk selling food such as pizza, in downtown Kotor that will be run by students. The Santa Barbara Ensemble Theatre is looking to send a production to the Kotor Film Festival. They will also continue the music program between UCSB and the Kotor Arts forum. They are hoping to secure another grant from the US Embassy in Kotor to support this effort.

Patras, Greece: George Pepazacharioudakis, Representative, reported via email after the meeting due to technical difficulties during the Zoom call that Patras Sister City committee was recently restructured following 2 yrs of low activity due to Covid. The

main activities this year will be to plan a student exchange program between Santa Barbara and Patras, a Greek Independence Day (March 25) celebration, a fundraiser to purchase equipment for Children's hospital in Patras. The event will include guess speakers, food, live Greek music, dancing, etc.

Puerto Vallarta, Mexico: Bonnie Carroll, Representative, expressed her enthusiasm for being the new representative for Puerto Vallarta. She thanked Margaret Saavedra for all her hard work. Margaret Saavedra reported that they had a Posadas event in December at the Moose Lodge.

San Juan, Philippines: Albe Dumlao, Alternate, not present.

Toba, Japan: Linda Matthews, Representative, reported that a small delegation from Toba will visit Santa Barbara in March for the rededication of the cherry trees in Alice Keck Park. She is working with City Hall to find a date where Mayor Rowse can be present. They have secured permits to renovate the Japanese garden in Shoreline Park and are finalizing plans. They wanted to host a student exchange program this summer but this is unlikely to happen as Covid is spiking in Japan.

Weihai, China: Peter Haslund, Representative, reported that they will have their first in-person meeting since Covid started on January 14th. The meeting will focus on planning the Chinese New Year celebration. He is working with Weihei to come up with ideas on how to connect in novel ways during this period when we can't visit each other. They are thinking of using Zoom to host sharing sessions between young people in each city or members of the respective Chambers of Commerce.

14. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:04 P.M.

Respectfully submitted, Lucile Veal, Vice-Chair.