

Minutes of the Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board Meeting of March 1, 2023.

1. **Call to Order** Chairperson Margert Saavedra called the meeting to order at 12:01pm
2. **Roll Call** Members present:
 - a. Chair - Margaret Saavedra
 - b. Vice Chari - Lucille Vea
 - c. Secretary - Mark Philibosian
 - d. Kotor, Montenegro – George Lilly
 - e. Patras, Greece – George Pepazacharioudakis
 - f. Puerto Vallarta, Mexico – Bonnie Carroll
 - g. Toba, Japan – Rory Moore (alternative stand-in as Linda Matthews and Gary Maxwell were unable to attend)
 - h. Weihai, China – Peter Haslund
 - i. Representative of the Mayor – Holly Perea
 - j. Staff Representative – Linda Gunther
3. **Approval of Minutes** On a motion made by George Lilly and seconded by Peter Haslund, the meeting minutes of the meeting held on January 4, 2023 were approved.
4. **Announcements** San Juan, Philippines will no longer, effectively immediately, be part of the Sister Cities per request from their representative. Miraflores, Peru has completed the necessary requirements to formally be admitted as a Santa Barbara Sister City. A vote will be held at the next Santa Barbara City Council meeting to get confirmation of their official approval.
5. **Public comments** None
6. **Santa Barbara South Coast Chamber of Commerce** Michele Schneider and Laurie Barene presented on the benefits, activities and overview of the Santa Barbara South Coast Chamber of Commerce. It was confirmed that one membership for the Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board would give all Board members and country representatives access to the benefits. Peter Haslund raised the idea of creating a Sister Cities brochure so it could be included in the Visitor Center, and elsewhere. The brochure will be added as an agenda item for next meeting.

7. **Review of calendar events for 2023**

Greek Independence Day Celebration George Pepazacharioudakis announce the Greek Independence Day Celebration on Saturday, March 18th at 5:30pm at the Saint Barbara Event Center (1205 San Antonio Creek Road). Proceeds to benefit Patra’s Karamandaneio Children’s Hospital.

Dim sum Weihai group will continue to hold dim sum lunches on the 1st Sunday of each month.

Toba, Japan

- 3/4/2023 – Volunteer Day at plant greenery at Torii Garden Project
- 3/31/2023 – Rededication of the Cherry Trees in Alice Keck Park

Puerto Vallarta, Mexico

- July 6 - July 12, 2023: Visitors from PV to Santa Barbara
- July 9, 2023: Dolphin Dive fundraiser in conjunction with Rotary Club
- October 30, 202: Annual visit to Puerto Vallarta

8. **Report from Sister Cities International (SCI)** SCI is looking to create regional meetings rather than a single event for all participants across the world. The intention is to make it easier for people to attend. Margaret Saavedra noted that all of the board members and country representatives have access to the SCI website.
9. **Report from SCI's So Cal Regional Meeting** SCI So Cal will be hosting a virtual, youth panel event which may be of interest to the sister cities. Margaret Saavedra will send the event information to the group.
10. **Report on committee request for new Sister City – Kinsale** Kinsale is no longer an option due to a relationship the city already has with a city in Rhode Island. However, Dingle has requested to try be reinstated as a Santa Barbara Sister City. However, it must go through the full application process to get reinstated.
11. **SCI – Young Artists and Showcase for 2023** An official flyer has been created announcing the event by Margaret Saavedra. The submission deadline is April 15th 2023 with a grand prize of \$250 and a reception on April 22nd, 2023 from 2-4pm at 2215 Santa Barbara St. Art (2-dimensional) and poetry entries will be accepted. Mark Philibosian will connect with the teachers from Providence and Bishop Diego. Margaret Saavedra will work to get the flyer passed to the other local schools.

12. Representative Reports

Puerto Vallarta, Mexico

November/December we had a very successful visit to Puerto Vallarta to celebrate the 50th Anniversary. Over 65 members attended. The elegant re-affirmation ceremony was held on Los Arcos Resort beach. Puerto Vallarta dignitaries were present (a congratulatory video from Mayor Rowse was presented). A beautiful buffet dinner was served on the beach, and a variety of excellent entertainment was provided.

January /February- Mayor Randy Rowse and Councilman Oscar Gutierrez attended the February dinner at Cesar's Restaurant, where our new board members 2023 were lead in the oath of office by Mayor Randy Rowse.

PUERTO VALLARTA, Jalisco, and Port Hueneme, California, formalized their ties of brotherhood on Friday February 10, 2023, with the signing of the Sister City Agreement by Mayor of Port Hueneme Professor Robert (Bobby) Martínez, and the Municipal Trustee, Juan Carlos Hernández Salazar, representing the Municipal President.

Patras, Greece

Annual Greek Independence Celebration on 3/18 with all proceeds going to the children's hospital in Greece. A member has been selected to help materialize the student exchange program between Santa Barbara and Patras. There is a desire to plan another trip to Greece, however it will likely not be until next year, as next year there will be a new mayor of Patras who will be more supportive of the Sister Cities program.

Weihai, China

The group held a successful Chinese New Year celebration, but they will need to look for a bigger venue next year as it was too small and did not allow full autonomy of the event. They will continue meeting on the first Sunday of each month for dim sum at China Pavilion. They are inquiring to determine if there is a desire for a student exchange.

Toba, Japan

On 2/4/23, they co-sponsored an event at the Faulkner Gallery to introduce a new opera production, where several survivors of the internment camps shared about their experiences and took questions from the public. Mayor Rowse was in attendance and gave opening remarks, approximately 200 people were in attendance. On 2/18/23 the Japanese Consul General from LA gave opening remarks at the opera. Japanese TV station NHK filmed both events and will provide footage (it can also be used on the SB Opera's website).

In March, a delegate from Toba will visit to participate in the rededication of the Cherry Trees in Alice Keck Park. All are invited to join.

The group is working with OMNI, Parks & Recreation, and Wade Nomura in the restoration of the Torii Gate Garden on Shoreline Dr. 3/4/23 is a Volunteer Day to plant the remaining greenery at the park. They hope to have Mayor Rowse in attendance.

There is still not a go ahead for a student exchange due to COVID restrictions. The group hopes there is an appetite for visitors in August.

Kotor, Montenegro

Meeting with director of the Resource Center for Education and Rehabilitation of Hearing and Speech Disorders to discuss culinary students at Divino Restaurant in July/August '23.

Meeting with SBCC's culinary dean to discuss SBCC culinary students to intern at Regent Porto Montenegro in Kotor from July to Sep '23.

Meeting with Director of Kotor Art International Music Festival to discuss having one or two students from UCSB perform at festival in August '23.

Meeting with Must Academy of the West to discuss Kotor auditions for the Music Academies Fellows program.

Looking to create a travel package to visit Montenegro and Music festival.

Looking to create a food kiosk operated by graduates of culinary academy in the city of Kotor.

13. **Adjournment** The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:05pm.

Respectfully submitted, Mark Philibosian, Secretary.