



Richmond-Zhoushan Friendship Commission Meeting

MINUTES

June 10, 2020

4pm via Zoom

- I. **Welcome and Roll Call** - Commissioners Sara Zhao, Stanley Li, Matt Lewis, Margaret Lee, Eric Peterson, Alex Golovets, Joseph Kong and Leonard Berry. Councilmember Martinez, Port Director Jim Matzorkis and Staff Liaison Trina Jackson.
- II. **Review and approve minutes from previous meeting(s).** Commissioner Peterson made a motion to approve the minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Li and approved unanimously.
- III. **Treasurer's Report – No change**
 - a. Committee raised funds - \$288.71
 - b. City allocated funds - \$1,000 – Trina informed the commission that the funds will be returned to the general fund if they aren't expended by the end of the month.
- IV. **Reports from subcommittees**
 - a. **Education** - Commissioner Peterson reported that their programs have been postponed due to COVID-19. Hopefully next year, they will be able to resume the programs. The two international students that came to DeAnza actually graduated and one was accepted to UC Santa Barbara. The Mandarin school has record enrollment and continues to grow. Due to funding needs, the school will be reduced from 90% emersion to 50%. The school received a grant from Hewlett for the international baccalaureate program. 50% of the slots are saved for low income students. Due to growth, they are at capacity regarding space. They are working to keep the school in Richmond. The District is discussing this matter and would like to move the school to El Cerrito in the old Portola site. The Serra site is more accessible for local families, but they need more space. The school is pushing for the Adams site, which is a may be a better option.

- b. **Economic Development** - Sara reported that real estate is doing well. Many people are moving out of San Francisco to Mill Valley. There is also interest in moving to Richmond because of the affordability. She further stated that she'd like to work with Matt to brainstorm on potential projects.
- c. **Tourism** - Matt reported that tourism is slowly improving; some Caribbean islands have opened up. However, the US airlines will have layoffs and the connection flights are spotty. Visit Richmond may be dissolving soon due to lack of funding from the hotels that are at low capacity. There are hopes to reopen in a few years.

V. **Pending Old Business** - no discussion

VI. **New Business**

a. ***What COVID related matters or initiatives can the commission look into?***

Stanley mention that in the tech sector, there are discussions on continuing to work remotely. More companies are moving completely remote permanently. Office space is too expensive and working remotely has proven to be viable. There have also been suggestions to reduce brick and mortar spaces to 30% as a cost savings strategy.

b. ***How can the commission take advantage of distance learning? How does the commission react and change to the new normal?***

Eric gave comments about the schools working to figure out how to proceed in the new school year. They are currently reviewing the guidelines from the Superintendent's Office. Students may be placed in two separate groups and have two different schedules to address the social distancing mandate. They'll have to discuss how that will impact the teachers, parents and students. The unions and the ACLU are involved in the discussion. One major issue is many families not having internet access. Distance learning is hard for the students with working parents that may not be able to assist their children during the day.

After hearing about a virtual Mandarin Language summer program provided by Mandarin Matrix for the students, the commission discussed making a donation to the scholarship program to provide funding for children to attend the program. The commission would like to contribute by providing scholarships to the students.

Margaret made a motion to donate \$1000 to the scholarship program and Stanley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Eric will send information regarding the English learning program and request an invoice.

VII. Other matters of interest

Jim has made contact the Jason Huang, Foreign Affairs Director in Zhoushan and Zhoushan has reopened their municipality. There was a suggestion to have a video conference with Zhoushan officials to communicate about the challenges that we are both having and how it impacts our sister city relationship. The commission supports having dialog to help economic growth and other initiatives. Stanley indicated that it is critical to understand what both jurisdictions are trying to accomplish. Martinez is interested in how is Zhoushan adjusting their annual events. The commission continues to discuss potential times and agenda for a video conference. Councilmember Martinez and Jim Matzorkis will reach out to Zhoushan. The proposed timeline is one or two months to plan and explore topics. The target month is August. Sara offered to translate, if needed. The commission would like this item to be placed on the July agenda for discussion. The commissioners are asked to make suggestions at the next meeting for topics.

VIII. Schedule the next meeting - July 15, 2020 at 4pm

IX. Adjourn The meeting was adjourned at 5:02