



Somersworth Cultural Commission

One Government Way
Somersworth, NH 03878

Minutes of Meeting on 10 March 2016: Second Draft

Present: Councilor Dumont, Chair; Councilor Cameron; Councilor Paradis; Richard B. Boulanger; Celeste Feren; Maureen Jackman; Arlene Jones; Rick Michaud; Dylan Zinkovich; Pius Charles Murray, Secretary.

I. Call to Order: At 6:00 P.M. by the Chair.

II. **Approval of Minutes:** Motion to approve the minutes of the February 2016 meeting as submitted was made by Councilor Paradis and seconded by Councilor Cameron. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Selection of Secretary: Motion to name Pius Charles Murray as Secretary of the Commission was made by Councilor Cameron and seconded by Councilor Paradis. Motion was adopted by majority vote, 9-1; Mr. Murray was opposed.

IV. **Vision Development:** The Chair introduced this topic by stating that the Cultural Commission had excellent representation from the French community in Somersworth but needed to increase participation from the Greek, Indonesian, & Irish communities. So successful has this initiative to re-brand Somersworth as a melting pot been, said the Chair, that its effects have spilled over to Berwick, ME.

Cameron, and

contact to

may be

strongly

force

was the

the

examples of

Athletic

Mission-type

who wanted

specific

Considerable discussion was engendered. Ms. Jackman, Councilor Councilor Paradis all believed they had contacts particularly in the Irish community. The Chair has contacted the city's Indonesian community inquire about identifying a potential Commission member. The weakness in identifying a representative from the Greek community. The Chair encouraged members to seek potential members from among neighbors, particularly given the Commission's demographic needs.

In furthering discussion, the Chair stated that the Mayor was the driving force behind the Commission's vision. The Chair reminded members that it was the Mayor's original initiative with Quebec City but the Mayor did not want the Commission's responsibilities to be narrowly confined or defined by that initiative. In light of the beginning of the Commission's planning, activities to engage in could include Student Exchange Programs, and/or contests.

At least initially, the Chair did not anticipate a lot of written Mission-type Statements from the Commission (although he did encourage anyone who wanted to try to do so) but rather that the Commission become involved in specific activities that demonstrated its interests.

- V. **Brainstorming**: Combined with other action or discussion items on the agenda.

VI. Thetford Mines: The Chair introduced this topic by emphasizing its importance given its local ties in Somersworth (Mr. Stephen Renaud, its Superintendent of English-speaking schools, is Ms. Jackman's nephew); the Chair would like to re-establish ties with the Canadian city as part of the Commission's initial planning. Among the possible programs discussed were included athletics, language classes, and cultural exchange activities.

Quebec with

Ms. Feren stated that in April the SHS was planning a trip to students. This could serve as a preview of what the

Commission could
that SHS
program. To re-
Commission

Feren re-
Jackman
Chair stated
but that the
now, the city
initiatives.

the Cultural
to ethnic
history. In this way
who may be
exposure to build

social media.
informed the
which city
that posts
Chair
replied that if

undertake in the future. Ms. Feren reminded the Commission used to have European students visit in an exchange-type undertake such an initiative would take planning as the would not want foreign students visiting with nothing to do. Discussion quickly turned to marketing and publicity. Ms. iterated the need for firm, specific plans for programs. Ms. inquired about publicizing on the Universal Calendar. The that a Universal Calendar is not yet a reality in Somersworth Mayor (and City Council) understand its importance. As of would certainly enter any of the Cultural Commission's

The Chair remarked that it is not necessarily the presence of Commission that is not important, but rather reaching out groups that have been so important in Somersworth's we form partnerships with various artistic or cultural groups interested in space at Hilltop School which does need up public support.

Mr. Murray asked about the City's policy regarding use of He said that at a library trustee meeting the Library Director trustees that the City had adopted a social media policy by departments were allowed to choose one social medium and were one directional (i.e. informational, not dialogic). The responded that he would check with the Mayor. Mr. Murray

media (e.g. quickly raise the Channel 22; the available to sending info to The Chair asked solicit for participation of the Ms. Elaine

the Cultural Commission could use several different social Twitter, Instagram, etc.) it would more easily and more visibility of the Commission and its activities.

Councilor Paradis suggested putting ads or programs on Chair also stated that Channel95, the school's channel, was the Commission. Councilor Paradis also thought that Vision 20/2 would be yet another avenue for marketing. Ms. Feren whom the Commission could contact at SHS to potential members. Mr. Zinkovich inquired about the student leadership in such programs as well as serving on Commission. One possible SHS contact mentioned was Anderson, moderator of the World Language Club.

VII. French Connection: The Chair summarized the Mayor's remarks from the February meeting and asked for input for types of programs to support the Franco-Somersworth Alliance. Ideas such as athletics (excepting perhaps hockey), language classes, and cultural exchanges were put forward. As specific projects are identified and decided upon, individual members may be asked by the Chair to assume project management leadership roles.

VIII. Catholic Schools: The Chair announced that he has asked Richard Boulanger to take on a special project researching the history and importance of the French in the Somersworth School system, including but not limited to the Catholic Schools in the city. The Chair confirmed with Mr. Boulanger that he wished to assume this project, to which Mr. Boulanger agreed.

time of this Commission would like would be to give the

IX. Hilltop School Visit: The Chair announced that the visit to the Hilltop School had not yet been scheduled by the meeting. The Chair re-confirmed that the to visit Hilltop School. The reason for the visit

available there so
activities that could
as
could be some time
place.

Commission members a sense of the physical space
as to engender thoughts as to appropriate cultural
scheduled at Hilltop. Due to weather conditions as well
deteriorating interior conditions, it
before an actual visit could take

X. Signage: There was a repeat discussion of the February discussion concerning signage. As the seasonal flags would be taken down soon, the Commission has been asked to come up with recommendations. One recommendation involved hanging flags of several important ethnic groups in Somersworth's history (i.e. French, Irish, Greek, Indonesian, and Italian), either all five on all 49 poles, or one flag per group alternating on the 49 poles. Mr. Murray raised the question of expense and re-iterated what had been discussed at the February meeting which would involve approaching various groups in town to fund its ethnic flag. The Chair recommended that the Commission consider this. Further decisions involve when to put the flags up, for how long would they remain, how often they would change, and the cost involved. The Chair stated that he would check with the Mayor and the City Manager.

“Bienvenue” signs had
up this meeting with an
alternate ways of
Somersworth welcome signs.
importance of the
on an article in the
radio show.

The Chair also announced that the
been designed. He would follow
email listing prices and photos of
hanging the signs on City of
Councilor Paradis emphasized the
aesthetic nature of the signs.

XI. Miscellaneous: The Chair reported
newspaper describing a new French

Mr. Murray asked if the

Commission would allow him
so that he could insure
importantly, motions correct.

to audiotape future meetings
getting facts and, more
There was no disagreement.

XII. ***Adjournment:*** Motion to adjourn at 7:00 P.M. was
made by Councilor Paradis and seconded by Councilor
Cameron. Motion was adopted unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Pius Charles Murray

(Mr.) Pius Charles Murray
Secretary