

Somersworth Cultural Commission

One Government Way
Somersworth, NH 03878

Minutes of Meeting on 14 April 2016: First Draft

Present: Mayor Dana Hilliard; Councilor Marty Dumont, Chair; Councilor Nancie Cameron; Councilor Jessica; Richard B. Boulanger; Bonnie Constantakos; Diane Crawford; Erin Ellis; Celeste Feren; Sharon Hodsdor; Jenne Holmes; Maureen Jackman; Arlene Jones; Maggie Larson; Peter Matthiau; Rick Michaud; Dylan Zinkevich; 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 March 2016 meeting as submitted was made by Mr. Murray and seconded by Councilor Paradis. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Address by Mayor Hilliard: The Chair invited Mayor Hilliard to bring the Cultural Commission's new members up to speed on the Commission's purpose. Its launch was occasioned by an invitation to the City of Somersworth to join the North American Franco Network because of the importance of Quebecois in the founding of Somersworth. In the 1980s, Thetford Mines established a sister city relationship with Somersworth. Mayor Hilliard sent one of his aides to meet with Thetford Mines officials, the first meeting since the 1980s. The Mayor announced that he would be visiting the Mayor of Thetford Mines and the Principal of the English-speaking school during the school break in April 2016. Mayor Hilliard would like to invite the Thetford Mines Mayor to attend the Christmas parade and possible also the June Festival which Somersworth would like to co-celebrate with Berwick, ME. Mayor Hilliard has invited the Thetford Mines mayor to address Somersworth's City Council.

In addition, the city of Tomahon, Indonesia has already expressed its interest in establishing a sister city relationship with Somersworth. The Mayor of the Indonesian city will be coming to Somersworth to celebrate the Tenth Anniversary of the arrival of his tribe in Somersworth on 17 September 2016. This provides an opportunity for planning and discussion concerning what types of cultural exchanges would be appropriate in fostering this new relationship.

Building on the Mayor's remarks, the Chair re-iterated that the Cultural Commission's mandate is to help celebrate Somersworth's diversity. To that end, the Chair acknowledged and welcomed representatives from the Greek

community to the
historically
Commissioners
Somersworth.

Commission. Despite small numbers, the Greek community has been important in the development of Somersworth. One of the new presented to the Chair a history of the Greek community's arrival in

The Mayor and the Chair are working on identifying a representative from the Indonesian community.

Poutine
celebration
June
informed the
High

IV. French Connection: Ms. Feren asked the Chair to accompany her to the Festival in Berwick, ME to investigate ways in which to co-ordinate its with Somersworth; the Poutine Festival is scheduled for 25 June 2016. On 18 2016, Manchester is holding a concert and festival that may be worthwhile investigating as a way to promote Somersworth's diversity. Ms. Ceren Commission that an Indonesian student who is a freshman at the Somersworth School has been identified as another candidate for service on the Cultural Commission.

V. Reports from Commission Projects:

taking over
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asking

A. Councilor Cameron reported attending a Somersworth Festival meeting. Discussion included dispelling rumors that the Cultural Commission was the Festival's responsibility. Councilor Cameron volunteered to serve as the Somersworth Festival. The Cultural Commission expressed its interest in the Festival to expand its cultural events.

History of
the
between
phase,

B. Mr. Boulanger and Ms. Jones reported on their project concerning the the Sisters in Somersworth. They went to the Diocese of Manchester, visiting Chancellor who sent them to the diocesan archives. Their contacts resulted in receiving a mailing list of all the sisters assigned to St. Martin's Academy 1902 to 1976. Ms. Jones excitedly reported that during this initial investigatory she met a Sister who had been her algebra teacher. The Chair asked them to

consider

how the Commission could use and promote this material.

and

excellent

C. The Chair mentioned the possibility of creating a Cultural History Museum Genealogical Center at the Hilltop School. He reported that Exeter has an genealogy research center that is partnered with the Mormon Church.

prominent

and Irish)

be

Mayor

the city

media

asked the

Mayor

but that

D. The Mayor asked the Commission to consider flying the flags of the ethnic groups in the city (i.e. English, French/Quebec, Greek, Indonesian, for part of the year on the light poles. The Chair stated that each group could approached to contribute toward the purchase of their national flags. The reported that the city's initiative celebrating its cultural diversity has earned the designation of New Hampshire's "cultural melting pot" in five major markets throughout the state, including *The Union Leader*. Mr. Boulanger Mayor if the French flag could be flown on Bastille Day (14 July); the responded that the city did fly the French flag on the day of the Paris attacks the French historically were not one of the founding ethnic groups.

television

road

E. The Mayor reported that he and Councilor Paradis would be starting a program titled "Hilltop Echo" on Channel 22. They anticipated making it a show which would visit historically important places throughout the city.

placing

volunteer to

the

some area

VI. Community Outreach & Information: The Commission discussed regular information on Channels 22 and 95. The Chair has asked for a co-ordinate this effort. One of the first responsibilities could be marketing placing of the plaque on Hilltop School; a public ceremony sponsored by businesses possibly offering refreshments would be the direction to take.

VII. Selection of Signage: The Mayor asked the Commission to recommend signage to be attached to the City's Welcome sign that would be in French, similar to the practice of the State of New Hampshire. Four signs would be needed for the city's boundaries at Berwick, ME, Week's Circle, Kelley's Row on Rte 108, and at Strafford Farms on Rte 108. Three signs would cost \$695; a fourth sign would add approximately \$50. Two options were presented: (a) cursive lettering placed on the bottom of the Somersworth Welcome sign; or (b) uncial lettering on a sign hanging below the city sign. Consensus was for option B (uncial letting hanging below). Motion to adopt Option B was made by Councilor Cameron and seconded by Councilor Paradis. Motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Flags and Banners: The Mayor announced that the American Legion would purchase a set of banners of US flags to fly downtown for Memorial Day. He asked the Commission to consider recommending purchase of a set of banners for each of the founding ethnic groups to fly throughout the summer and fall. A set would cost in the neighborhood of \$200. The Commission has taken that recommendation under advisement.

IX. Miscellaneous:

A. Visit to Hilltop School. The Chair invited the members of the Commission to a tour of the Hilltop School conducted by the Fire Chief on Thursday, 5 May 2016. Please be present before 5:30 pm.

B. Hilltop Commission matrix developed. The Chair informed the Commission that the Hilltop Re-Use Commission has developed a matrix of different possibilities. The Cultural Commission should have a lot of input into the types of organizations and programs offered. The Mayor stated that he would like to see this as a community center. Other possibilities include establishing a Genealogy

Center such
furthermore

as can be found in Exeter and at Saint Anselm's College. The Mayor

a meal

stated that it might be possible to establish sister city relationships with cities representing each of the ethnic groups. The Chair reported that plans were proceeding to have a French Mass; interest also has been expressed in having

perhaps at the National Guard Armory.

planning its
please

C. The Chair announced that the Friends of Somersworth have begun Jakarta Fair and is looking for any help. For those interested in volunteering, contact Emmett Soldati, the Jakarta Fair chair.

Somersworth-
interest in

D. The Chair announced that this year there would be a combined Berwick, ME Christmas Parade. In addition, Berwick has expressed an partnering with Somersworth on any French-related celebrations.

Paradis and

X. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn at 7:07 pm was made by Councilor seconded by Ms. Feren. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Pius Charles Murray

(Mr.) Pius Charles Murray
Secretary