

Sister Cities Association of Salisbury/Wicomico County
Minutes of the February 1, 2012 Meeting

Place: Chamber of Commerce
Began: 4 PM
Ended: 5 PM

Board Attending: Chairman George Whitehead, Cindy Feist (briefly as she was needed at her work), Treasurer Ernest Borger, Tom Welsh, and Vice-Chair Marion Keenan

George reported that Cindy has taken another position in Salisbury and therefore will no longer be the Chamber representative. The group expressed hope that Cindy would continue on the Board.

Minutes: The January 4, 2012 Minutes were approved.

Treasurer's Report: There is no change from the previous meeting.

Intern: SU student Justin Auraura was unable to attend. He is working on the May 5 Conference with the Board of Education

Newsletter and Fundraising: Paper copies of the newsletter were mailed to two previous visitors and current contacts in Salisbury UK: Jan and Kevin Cardy and Simon Maher of the Tourist Office. They were also distributed electronically to the above and Julian and Kathy Thomas. However, Jan, Kevin, and Simon reported difficulty opening the electronic version. Those present signed a fundraising letter prepared by Ernest Borger. The group reviewed our "Fact Sheet" and agreed that it needs updating. George offered to do so.

Website: Tom Welsh noted that the Minutes are posted on our website.

Sister City in Central or South America: Tina Perrotta, Executive Director of La Merced, had hoped to attend but was unable to do so because of a family responsibility. However, she wrote an email to Marion about the favorable and enthusiastic responses in Managua to our inquiry about establishing a Sister City relationship.

She reported that Fr. Antonio Castro had spoken to the Mayor and to the President upon his return to Managua from Salisbury last May. When the LaMerced medical mission group arrived in June the government hosted a dinner for them. The Mayor expressed keen interest. Both Father Castro and President Ortega were hopeful and optimistic about the relationship.

Pertinent elements of Tina's email:

I hope you will share with your committee what I know to date. I will be more than happy to assist in anyway possible, just please let me know.

After our meeting in the Spring, our medical mission, La Merced went to Managua at the end of June. A very successful trip where we treated over 500 patients in 3 hospitals and a clinic. During our visit, the government of Nicaragua held a dinner on our behalf. Present was the Mayor of Managua. Father Castro had already

spoken to her in length regarding a possible joint venture as Sister Cities with Salisbury. She appeared very receptive! She wished to move forward and begin dialog with your committee. My apologies that no one has gotten back to you all regarding this.

She had many questions and ideas. Her and her assistant appeared very very enthused. Father Castro and the Mayor are good friends with President Ortega, newly re-elected President of Nicaragua and his wife. She felt they too would be extremely supportive.

This year La Merced will be going to Managua at the beginning of June. I would like to suggest the possibility of having a point person, here from Salisbury meet with the Mayor of Managua. I, being Executive Director of La Merced will be too busy directing 35+ members while there. But I do have a few suggestions that I hope you will consider. Dr. Memo Diriker and his wife Dr. Veronique Diriker have plans to attend our trip. I know Memo would be honored to assist with this. His goals while there will not be directed at the medical mission but exploring the universities in the area. Another option is to have a member of your committee, of your choosing, come with us for the purpose of exploring Sister City options.

I am very excited to assist in any way so please let me know what I can do.

The Board agreed that either Brian Stiegler, who speaks Spanish, has already spoken to Fr. Castro, and who is on our Board, or Memo and Veronique Diriker would be excellent choices. Marion will call Brian and we will invite Memo and Veronique to our meeting. George will go to a La Merced meeting.

May 5 Ethnic Diversity Conference with Board of Education (BOE):

George distributed a draft agenda. The Saturday event begins at 9 and concludes at 2. Lunch will be catered either by the Board of Education or another vendor. Tom suggested several new restaurants that might be interested. During the meal there will be a children's performance, a speaker from Mid-Atlantic Equity Center, and perhaps others.

George has met with staff from the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore (CFES) about a grant of about \$2,000 or less to cover some of the costs. Those present agreed that we should require a small fee for attendance—perhaps about \$10.

Next meeting: March 14, 2012 at the Chamber of Commerce

Submitted by Marion Keenan