

## International Relations Committee

Meeting held July 10, 2024

A hybrid meeting of the International Relations Committee is held this day commencing at 3:30 o'clock p.m. in Room 522a, 350 City Hall Square West, there being present the following members:

Councillor Angelo Marignani, Chair  
Councillor Renaldo Agostino  
Councillor Ed Sleiman  
Lubna Barakat (arrives at 3:45 o'clock p.m.)  
Jerry Barycki  
Saiful Bhuiyan  
Ronnie Haidar  
L.T. Zhao

***Regrets received from:***

Councillor Fred Francis

***Also present are the following resource personnel:***

James Chacko, Executive Director Parks & Facilities  
Sandra Gebauer, Council Assistant  
Karen Kadour, Committee Coordinator

### 1. Call to Order

The Chair calls the meeting to order at 3:34 o'clock p.m. and the Committee considers the Agenda being Schedule A attached hereto, matters which are dealt with as follows:

Verbal Motion is presented by Councillor Ed Sleiman, seconded by Councillor Renaldo Agostino,

That Rule 3.3 (c) of the Procedure By-law, 98-2011, **BE WAIVED** to add the following items to the Agenda:

- 4.5 Changchun International Marathon
- 4.6 2024 Changchun Green Agricultural Food Forum for International Cooperation
- 4.7 Poland to celebrate its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a member of NATO.

Carried.

## 2. Declaration of Conflict

None disclosed.

## 3. Adoption of the Minutes

Moved by Ronnie Haidar, seconded by Councillor Ed Sleiman,  
That the minutes of the International Relations Committee of its meeting held May 8, 2024 **BE ADOPTED** as presented.  
Carried.

## 4. Business Items

### 4.1 Discussion regarding Strengthening the Relationship with Changchun, China

The Chair states that our Sister City in China has one of the largest automotive battery plant manufacturing facilities in the world. He states there is a possibility for some collaboration and asks for input on how to strengthen and develop a better relationship with Changchun. In response to a question asked by the Chair to L.T. Zhao regarding if there is a possibility to liaise with the Chinese Community in Windsor, L.T. Zhao responds that this economic development perspective can be passed on to the Chinese Association.

L.T. Zhao advises that he will be visiting China in the coming days. He asks for a contact in Changchun to allow for the opportunity for a brief meet and greet with our Twin Cities government.

Sandra Gebauer remarks that she will assist in connecting L.T. Zhao with representatives in Changchun so that a meeting can be coordinated if his schedule permits. Ronnie Haidar offers to pick up and drop off some City of Windsor pins to L.T. Zhao.

Sandra Gebauer advises that a letter of introduction from our Mayor to the Mayor in China will be prepared by the Mayor's Office.

Moved by Ronnie Haidar, seconded by L.T. Zhao,  
That the discussion regarding strengthening the relationship with Changchun, China **BE RECEIVED**.  
Carried.

#### 4.2 Arlington, Texas – Verbal Update on the Committee’s Friendship City Recommendation

Sandra Gebauer remarks that the IRC at its meeting held May 8, 2024 recommended a Friendship City relationship with Arlington Texas which was approved at the Development and Heritage Standing Committee and City Council. The City of Arlington was advised of Council’s decision and decided not to move forward with a Friendship City relationship and asked if the IRC would reconsider the decision.

The Chair asks if the IRC is interested in reconsidering the decision and to enter into a Sister City agreement. Jerry Barycki remarks that renewing the agreement every five years as outlined in the Friendship City relationship should not be a problem.

Councillor Renaldo Agostino asks what the impact would be if the IRC says no and asks for clarification. Sandra Gebauer responds the Committee requested that a Friendship City Policy be established.

Ronnie Haidar recalls a conversation at a previous meeting regarding how Sister Cities should be established. They should be community to community and not government to government.

Councillor Renaldo Agostino remarks that the rewards of a Twin City relationship with Arlington, Texas far outweigh the risks.

Moved by Councillor Renaldo Agostino, seconded by Saiful Bhuiyan,  
That the following motion **BE RECONSIDERED:**  
**CR 293/2024**

Moved by Councillor Fred Francis, seconded by Councillor Ed Sleiman  
That the International Relations Committee **RECOMMEND** that the City of Windsor and the City of Arlington, Texas enter into a Friendship City Agreement; and,  
That if approved by both parties, that the Mayor’s Office **BE REQUESTED** to sign a Friendship City Memorandum of Understanding for Arlington, Texas consistent with the process outlined in the Twin City/Friendship City Policy.  
Carried.

Moved by Councillor Renaldo Agostino, seconded by Lubna Barakat,  
That the International Relations Committee **RECOMMEND** that the City of Windsor and the City of Arlington, Texas enter into a Twin City Agreement; and,

That if approved by both parties, that the Mayor’s Office **BE REQUESTED** to sign a Twin City Memorandum of Understanding for Arlington, Texas consistent with the process outlined in the Twin City Policy.  
Carried.

### 4.3 Twin City Post Update – Verbal Update

James Chacko, Executive Director Parks & Facilities provides an update of the status of the Twin City Post as follows:

- This project that has taken seven years will soon be unveiled.
- The pole has been installed on the south side of the campus between 350 City Hall Square West and 400 City Hall Square East.
- The details of each individual sign for each of the twelve Sister Cities of the City of Windsor have been approved.
- The sign layout will include the city name, the country, the distance to the city, the flag of the country (the sign is tapered to look like the arrow) and each one of the signs will be orientated to point towards the actual Sister City.
- The pole is in excess of 30 feet high with the names of the Sister Cities beginning at the top which it will allow for sufficient space to add more Sister Cities as the current number of Sister Cities will only occupy eight feet.
- The order of the layout of the signs begins with the first Sister City at the top and proceeds downward according to the order in which they were approved.
- On Friday, July 26, 2024, there will be the Official Unveiling at 1:30 o'clock p.m.
- His Worship Mayor Dilkens will be on site to provide some remarks. The Misono High School Girls from Fujisawa, Japan will also be in attendance.
- It is an exciting event that recognizes the contribution of the International Relations Committee and the 12 Sister Cities.

The Chair adds that the Twin City Post exemplifies the diversity of the City of Windsor and shows our connection with our Sister Cities.

Moved by Councillor Renaldo Agostino, seconded by Ronnie Haidar,  
That the sequence of the Sister City signs on the Twin City Post originate at the top of the post identifying the oldest Sister City relationship and proceeding down to the most recent Sister City relationship **BE APPROVED.**

Carried.

### 4.4 2024 Children's Art Exhibition – Verbal Update

Sandra Gebauer advises that space has been reserved at Devonshire Mall for the display of the 2024 Children' Art Exhibition to be held from October 7, 2024 to October 13, 2024. She adds that the Twin Cities have been apprised of the date of the Children's Art Exhibition and states that local schools will be advised upon commencement of the new school term.

In terms of the display boards, Sandra Gebauer reports that samples were provided by the Recreation Department, at a cost of approximately \$1,500 per board and

it is noted that six boards will be required. She contacted Recreation to determine if there is an opportunity to cost share and notes there is a four week time frame for ordering.

The Chair summarizes that the cost for the boards will be approximately \$9,000 and is looking to share the cost with the Recreation Department.

Jerry Barycki suggests renting the boards.

Sandra Gebauer will look at other options including purchasing new foam core boards, similar to those that have been used in previous years.

Moved by Councillor Ed Sleiman, seconded by Councillor Renaldo Agostino,  
That the update regarding the 2024 Children's Art Exhibition to be held from  
October 7, 2024 to October 13, 2024 at Devonshire Mall **BE RECEIVED.**  
Carried.

#### **4.5 2024 Changchun International Marathon**

Sandra Gebauer advises that an invitation was received from Changchun, China for the 2024 International Marathon to be held on August 30, 2024. She states that in the past, this information was sent to the University of Windsor, St. Clair College and their local running clubs to determine if there is interest in sending someone to the event. If someone is interested in attending, the City of Changchun will cover the cost of accommodations while they are there, however, they would have to pay for their own round-trip travel.

#### **4.6 Green Agricultural Food Forum for International Cooperation, Changchun, China on August 15 – 18, 2024**

The Chair suggests reaching out to local greenhouse growers and Invest Windsor Essex to see if there is interest in attending this event

Saiful Bhuiyan advises he is associated with Rose City Gardening which has approximately 100 members.

Sandra Gebauer states that the invitation will be sent to Invest Windsor Essex who will forward this information to their contacts and also to the Rose City Gardening organization.

#### **4.7 Poland to celebrate the 24<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of its accession to NATO**

Jerry Barycki states that in 1997 a petition was undertaken to support Poland in becoming a member of NATO as it is important to keep security across the globe. NATO

will celebrate its 75th anniversary at the Summit on July 9-11, 2024 in Washington D.C. where its founding treaty was signed. At the same time, Poland will celebrate its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a member of NATO.

Jerry Barycki advises he would like to meet with the Mayor of Lublin and present a letter from Mayor Drew Dilkens regarding the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the City of Lublin and the City of Windsor Sister City relationship.

Jerry Barycki refers to the anniversary dates with Windsor's Twin Cities and suggests inviting those Twin Cities to Windsor whose anniversary date is within the next few years.

The Chair agrees to look at the upcoming anniversary dates with our Sister Cities to determine how we can capitalize in strengthening those relationships.

Sandra Gebauer suggests that the Grand Opening of the Gordie Howe Bridge in 2025 could be considered as a celebratory event to invite those Twin Cities with impending anniversary dates.

The Chair suggests that a discussion be held to look at all upcoming anniversary dates of Twin Cities and to choose options as to how to address this as a Board moving forward.

Councillor Ed Sleiman asks that Jelena Payne, Commissioner Economic Development or an alternate be invited to attend occasional meetings of the International Relations Committee. The Chair concurs and suggests that Jelena Payne be invited to the next meeting to determine if there are economic development opportunities with our Sister Cities.

**5. New Business**

None.

**6. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on a date to be determined in September 2024.

**7. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting is adjourned at 4:29 o'clock p.m.