

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Meeting held November 7, 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 Fred Francis
Councillor Ed Sleiman
Lubna Barakat
Jerry Barycki
L.T. Zhao

Regrets received from:

Saiful Bhuiyan
Ronnie Haidar
William Ma

Also present are the following resource personnel:

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:

2. Declaration of Conflict

None disclosed.

3. Minutes

Moved by Councillor Ed Sleiman, seconded by Jerry Barycki,
That the minutes of the International Relations Committee of its meeting held July 10, 2024 **BE ADOPTED** as presented.
Carried.

4. Business Items

4.1 Report of L.T. Zhao's visit to Sister City Changchun, China on August 1, 2024

L.T. Zhao advises that he met with Mister Ou Shuo, Deputy Director (mayor) and the Consular Affairs Division and other officials on August 1, 2024. The Chair thanks L.T. for his detailed report and surmises it was an engaging and fruitful meeting. A discussion was held regarding future relations with our Sister City. He suggested leveraging a student exchange program with high school students or with students from the University of Windsor. Sandra Gebauer advises that exchange programs are facilitated through the school boards and adds that she will reach out to the school boards and will report back.

L. T. Zhao proposes notifying the Councillors in Changchun when the next Windsor/Detroit Marathon will be held.

Moved by Councillor Fred Francis, seconded by L.T. Zhao,

That the update provided by L.T. Zhao regarding his visit to Changchun, China **BE RECEIVED**, and further, that a letter be sent from the Office of the Mayor of the City of Windsor to Changchun, China to facilitate an official delegation visit to the City of Windsor in the near future.

Carried.

4.2 Arlington, Texas – Decision of the Development & Heritage Standing Committee at its meeting held September 3, 2024

Councillor Francis refers to the meeting of the International Relations Committee held on July 20, 2024, and states that the Committee cannot decide to bypass the policy for one city and not for another city. He adds if it is not a people-to-people relationship it is not a relationship that will last long.

Sandra Gebauer advises that the Mayor's Office responded to the Chair and commented "that Mayor Dilkens trusts in the process of having the report go through the IRC with the Committee continuing to vet the proposal and arrive at a recommendation". She advises that the recommendation and the motion sent to the Standing Committee was referred to the Mayor's Office for comment and that the comments be forwarded to a future meeting of the Development and Heritage Standing Committee.

Councillor Fred Francis recommends that the proper way to do this is to change the policy, however, if the policy is changed, there will be requests from other cities in other countries.

The last Sister City to be added 24 years ago was Lublin, Poland. The Policy was updated in 2023.

Councillor Fred Francis advises there has not been a formal twin city agreement in over 20 years, however, there have been several requests that did not meet the merits of this Policy. Councillor Renaldo Agostino comments if no cities have been added in many years, should we be looking at changing this Policy? Councillor Fred Francis responds that the point of this Committee is to foster long lasting relationships with like-minded communities.

L.T Zhao concurs with Councillor Fred Francis relating to building up existing relationships.

Councillor Renaldo Agostino indicates that Windsor does not have a Sister City in the United States, and this proposal presents that opportunity. Councillor Fred Francis asks how will this be a sustainable relationship and refers to Item 6.2 of the Twin City/Friendship City Policy as follows:

“Request for twinning’s should also be community driven, supported by a formal organized cultural/ethnic association and must demonstrate that a sustainable relationship can be maintained”. Councillor Fred Francis remarks there is no formal organized cultural association and no demonstrable evidence to show that this will be sustainable or maintained.

Councillor Fred Francis states that the Friendship Policy is the best as it allows the IRC to build a relationship. He adds there is no process to remove a sister city.

Lubna Barakat remarks that the IRC should be more fluid rather than following policies and agendas and expresses concern that they have lost the core of the IRC. She refers to the Friendship City and the five-year review period.

Jerry Barycki responds that he has been a member of IRC for 22 years and adds that the Policy is required along with the model being people to people and community driven.

Sandra Gebauer advises when Arlington, Texas sent their Draft Memorandum of Understanding, it was noted that the relationship would be for five years which is similar to our Friendship City partnership. The response from Arlington was they were not interested in anything but a Sister City relationship.

It is generally agreed that the Chair along with Sandra Gebauer will contact Sheri Capehart, Arlington, Texas via Zoom video conference to further discuss a Twin City/Friendship City relationship.

Moved by Councillor Fred Francis, seconded by Councillor Renaldo Agostino,
That the update regarding the Twin City/Friendship City relationship with Arlington,
Texas **BE RECEIVED.**
Carried.

The Chair advises that the Twin City/Friendship City Policy and Mandate will be reviewed at the next meeting of the International Relations Committee.

Discussion ensues regarding the building of a relationship with the City of Detroit. Councillor Fred Francis responds that it is not the responsibility of this Committee to improve or establish relationships with Detroit; this is done through the Mayor's Office. The Chair wants to create an international brand between our shared shoreline with this City. He refers to Windsor Works, and strengthening relationships with the City of Detroit and asks if the IRC should be part of that solution outlined in Windsor Works with the improvement of Windsor's relationship with Detroit. Councillor Fred Francis states it is possible, but not without an organized framework and the Mayor's Office that highlights IRC's role and defines the expectations to further relationships with the City of Detroit.

Councillor Fred Francis suggests that the following documents be reviewed at the next meeting of the IRC - IRC Mandate and Terms of Reference along with the Twin City/Friendship City Policy.

4.3 The 2024 Changchun International Medical & Health Industry Expo

Councillor Fred Francis proposes that the information relating to the Changchun International Medical & Health Industry Expo to be held on December 7 – 9, 2024 be sent to all interested parties, i.e. health organizations, wellness organizations, University of Windsor, St. Clair College and Invest Windsor Essex.

Moved by Councillor Fred Francis, seconded by Councillor Ed Sleiman,
That information relating to the 2024 Changchun International Medical & Health Industry Expo to be held on December 7 – 9, 2024 **BE SENT** to all interested parties.
Carried.

5. Correspondence

5.1 Letter from Mayor Wang Zillian to Mayor Drew Dilkens

Moved by Councillor Fred Francis, seconded by Councillor Renaldo Agostino,
That the letter from Mayor Wang Zillian to Mayor Drew Dilkens inviting a delegation from Windsor to Changchun, China **BE RECEIVED**.
Carried.

5.2 Invitation to the 27th Annual Polish-Canadian Society Business Dinner

Sandra Gebaurer advises that one ticket is still available for the Annual Polish-Canadian Society Business Dinner to be held on November 15, 2024 at the Dom Polski Hall.

5.3 Visit to Lublin by representatives of Windsor

Jerry Barycki remarks that on August 12, 2024, there was a visit to Lublin by representatives of the Polish-Canadian Business and Professional Association of Windsor. He provides an overview of their visit to Lublin, Poland.

Moved by Councillor Fred Francis, seconded by Councillor Ed Sleiman,
That the update of the visit to Lublin, Poland by representatives of the Polish-Canadian Business and Professional Association of Windsor provided by Jerry Barycki,
BE RECEIVED.
Carried.

5.4 Message from Changchun, China

The Chair thanks L.T. Zhao for strengthening the Twin City relationship with Changchun while on his recent visit to China.

L.T. Zhao remarks that the economic and student exchange will be beneficial in maintaining the Sister City relationship in Changchun. L.T. Zhao asks if there will be an opportunity to speak to Council regarding his visit

Moved by Fred Francis, seconded by Councillor Renaldo Agostino,
That the letter from Changchun, China advising that they are facilitating a delegation visit to Windsor at the earliest opportunity **BE RECEIVED.**
Carried.

Councillor Fred Francis advises there are two requests for delegations, one in Lublin and one in Changchun.

Moved by Councillor Fred Francis, seconded by Councillor Ed Sleiman,
That information relating to requests for delegations from the International Relations Committee to visit Changchun, China and Lublin, Poland at some time in the future **BE PROVIDED** to the Mayor's Office.
Carried.

6. Confirm and Ratify E-mail Polls

6.1 That the results of the e-mail poll conducted on August 7, 2024, approving the following recommendation **BE CONFIRMED AND RATIFIED:**

Moved by Councillor Fred Francis, seconded by Councillor Ed Sleiman,

That the International Relations Committee approve an expenditure in the upset amount of \$100 for the purchase of a cake and water for the Ritsumeikan Uji High School Group from Kyoto Japan, who will be visiting City Hall on Thursday, August 22, 2024.

Carried.

6.2 That the results of the e-mail poll conducted on August 28, 2024, approving the following recommendation **BE CONFIRMED AND RATIFIED:**

Moved by Councillor Fred Francis, seconded by Councillor Ed Sleiman,

That the International Relations Committee APPROVE an expenditure in the upset amount of \$2,500 for the purchase of six six-panel display towers, which are being purchased in collaboration with the Recreation & Culture Department and will be used for the City's annual Children's Art Exhibition as well as any other future.

Carried.

6.3 That the results of the e-mail poll conducted on October 15, 2024, approving the following recommendation **BE CONFIRMED AND RATIFIED:**

Moved by Councillor Fred Francis, seconded by Councillor Ed Sleiman,

That the International Relations Committee AUTHORIZE an expenditure in the upset amount of \$560 for the purchase of four (4) tickets (1 ticket for Mayor Dilkens) for the 27th Annual Polish-Canadian Business Society Dinner to be held on November 15, 2024 at the Dom Polski Hall, located at 1275 Langlois Avenue.

Carried.

7. New Business

Moved by Councillor Fred Francis, seconded by Councillor Ed Sleiman,

That **APPROVAL BE GIVEN** to an expenditure in the upset amount of \$100 for costs associated with mailing the Children's Art to Gunsan, Japan for their Children's Exhibition.

Carried.

Sandra Gebauer advises that a request has been received from Gunsan, Japan for the City of Windsor to send gifts for the First place male and First Place female Marathon winners. She suggests the purchase of City of Windsor shirts.

Moved by Councillor Fred Francis, seconded by Councillor Renaldo Agostino,

That **APPROVAL BE GIVEN** to an expenditure in the upset amount of \$500. for the purchase of gifts and mailing costs for the First Place Male and First Place Female Marathon Winners in Gunsan, Japan.

Carried.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held at the call of the Chair.

9. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting is adjourned at 4:55 o'clock p.m.