Members Present: Darlene Blake, Carol Brown, Don Chesnut, Patricia Civitate, Soozie McBroom, Sachiko Murphy, Martha Nelson, Christine Pardee, Matt Rosen, Vidal Spaine

Members Absent: Toby Davis, Joseph Jones, Cynthia Nahas, Alex Piedras, Janis Ruan, Jenelle Sarcone

Guests Present: Rick Clark, City Manager, City of Des Moines; Martha Willits, CEO, Greater Des Moines Partnership; Jay Byers, Assistant to the CEO, Greater Des Moines Partnership; Steve Ferguson, Director, Iowa Agribusiness Export Partnership, Greater Des Moines Partnership

Staff Present: Emily Collins

On Tuesday, September 14, 2010, Mr. Rosen, Commission Chair, called the meeting of the Greater Des Moines Sister City Commission to order at 5:04 p.m. in the Kofu Conference Room, Des Moines City Hall.

MINUTES

Minutes for the meeting of August 10, 2010 were discussed. Ms. Nelson asked for the minutes reading “Ms. Collins to also request information on the role of Vice Chair from 2004-2010 from Joyce Warburton; specifically in regards to Commission historical information to pass along to aid Mr. Ferguson. Ms. Nelson to pass historical information (up to 2004) to aid Mr. Ferguson as well.” to be changed to “Mrs. Nelson will provide job descriptions for both the Chair and Vice Chair to Mr. Ferguson. Ms. Collins will provide files of SCC minutes and agendas to Mr. Ferguson for 2005-2009 fiscal years for the Commission Members and Mr. Ferguson by November 1, 2010. Mrs. Nelson was Vice Chair from July 2005 to June 2009.” Mr. Ferguson wanted to clarify that a fee schedule is being worked on by staff. Mr. Rosen requested a change from City of Lafayette to Fayetteville, Arkansas. Motion to approve the minutes with changes was made by Mr. Chesnut and seconded by Ms. Pardee. Motion passed unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORT

No financial report at this time.

COMMISSION CHAIR REPORT

1. City/Partnership Discussions and Funding

Discussion commenced on the following topics:

Clark—Shared possible changes in the SCC. The current program offers great benefit to community but how to sustain program and better it in future with the City budget? Funding comes from a new appropriation each year from the City budget. Much of the work is travel and it’s becoming hard for City to pay for travel. This makes it difficult for the Commission to flourish and expand within the
government given the budget. Appreciates that the Commission establishes partnerships and opens up the door for trade and Economic Development. So in thinking of a way for it to be reorganized to flourish, the Partnership seemed like a natural fit. It is a private entity, travel is easier and there are more resources to the business community. The City needs to continue to lead the SCC and Mayor and City Council needs a strong representation, so it could continue under the Partnership with the Mayor as a standing member, or his appointee.

Willits—Have had conversations for years, especially surrounding Economic Development. Partnership is a regional organization, business community united, serves three county areas and is looking at expanding in the near future. The Partnership establishes local, national, federal and world connections through public policy issues. Can accommodate the SCC better than local government. Five communities are currently involved with the Partnership but expansion could easily occur in this area. The Partnership does not want to change anything regarding the SCC, but wants to enhance the program.

Rosen—Organizations are ever-evolving and the Partnership is a good example. Went from Chamber of Commerce, took on affiliates, combined with Des Moines and Downtown Chamber to become Partnership for the last 10 years. A really good fit, more ties with corporate community, other government entities (suburbs), worldwide. Win situation for everybody.

Clark—Proposition requires approval by Council at an upcoming meeting (within 30 days). The approval is just to authorize Clark to work with Willits and Byers. Wished to present it to the Commission first before it officially goes to Council. Council is aware that this is going to happen, but they have not been given all the details. Thanked Matt for his leadership and role so far.

Blake—All of us have Des Moines and Iowa in our best interests and we should tap the unused resources of the Partnership.

Nelson—What would success look like for the Commission? How long would it be with the Partnership?

Clark—This is a permanent decision. We would leave room for discussion, if it could fit somewhere else better, like Community Foundation, etc. Would hope it stays with the Partnership.

Willits—This is a transitioning time and hopefully a growing time. If able to stand alone or better elsewhere, the Partnership is willing to cut the SCC loose.

Nelson—Where would the SCC be in the Partnership structure?

Willits—The SCC would be in Public Policy, but close to Economic Development.

Nelson—How does it organizationally work?

Willits—There is a current set of bylaws and the Partnership does not want to change that. They will offer the same kind of support, but the SCC will function by itself.

Clark—The SCC will still have a Board Chair and budget with the Partnership. Appointments of members would be different; possibly half Mayor and City Council appointees and half something else. Operating same way as now or the way you wish it to be functioning.

Spaine—Does the Partnership staff have a person available to write grants?
Willits—They look for grants and apply for quite a few; unfortunately, they can’t commit a lot of time.

Rosen—No Mayor and City Council approval of items, the SCC could function in a more streamlined approach at the Partnership. Could find a grant and complete it in the 11th hour legally.

Willits/Nelson—The Partnership is a 501c6 organization, same opportunities as a 501c3.

Willits—The Partnership fundraises once every 5 years; but they can go above that with more staff time.

Rosen—We can interact with the corporate community more. Folks interested in Economic Development worldwide; SCC can help introduce these entities and raise the level of awareness for these types of opportunities.

McBroom—Can use the same name with Partnership.

Pardee—SCC will fall under the Partnership budget and legal structure.

Nelson—Can the SCC be made more public in future?

Clark—Wish to keep the Des Moines name on it, as this is important to the Mayor and City Council.

Spaine—Could this change the monthly meeting area?

Clark—City could still accommodate the meetings, if needed.

Brown—if the SCC is under the umbrella of the Partnership, where would money come from?

Willits—Continue same model as current established, along with an in-kind donation in the amount of about $10,000. No more funds at this point.

Brown—Some Sister Cities like high-profile exchanges. (i.e. Mayor)

Clark—The Mayor is very interested in the SCC and is still an active member. Elected officials relationships are important and we want to support that. This should be a seamless change.

Brown—It is important to maintain a relationship with International Sister Cities. As they are much more involved with business partnership.

Nelson—In kind donations include room, staff, etc.

Murphy—Kofu exchanges are heavily based on education, not as much Economic Development oriented. Do we have a place in the Partnership?

Willits—We know relationships count, so yes, Kofu would have a place.

Nelson—Where would the SCC fall organizationally?

Willits—Jay is head person and Steve is reporting to Jay.

Clark—The SCC really operates independently.
Rosen—We aren’t really a part of an entity of City government. We’re not working towards goals of the city of Des Moines. We have more of an ability within the Partnership.

Clark—Wish we could have done more with the SCC, but we have cut $24 million out of the budget in the last 12 years. The organization is forced to look at only critical aspects of the City. Institutional capacity within the City is less than it has been and the Partnership has an interest to create international relations.

Willits—The Partnership focuses on four pillars of work and three support mechanisms. The SCC would rest in Public Policy with strong attachment to Economic Development. The Partnership currently has many relationships of this kind: International, BIZ, Farmer’s Market, etc.

Pardee—Still Commissioners or morph into something else?

Clark—In reality, you are volunteers and the responsibility resides with the Partnership.

Civitate—How do you handle a visiting Sister City?

Clark—In the same fashion.

Rosen—Timeframe for a move within November?

Clark—Will introduce the topic in next two to three meetings and a move within 30-60 days.

Rosen—Probably December meeting for move to the Partnership.

Clark—The Mayor and City Council may have comments/ideas/etc.

Rosen—Could this be a workshop topic?

Clark—Would like to take it straight to the agenda, as a few discussions have already taken place.

2. **Partnership China Trip**

Mr. Rosen reported that they had a really good trip; meeting with the U.S. Consulate in Shanghai, listening to great speakers and taking part in workshops in Beijing. Mr. Ferguson added that there was a reception between Iowa and China companies; they toured Shijiazhuang schools, water plants, office of foreign affairs, chamber of commerce; and met different companies that wanted Iowa connections. The Mayors of Carlisle and Windsor Heights had a particularly good exchange. Mr. Ferguson shared that an ISU group is having dialogue with other universities for future exchanges.

**COMMISSION VICE CHAIR REPORT**

No report at this time.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Facebook Page – Christine Pardee**

Ms. Pardee reported that 46 people are friends, but continue to encourage people to join. She started posting questions to see if anyone is interacting, placed new pictures up of the Yamanashi baseball players, and sent out a call for home visits for Stavropol Krai, Russia. Ms. Murphy suggested posting photos from the Partnership China trip. Ms. Pardee asked if there is an opportunity for the Partnership to help build the Facebook site. Mr. Ferguson thought the Partnership probably would through Lauren Bert’s assistance. Ms. McBroom asked if the Partnership had a PowerPoint of what the SCC does.
Mr. Rosen reported that they were given the PowerPoint that was presented to Des Moines Public Schools.

Ms. McBroom suggested that the SCC should do more PR through documents like the PowerPoint. Ms. Nelson said the PowerPoint was sent out but that a CD could be created for each member. Mr. Ferguson stated that one of the Partnership’s goals is to get other cities to assist in their cause and that the SCC will need something to market to them.

**Catanzaro, Italy – Pat Civitate/Jenelle Sarcone**
Ms. Civitate and Ms. Sarcone talked about an exchange in early May that would focus on education, the science center and IMAX. Ms. Civitate reported that there was no way they would have been able to make a trip in October, so they will extend an invitation once plans have been set. Mr. Rosen suggested that this is a good group to begin establishing Economic Development relationships. Mr. Ferguson also suggested that we get together to talk about target industries for Catanzaro. Ms. Civitate would like to get the medical community involved. Mr. Spaine asked if there was a list of host families we can call on or if there was something we could do? Mr. Ferguson said the SCC might want to consider creating a committee for calling on host families in the future. Ms. Murphy stated that a country specific list would be needed. Ms. Nelson shared that the SCC should have marketing strategy for this. Mr. Rosen stated that they need to find a best fit for home hosts.

**Saint-Etienne, France – Martha Nelson**
Ms. Nelson shared that an envelope with information about Greater Des Moines had been sent to St. Etienne who is developing a cultural display for the community.

**Gaziantep, Turkey – Darlene Blake**
Ms. Blake shared that Turkey is getting restless. They are really interested in Economic Development and expansion. Bedri Demerci has been pushing for SCC involvement and was asking for a letter to take to Turkey. A response regarding their initial letter about an exchange for November was sent, saying it would be better in March, April or May. The Mayor sent an initial letter, then they invited us over, but no one has responded since then. Mr. Ferguson asked what the process is to approve new Sister Cities. Mr. Rosen shared that City Council has final authority and this has not gone forward yet.

**Shijiazhuang, China – Matt Rosen**
Confucius Classrooms is in the final stages of approval.

**Naucalpan/Taxco, Mexico – Cynthia Nahas**
No report at this time.

**Kofu, Japan – Sachiko Murphy/Carol Brown**
Ms. Murphy shared that Yamanashi High School is going to DMACC from October 8-18 to discuss future programs and communication methods. Ms. Murphy also asked for pictures from Kofu to put on Facebook.

**Stavropol, Russia – Vidal Spaine**
Mr. Spaine suggested that we prepare for delegation to travel to Stavropol. Per a fax, they are awaiting our visit next year. There is a three year plan for when exchanges take place. Mr. Rosen would like to get a committee going and see what the agreement says and to work within framework of who is going. Mr. Spaine shared that a newsletter that Drake puts out every month featured the Stavropol dinner at the Maxwell’s house. Mr. Rosen suggested putting the article and photo on Facebook.

**OLD BUSINESS**
None at this time.
NEW BUSINESS
None at this time.

ADJOURNMENT
Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Chesnut and seconded by Ms. Brown. Meeting adjourned at 6:33 p.m.

NEXT MEETING
The next meeting will be October 12, 2010, in the Kofu Conference Room, Des Moines City Hall.