

Centerville Sister City Committee

Meeting Minutes, September 3, 2019

Members Present: Mike Vacchiano, *Chair*, John Beals, *Council Liaison*, Cynthia Clay, Suzanne Holloway, Phillip McLaughlin, Carolyn Basford, Marilyn Hobak, Surinder Jain.

Guest attendee: Emily Schluter, GAPP coordinator, Centerville High School.

Mike Vacchiano, chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. After welcome and attendance, meeting minutes from June 4, 2019 were reviewed and approved by the committee.

Committee Officers for 2020: It was proposed and agreed that Phillip McLaughlin will be the new chair starting January 1, 2020 at the end of Mike Vacchiano's term. Mike will take over as the Vice Chair. Treasurer's position is yet to be decided. Surinder will continue as the secretary.

Emily Schluter's Report: Centerville High School teacher Emily Schluter is the GAPP (*German American Partnership Program*) co-leader for the school 2020 student exchange program with our sister city Bad Zwischenahn, Germany. Emily attended a GAPP Coordinator's workshop in Washington, DC in January 2019. Emily traveled to Bad Zwischenahn this past June after a CHS student trip to Europe. Several ideas were discussed in the meeting as possible activities while the exchange students are visiting us. Key points from here report are as follows:

- Emily met with Herr Friedrich, the director of our partner school, GZE (Gymnasium Bad Zwischenahn-Edewecht).
- Herr Friedrich was very welcoming and is enthusiastic about continuing our partnership and GAPP exchange – he supports it fully.
- Steffi Grosse is out on medical leave right now, so it is very likely that another English teacher will take her place when the German kids come here.
- GZE has their spring break from March 30 – April 14. They will **tentatively** come here **March 16-27** – still awaiting confirmation from them. It is expected that 10-15 exchange students will visit Centerville.
- The school is very progressive. There are over 20 English teachers!
- GZE has multiple exchanges every year with a variety of schools in different countries – they value this type of learning immensely. They expect a very good level of interest in coming to Centerville.
- Emily also shared the flyers about a GAPP information event at Centerville High School that she is organizing for parents and students.

Centerville Sister City committee is continually discussing 2020 student and adult exchange visit details in every meeting. Emily will be attending future meetings as a guest and provide updates.

Treasurer's Report: Phil McLaughlin presented the Treasurer's report. Current balance on hand is \$2,625. Actual money spent \$743.25. After discussion it was proposed to request higher amount for FY 2020 as we are expecting exchange students and adults visiting Centerville from the Sister City Bad Zwischenahn in March and April of 2020. Proposed amount for FY 2020 is \$6,000. It will be finalized in next meeting on October 1 after past expenditures are reviewed by committee members and in time to make the Council's budget requests.

Adult Exchange Visit in 2020: Several fellow citizens from our sister city Bad Zwischenahn, Germany plan to visit Centerville in **May 2020**. Firm dates, how many guests will be here and other details of their trip are awaited.

Potential New Sister City Partnerships: Councilman John Beals presented various possibilities to explore connecting with a French speaking sister city in Canada or France. Committee discussed a few possibilities. Emily Schluter offered to help in that respect as well as she also teaches French at Centerville High School and often visits France. (Emily will be organizing a visit to France for CHS students in summer 2020).

Sister city committee will continue to work on the following items for 2019:

- Increase sister city committee membership.
- Increase sister city committee visibility by participating in community events.
- Raise funds (pending establishing a non-profit status). It will be in partnership with local businesses and other opportunities as they come up.
- Planning for the 2020 German Sister City exchange visits by students and adults.
- Possible visit to sister city Bad Zwischenahn, Germany by Centerville High School students in summer 2020.
- Continue exploring possibilities to establish a new Sister City.
- Christmas dinner 2019. Proposed dates are December 5 or 12. Marilyn Hobak is coordinating the event.

Centerville Sister City link: <https://www.centervilleohio.gov/government/mayor-and-council/boards-and-commissions/sister-city-committee>

Next meeting is on Tuesday, October 1 at 7:00 pm at the Centerville City Police Station.

Future Sister City Committee Meetings for 2019: November 5. (Committee can meet anytime it deems necessary in addition to these dates)

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by Surinder Jain