

Kitakata Sister City Advisory Board Meeting Action Minutes
February 24, 2021

Advisory Board Members Present:

Jason Jones
Lois Reimer- emeritus
Aaron Reyna
Cathy Rice
Tracy Sailors
Dave Schalk
Bev Schalk - emeritus
Seiji Shiratori
Adrienne Scritsmier
Ashleigh Sumerlin
Bob Yokoyama

Staff Present:

Erica Behler – Recreation Coordinator

Members of the Public Present:

None

AGENDA ITEM	ACTIONS
CALLED TO ORDER	6:02 p.m.
<u>Minutes</u>	A. January 27, 21 minutes approved- no changes. Dave Schalk made a motion to approve, Tracy Sailors seconded the motion- all were in favor.
<u>Public Comment</u>	A. None
<u>Agenda</u> A. Emeritus Member Introductions	A. Bev Schalk and Lois Reimer gave their introductions. Bev Schalk said she has been involved with the Sister City since the early 1990s and has seen tremendous value of the relationship for her family and the community and wanted to continue to stay involved and help support the group. Lois Reimer has been involved with the sister city since 2000. Lois grew up in Japan from the ages of 9-14. She got a job in Gladstone teaching Japanese in 1990, and then came to teach Japanese at the high school in Wilsonville in 2000, taught there for 8 years, and then taught at West Linn for another 5.
<u>History Presentation</u> A. Bev Schalk	A. Presentation attached
<u>School Communications</u> A. Lois Reimer	A. School Communications- present teacher is Shinobu Chrisman. Lois discussed her background of being a Japanese language teacher and how this group has influenced her. Lois urged the board to keep Shinobu in the loop about board happenings and business. Lois talked about the students from Wilsonville High school that came to the departure dinner at the Wilsonville Community Center. They were students that were supposed to travel to Japan the following year, but the trip got canceled due to Covid-19. B. Observations: Lois said that her students who have gone to Japan will never be the same because of how much the trip meant to them. Lois mentioned four of her students from Wilsonville High School are currently living in Japan, 2 of them are now married to Japanese women. Lois mentioned the idea of hosting a reunion for Wilsonville High School

students who have traveled to Japan in the past so that they could share their stories. Lois also mentioned how important the homestay experience was for her students. She explained that it was the most frightening part for the students, but also the most meaningful.

- C. Lois encouraged the board to get to know Shinobu and to introduce ourselves (perhaps yearly) to the various schools around Wilsonville, so that we can better support Shinobu and the educational exchanges. Lois said she has observed that our school system in Wilsonville is growing, and that communication is more important now than ever to re-introduce the sister city program to the schools. "The advisory board has clout," Lois said. Lois explained that it is expected of the teacher, but it will mean more coming from the city advisory board. "Don't leave the schools out, don't think that that piece is already handled," Lois said.
- D. Bob wanted to clarify that, currently, it is Shinobu who is planning the school trips, and working with a travel agent to get plane tickets, event passes, etc... and that it is not a function of the school. Bob reiterated that Shinobu does all of this on her well-deserved summer vacation, and that the school does not contribute monetarily. Lois confirmed that this was correct.
- E. Ashleigh asked the group if they thought we should be taking over the school trips. Lois urged the group to work with Shinobu. Lois also brought up the aspect of liability with these trips. Erica chimed in that this would be something that would have to be discussed with council, admin staff, and city attorneys, as the board cannot use funds to send board members to Japan. Council will need to direct the board on how much they want the board to be involved in the school trips.

Bob asked Erica to speak with City admin staff and potentially council, to see where the limitations are in terms of helping Shinobu plan the student trips, or if that is an area, the city is willing to step in and help with. "We don't want to overpromise and under-deliver," Bob said. Tracy asked if we could use part of our budget to help with this. Erica explained that the budget could not send specific citizens or board members to Japan. Tracy further explained she meant helping cover the teacher's expenses. Erica said that the board could potentially help pay for supplies for trips.

Cathy said her understanding was that the board's budget was more for covering expenses for when Wilsonville has incoming delegations visit from Japan. Cathy also wanted to explore the idea of having the budget cover the expenses for a chaperone to help staff the school trips. Lois explained that she sometime took students' parents as chaperones, but that they had to pay their own way. Erica said she has strictly been told that the funds cannot send board members to Japan.

Aaron asked if the group could fundraise to help with the costs- examples he gave were a mochi drive. Erica said she would need to get clarification on this because she was unsure if a board could fundraise on behalf of itself. The idea of a 'friends' group was briefly discussed, and Bob said that a friends group was brought up in his interview. Other ideas, spaghetti feeds, pancake breakfasts...

Cultural Marker at CCC

A. Adrienne
Scritsmier

A. Adrienne became aware of a cultural marker that exists at Clackamas Community College in Wilsonville. Adrienne said that it was gifted to Wilsonville in 1991 from Kitakata. The item was originally gifted from Kitakata to the college and was on the main campus in Oregon City. The Wilsonville campus did not exist in 1991. It was moved to Wilsonville when the campus was built. The marker is pretty badly weathered and needs repair. Adrienne just wanted to make the board aware of the marker, as gift giving is an important part of Japanese culture. The board talked about potentially restoring the pole and planting some flowers at the base of it- timeframe, late summer.

Adrienne further explained that the marker was gifted or moved on behalf of the former dean of technology and applied sciences division (TAPS). The marker was located at one of the training centers where they do welding and plumbing work, and could have some connection to the apprentice program.

Aaron asked the board if there were any ever any connection with any taiko drumming groups at the various colleges throughout Portland. He mentioned that he thought it might be a good connection for the board if the group ever moves forward with hosting sister city day events.

Debrief of Virtual
Exchange Meetings

A. All Members

A. High School Student Exchange:

B. Board Exchange:

Ashleigh really liked the idea of doing a wine/sake tasting with individuals in Kitakata.

Bob said he felt unprepared.

Cathy said she thought Ashleigh did a wonderful job.

Adrienne said she thought the group should have a zoom background that is consistent and have some sort of City Logo on it. It looks more professional. Erica said she could look into this.

C. Mayoral Exchange

Erica explained that there was a lot of background information/presentations given for Mayor Fitzgerald, as she is new to this program. One of the presentations was on being an Olympic host town for rowing, and the other was on the tsunami that hit in 2011, and how much the financial gift from Wilsonville meant to them.

One of the major takeaways from the meeting came in the form of a task from Mayor Fitzgerald. She asked the board to start reaching out to local businesses to see if they would be interested in giving a virtual tour/background of their business for Kitakata. The idea would then be to have a similar business in Kitakata on the same zoom call, so that they could make a connection with someone in a similar line of work.

	<p>Aaron shared several ideas including a hybrid sister city beer, and the 'consider Kitakata campaign' to bring in local businesses. Another idea Aaron shared was building a Japanese garden in Wilsonville.</p> <p>Bob shared a topic that had been discussed a while back about how there six Japanese infants are buried at Pleasant View Cemetery in Sherwood, with no history. Bob shared that we may be able to put a memorial there.</p> <p>Tracy recommended starting a google doc for all of our ideas. Erica said she would create this and share it.</p> <p>Dave shared that he thought the board virtual exchange went really well and it seemed like everyone was excited about the new involvement from a city perspective.</p> <p>Bob brought up the idea of extended in person exchanges- for a full school year. He thought the board should reach out to the rotary to see how they have done this in the past.</p> <p>Seiji reflected on Bev's presentation and mentioned that the relationship between the two chambers pre-dated the sister city relationship. He said he was curious what the relationship was like today.</p> <p>The board overall expressed interest in having a rotary member and a chamber member join one of our upcoming meetings to talk about what past relationships have looked like and see what interest there is.</p> <p>Motion: The board voted, all in favor, to appoint Bob Yokoyama as our school communications liaison. Bob will be the boards point of contact for Shinobu regarding any board happenings and questions/concerns she may have moving forward.</p> <p>Bob clarified that he would like to meet with the rotary and chamber separately to focus on each individually. The board agreed that that would be a good idea.</p>
<p><u>Board Comments and Next Steps</u></p> <p>A. Schedule next meeting</p>	<p>A. The next meeting was scheduled for March 24th at 6pm, but was later rescheduled via email to March 30th at 6pm.</p>
<p>ADJOURN</p>	<p>7:38 p.m.</p>