

Somersworth Cultural Commission

One Government Way
Somersworth, NH 03878

Minutes of Meeting on 11 May 2016: Second Draft

Present: Mayor Dana Hilliard; Councilor Marty Dumont, Chair; Councilor Nancie Cameron; Diane Crawford; Celeste Feren; Sharon Hodsdon; Maureen Jackman; Arlene Jones; Rick Michaud; Rachael Wattimena; and Pius Charles Murray, Secretary.

Excused: Councilor Jessica Paradis; Richard Boulanger; Bonnie Constantakos; Erin Ellis; Jenne Holmes; Maggie Larson; Peter Matthiau; and Dylan Zinkevich.

- I. Call to Order: by the Chair at 6:00 P.M.
- II. Introductions: The Chair invited Ms. Wattimena, the newest member, to introduce herself briefly. She is a student at Somersworth High School, President of her class, and represents the Indonesian community. The Chair warmly welcomed Ms. Wattimena to the Commission and promised to keep her busy.
- III. Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting: Motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of 14 April 2016 as amended was made by Mr. Murray and seconded by Councilor Cameron. Motion passed unanimously.
- IV. Report by the Mayor: Mayor Hilliard reported that he had been unable to travel to Thetford Mines in April as originally hoped. In his place, he sent two aides. He is hoping to attend the large summer concert on St Jean Baptiste Day in June. Prior to that he will engage in some conference calls as Thetford Mines decides on its protocol. Mayor Hilliard asked the City Clerk to see if Somersworth had ever passed a resolution formalizing its relationship with Thetford Mines. In the absence of any documentation, Mayor Hilliard reported that he planned to submit a resolution to the City Council in June so that at the resolution's second reading at the end of June the City Council could adopt it thus identifying Thetford Mines as a Sister City officially. To respect the cultural boundaries of the two cities, the Mayor stated that he would like the resolution written in both French and English. Furthermore he is hoping that by Spring 2017 after completing all the diplomatic steps a formal exchange between Thetford Mines and Somersworth could occur.
- V. Thetford Mines Outreach: see the Mayor's report above. Ms. Jackman added that the Cultural Commission would become much more involved in the planning of cultural activities and exchanges after the diplomatic formalities have been completed.
- VI. The Nuns' Story: Mr. Boulanger was absent and so no report was made.
- VII. The Children's International Festival: Councilor Cameron is the liaison. The date of the Festival is 18 June 2016. Councilor Cameron reported that both the Greek and Italian

communities would be represented; she asked if the French community which is celebrating Franco-American Day that same day would also send representation.

Ms. Crawford mentioned finding a copy of *A Taste of Historic Cooking* which had been printed for the city's 100th Anniversary in 1993. She thought it might be a good idea and great fundraising project to update and re-publish it for the city's 125th Anniversary in 2018. The Mayor recommended contacting the High School printing department to inquire if it could digitally reproduce that exact copy in time for sale at the Festival on 18 June 2016. The Chair asked Ms. Crawford and Ms. Hodsdon to contact Ms. Holmes to form an *ad-hoc* committee to oversee updating the cookbook by including some Indonesian recipes as well; the Mayor and Chair of the Cultural Commission would contribute a second introduction. A suggested retail price of \$10.00 was discussed. The deadline for the updated edition was set by October 2016.

VIII. Flag Raising Committee: The Chair asked Mr. Michaud to co-ordinate a committee that would provide a Cultural Commission presence at flag raising ceremonies at City Hall. It could serve as a good marketing and publicity-generating presence for the Cultural Commission. The Mayor stated that there are two such ceremonies coming up: (a) on 18 June 2018 for St Jean Baptiste Day, the Quebec Provincial flag would be raised; and (b) for the Jakarta Fair, sponsored by the Friends of Somersworth, the Indonesian flag would be raised but the dates of the Jakarta Fair have not been set yet. The Mayor announced that the American Legion has donated \$3,500 to purchase 63 USA flags to fly between Memorial Day and Veterans' Day on poles between the Dover line at Weeks' Circle and Constitutional Way; flags will fly on both sides of the street. In addition, the city is deciding what to do about the banners downtown; there are 45 poles and if each of the five founding ethnic groups contributed flags, they would only need to provide something in the area of nine apiece. This helps build community according to the Mayor. Ms. Feren suggested placing an ad in the newspaper before Memorial Day to alert people to what was happening.

IX. Student Report: As Mr. Zinkevich was not present and this was Ms. Wattimena's first meeting, there was no student report. The Chair explained that he encouraged the student members to participate actively in the Commission's deliberations because in his experience the students oftentimes had excellent – and unique -- ideas. The Chair asked Ms. Feren to facilitate the students' conversations with the whole Commission. The Mayor reported that the Somersworth Middle School's Spring Concert had an Indonesian flair as five traditional Indonesian musical instruments were played and the students learned a song in Indonesian. The concert was videotaped and broadcast via Manhattan throughout Indonesia, immensely raising Somersworth's international prestige. The Mayor's vision is for the SMS Spring Concert to become an international musical one featuring instruments and songs from each of the city's founding ethnic groups.

X. Government Channel Usage: Councilor Paradis who is spearheading this effort was not present. The Mayor suggested that the Cultural Commission compose several multi-lingual Public Service Announcements for broadcast on either the city's channel (22) or the schools channel (95). Since the school has a green background, its production could add any appropriate background to enliven a Cultural Commission PSA. Ms. Feren volunteered to work on composing a short PSA and asked the Chair for a motto or logo, to which the Chair responded

that he would soon oblige.

- XI. Sister City: The Mayor received a letter from Jimmy Seak, the Mayor of Tomahon, Indonesia. In order to obtain the designation of a sister city in Indonesia appropriately, the Mayor has forwarded the request to the Indonesian Ambassador at the Consulate. In that way, the Indonesian Government can identify what it thinks would be the best fit for a sister city for Somersworth. According to the Mayor, his goal would be to have a sister city in each of the countries of Somersworth's founding ethnic groups.
- XII. Franco-American Day: to be celebrated on 18 June 2016. The Quebec Provincial flag will be raised at City Hall that day. The Chair is working on having a French mass celebrated perhaps at St Martin's in early July 2016. He did ask if the Commission thought that Holy Trinity would be better especially since the Indonesian community celebrates their mass there already; no consensus was reached. Since many Canadian vacation in Orchard Beach, a very good attendance could be expected for a French mass.
- XIII. Miscellaneous: The Mayor announced that he had found out about a book titled *A Mystery in Somersworth* by Susan Littlefield that concerned vacationing children from Thetford Mines who come to Somersworth and have an adventure. One copy was located on Amazon; Ms. Feren said she would look for additional copies; she recommended that the Mayor ask his Thetford Mines contacts if anyone there had or knew about available copies. The Chair reported celebrating Greek Orthodox Easter at the Somersworth House of Pizza; his waitress informed him that she was one of a number of children sent by their families from Thetford Mines to Somersworth to live because there were too many children; it is an interesting explanation why there is a Somersworth-Thetford Mines connection.
- XIV. Next Meeting: Wednesday, 15 June 2016, at 6:00 PM at City Hall.
- XV. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn at 6:08 PM was made by Mayor Hilliard and seconded by Councilor Cameron. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Pius Charles Murray

(Mr.) Pius Charles Murray
Secretary

N.B. There is a recording of this meeting made with Minutes of Meeting Recording software.

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