



KITAKATA SISTER CITY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, 2/21 at 6:00 PM

Parks and Rec Admin Office, 29600 SW Park Place

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Kitakata Sister City Advisory Board was held at the Parks and Recreation Admin Office beginning at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 21, 2024. Adrienne Scritsmier called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m., followed by roll call.

PRESENT

Adrienne Scritsmier
Ashleigh Sumerlin
Aaron Reyna

Sammy Scarpone
Jenelle Reid
Mas Yatabe

ABSENT

Karen Kreitzer
Seiji Shiratori

STAFF PRESENT

Erica Behler

GUEST ATTENDEES

Lois Reimer

CONSENT AGENDA

- **Approval of the Minutes:** Ashleigh made a motion to approve the January 10, 2024 Kitakata Sister City Advisory Board Minutes. Mike seconded the motion. Motion passed with unanimous consent.

CITIZEN INPUT

- Lois Reimer stated that she was there to learn of the recent trip to Kitakata, Japan

BUDGET

- Erica mentioned that the board was at budget due to trip expenses, and there was not a standing budget between the time of the meeting and June 30. Erica also mentioned that a budget request had been proposed for \$25,000 for fiscal year 24-25. Kitakata students will not be visiting Wilsonville in October, 2024. The next expected delegation will be arriving in October 2025.

TRIP OVERVIEW

- Erica gave a brief overview of the trip and itinerary. She shared that the trip was very educational and eye opening for those who went. The group consisted of Mayor, Julie Fitzgerald and her husband. Council President Akervall, Council Members Berry and Linville, staff representatives Amanda Guile-Hinman, and Erica Behler and Sister City Board members, Adrienne Scritsmier (chair), Sammy Scarpone (vice chair), and Ashleigh Sumerlin (member). Behler shared that she thought council had an amazing time, and got to experience firsthand the generosity and appreciation of our sister city and its people. The group toured several local businesses including a ramen factory, local trade school, shops, restaurants, and more. The group also had the experience of several cooking classes, including soba making. There were also several business exchange meetings that took place.
- **What we learned**
 - Erica shared that she thought Council has a lot more understanding and appreciation for the Sister City organizations as a whole, and the board can likely expect them to be more involved in events and student delegations moving forward.
 - Erica also shared that a big takeaway was regarding the 2011 Fukushima Nuclear Disaster, and how that event has given Fukushima/Kitakata products a bad stigma regarding safety. Even though exports are rigorously tested for trace amounts of radiation and pass safety tests, many historical export cities still refuse to purchase Fukushima products. This has hurt the economy and reputation for Kitakata made goods. It was continuously stressed by Kitakata that they want us to share how Kitakata products are good and safe.
 - Adrienne also shared that there was an underlying focus on depopulation of the area, and the challenges the city faces because of that such as empty housing and commercial buildings. On this topic, Ashleigh said that many students are choosing to go to college outside of Kitakata and then choosing to stay where they go to school.
 - The group also learned a lot about local traditions and crafts such as ramen, kura, soba, peanuts, sake, etc...
- **Changes Moving Forward**
 - The group shared that moving forward, not a ton has to change. It was the realization of the group and council that the board itself isn't set up in a way to drive economic exchange forward in a meaningful way, and that that piece of the boards goals should be reevaluated.
 - The board should look to formalize a few more aspects of the student delegations such as having them attend a city council or board meeting, perhaps having some sort of pinning ceremony during the welcome dinner or certificate ceremony at the farewell dinner, etc...
 - More Wilsonville initiated zoom interactions
 - Feedback about future trips included- add bbq cooking class, roller skating, and a boat cruise

2024 GOAL SETTING

- Erica shared that the work plan that was initially done in 2021 when the board was formed, was only projected through 2023. The board is in a place where goals need to be evaluated, re-

written and presented to council. In 2021, a consultant was used to help create the official work plan.

- Erica asked each board member to come up with three goals, and corresponding action items for each goal. Board members should be ready to present these ideas at the March 13 meeting.

Example of a Goal with Action Items:

Goal: *Host a Oregon/Japan Sister Cities Roundtable meeting*

Action Items:

1. *Contact local OR/Japan sister cities to gauge interest*
 2. *Come up with a framework for a roundtable meeting*
 3. *Send invitations and host meeting by end of 2024*
- The board briefly discussed other goals to consider such as reevaluating term limits for board members (currently 2 terms), and becoming a 'standing' board of the city.
 - Sammy made a motion to direct staff to continue to look into the process of the board becoming a standing committee and lengthening term limits, Adrienne seconded, and none were opposed.
 - *Current term limits: No Board member shall be appointment for more than two full consecutive terms (not including a partial term served), but any person may be appointed again to the Board after an interval of one year.*

BOARD COMMENTS

- **Cherry Blossom Viewing Event**
 - Adrienne mentioned that she would like to host a cherry blossom viewing event in March. The date of Saturday, March 23 was identified for this event in Town Center Park.
- **Sister City Research**
 - Mike mentioned that he would like to compile some OR/Japan sister city info to gauge what other OR/Japan sister cities are doing as far as itinerary planning, budgeting, etc... to identify if there are any standard best practices

ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned at 7:18pm