

Richmond-Shimada Friendship Commission
Wednesday, April 9th
– (In-person + Zoom call (for non-Commissioners) –
Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order and Attendance: **6:49pm**
(Highlighted yellow or checked in attendance)
 - Jamie Brown, Chair
 - Valerie Snider, Vice Chair-Treasurer
 - Maryann Maslan, Secretary (on leave)
 - Arianna Rodriguez, Commissioner
 - Esther Takeuchi, Commissioner
 - Zelda Holland, Commissioner
 - Mindy Pines, Commissioner
 - Liana Ngo, Commissioner (Secretary pro tem) - via Zoom
 - Connie He, Commissioner - via Zoom
 - Evan Sirchuk, volunteer to the Commission - via Zoom
 - Ana Speros - of the Hercules Sister City Association - via Zoom
 - Cesar Zepeda, City Council Member

2. Reading and approval of March minutes - **Mindy motioned, Valerie seconded; Approved.**

3. Agenda Review (to amend or remove but not to add)

4. Treasurer's Report - **Valerie reported no change as of the February statement of \$13,436.20**

5. Other Commissioner Reports
 - a. Zelda Holland
 - i. **We heard from Zelda's son that Zelda passed away sometime last year, and due to there being no official obituary her son will write something to send to us.**
 - ii. **Jamie would like to send a formal acknowledgement to Shimada, but is unable to do so until she hears back from her son.**
 1. **Jamie will message Marilyn to ask about Zelda's time with the commission.**
 - b. Jamie & Valerie met with Takeo and Chika - **Discussion Topics**
 - i. **Obi Festival visit: 10 hotel rooms available and around 12 people are allowed at the banquet. Shimada requests the arrival and departure**

dates of each attending individual. The Welcome Banquet is on Oct 10th and the end of the festival is on Oct 13th.

- ii. **2025 Richmond ambassadors: The names of the 5 ambassadors were discussed as well as their arrival and departure dates.**
- iii. **2025 Shimada ambassador itinerary: some days were too busy, specifically Tuesday March 25th and Thursday March 27th. They would like us to make the last day in Richmond low intensity, and possibly limit each day to 3 activities max.**
- iv. **2026 Adult Delegation from Shimada: Jamie asked when the best time would be for this and May or October was the response. The commission will discuss logistics further in detail and most likely create a subcommittee in the future.**
- v. **What activities the 2024 Richmond ambassadors liked the most: There were no specific activities, but they liked hanging out with their host families the most.**

6. Old Business (to be actioned or archived)

a. RSFC Living History Project

- i. Hajimari Project: Update on interviews. Jamie will contact Esther, Valerie will contact Steve Pinto and Janna Coverston, and Liana will contact Marilyn Lee
- ii. Schedule subcommittee meeting for April
 - 1. **Jamie will send out an email to the subcommittee.**

b. 2025 Outbound Richmond Application

- i. Lola Abdugapparov has withdrawn as Friendship Ambassador
- ii. Selection of alternate Friendship Ambassador
 - 1. Aidan Cruz, Atzin Sanchez, Angel Uribe Fuentes
 - a. **Jamie motioned that Aidan Cruz, our 1st alternate, will become our new friendship ambassador, Mindy seconded; Approved.**
 - b. **Aidan Cruz has been chosen by the commission and has been informed. He has also sent his check as of April 9, 2025.**

- ii. **The van was too hot. The AC didn't work and they couldn't open the windows, so the students wanted to ride with the chaperones.**
- iii. **Jamie would like to meet with Parks & Rec to coordinate better for next year.**

3. **Schedule/General Issues**

- a. **Monday, March 24th wasn't scheduled well. Connie and Valerie had to find something to do since EC Plaza didn't have many options. They were able to go to Bay View in Emeryville due to the driver, Travis, being flexible.**
- b. **The Commission received reports from local volunteers of an ambassador whose food needs were not met by their host family, after the conclusion of the visit. It is possible that SIEA may reach out about this issue. The Commission will provide more guidance to host families about anticipating and meeting the ambassadors' food needs.**
- c. **4 activities a day were too much for the ambassadors, and they requested that we lessen it to 3 activities a day.**
- d. **Some days were difficult due to 2 of the adult ambassadors not being confident in their English skills. Chika said SIEA will try to send an adult ambassador who can speak more English to help communicate, especially for moments such as getting medication/going to the hospital.**

ii. **Thank-you's**

- 1. **Each Commissioner/volunteer send a thank-you to partners you communicated with**
 - a. **Arianna and Mindy will make an Ecard to send out by Friday to send to our contacts.**
 - b. **Each commissioner/volunteer will either send the Ecard or a thank you email.**

- d. Updating the richmondfriendship website
 - i. Evan currently manages this. He is willing to create training materials and walk through the process of updating the website. Jamie will coordinate a subcommittee
 - 1. Website update to include information about the annual timeline for application, process, and estimate of cost.
 - ii. Can we make travel brochures about Shimada available on our website?
- e. Fundraising Subcommittee
 - i. 2024/2025 Budget and 2025/2026 Draft Budgets
- f. 2025 Northern California Cherry Blossom Parade
 - i. We are registered to participate. Rob Leung confirmed no fee, no participant limit, route is approximately 1.5 miles.
 - ii. Jamie to send out a save-the-date note to the big mail list for participants.
 - iii. New banner? - **The commission will be charged \$92 and it will take 2 days to make a 3 ft tall by 6 ft wide banner.**
 - 1. **Jamie motioned to order a new banner to use for a variety of reasons, Arianna seconded; Approved.**
- g. Getting the word out about our programs for 2026
 - i. Tabling opportunities - compile list

7. New Business

- a. 2025 Adult Delegation to Obi Festival
 - i. Reconcile attendee list, arrival and departure dates, and hotels/host families
- b. Inviting Adult Delegation from Shimada - 2026 65th Anniversary
 - i. Possible itinerary for adult delegation

8. Calendar Look-ahead (note absences if any)

- a. April 20th Cherry Blossom Parade
- b. May 7th Commission Meeting
- c. June 4th Commission Meeting
- d. **June 19th 2025 Ambassador Send Off**

9. Good of the Order **8:23pm**