

Richmond-Shimada Friendship Commission
Wednesday, May 7th
– (In-person + Zoom call (for non-Commissioners)) –
MINUTES

1. Call to Order and Attendance: **6:08pm**
(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
 - Mindy Pines, Commissioner
 - Liana Ngo, Commissioner (Secretary pro tem)
 - Connie He, Commissioner
 - Evan Sirchuk, volunteer to the Commission
 - Ana Speros - of the Hercules Sister City Association - via Zoom
 - Cesar Zepeda, City Council Member

2. Reading and approval of April minutes
 - a. **Motion by Jamie, 2nd by Arianna; minutes approved.**

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

4. Treasurer's Report
 - a. **Valerie has not received the March or April bank statements.**
 - b. **Anyone who still has reimbursements from the Ambassadors' visit in March should send them to Valerie, who will submit them in one package.**
 - c. **Valerie purchased travel insurance for Aidan Cruz for \$141.00.**

5. Other Commissioner Reports
 - a. **The Commission was represented in the 2025 Northern California Cherry Blossom Parade by a group of nine Commissioners and volunteers, including Jamie, Arianna, Connie, Bridget McVey, Mia Del Rio, and David Kamil. The route was 1.5 miles and took about an hour to complete. Next year it would be nice to bring a larger group, and possibly have Richmond and Shimada flags to wave and think of ways to attract attention. The new banner turned out well.**

- b. The first orientation for 2025 Richmond Ambassadors was held on April 27th from 1-4 at Valerie's house. Arianna, Liana and Connie covered the information packet and the ambassadors asked questions.**
- 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 May
 - b. 2025 Outbound Richmond Delegation
 - i. Aidan Cruz accepted the position of Friendship Ambassador, delivered a check for the airfare, and attended the orientation on April 27th.
 - ii. Refund to withdrawn Ambassador Lola's family
 - 1. **Jamie motioned to issue a full refund to Lola's family minus the \$150 airline change fee; Valerie seconded. All were in favor. Jamie will email Mary to process the refund.**
 - 2. **The Commission will pay the additional \$141 for Aidan Cruz's insurance, and will work to update the Ambassador Agreement form to clarify if this amount will be withheld from future refunds.**
 - iii. Schedule Orientation Session
 - 1. 2nd Orientation scheduled for Saturday May 24th at Richmond Museum at 1pm. Liana has contacted Evelyn to reserve the Research Room, will follow up.
 - 2. **Jamie motioned to donate \$100 to the Richmond Museum as an acknowledgement of the contribution they make to our student exchanges each year. Valerie seconded; All were in favor. Jamie will deliver a check on the 24th.**
 - iv. Ambassadors' information has been sent to Shimada.
 - v. Is it allowable for Ambassadors to bring drones?
 - 1. **The Commission discussed that it may be an invasion of privacy; past Ambassadors felt that there wouldn't be time in the schedule to use it. The host families may not be knowledgeable about Japan's drone use regulations. Connie**

felt that it would be fine as long as it was not used during the Ambassador's official duties from 9 to 5.

- c. 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. **Connie, Ana, Jamie and possibly Helen will meet with Evan, date and time TBD**
 - 2. Website update to include information about the annual timeline for application, process, and estimate of cost.
 - 3. **Connie would be open to a redesign of the website. Jamie is open to a redesign of the website when all seats on the Commission are filled.**
 - ii. Can we make travel brochures about Shimada available on our website?
- d. Fundraising Subcommittee
 - i. 2024/2025 Budget and 2025/2026 Draft Budgets - **postponed**
- e. Getting the word out about our programs for 2026
 - i. Tabling opportunities - compile list
 - 1. **Solano Stroll (September); RYSE Community Resource Fair (Mid-May); Hercules Culture Festival (June 1st); Point Richmond Music Fest (June-September); El Cerrito July 4th; East Richmond Heights Art and Music Festival (August 2nd); check with Richmond Parks & Rec for more.**
- f. 2025 Adult Delegation to Obi Festival
 - i. Arrival and departure dates for Shimada, and hotels/host families request
 - ii. Nat Bates is the new chair of the Zhoushan Commission. He may attend the Obi matsuri?
- g. Inviting Adult Delegation from Shimada - 2026 65th Anniversary
 - i. Discuss possible itinerary for adult delegation - **postponed**
- h. 2026 Adult Ambassador Application
 - i. **The Commission set a goal to open the application and send out notices by May 23rd, with a deadline of June 6th (extended to June 30th).**

- ii. How to distribute? **Jamie will ask John Iwawaki for suggestions for reaching out to the District schools. Arianna will send to teachers/Principals she communicated with.**
 - i. CJSCN Article & Photo for next month - **Jamie will write and submit it.**
 - j. CJSCN Online Workshop Wed. May 21st 5-7pm
 - i. San Diego - Yokohama and Sunnyvale Sister Cities will present
 - k. 2025 Volunteer Appreciation Picnic
 - i. **August 9th and 16th are potential dates. Jamie will confirm with Mary if we can reserve Shimada Friendship Park AND the parking lot for one of those dates.**
- 7. Calendar Look-ahead (note absences if any)
 - a. May 24th - Ambassador Orientation
 - b. June 4th - Commission Meeting
 - c. June 19th - 2025 Ambassadors depart from SFO
 - d. July 9th - Commission Meeting
 - e. July 11th - Ambassadors return
 - f. August 6th - Ambassadors report to the Commission (retreat?)
 - g. August 9th or 16th - 3rd Annual Volunteer Appreciation Picnic**
- 8. Good of the Order: **8:27**

Minutes recorded by Jamie Brown