



Richmond-Zhoushan Friendship Commission Meeting
February 12, 2018
1:00 PM
City Council Office

Minutes

- I. **Welcome and Introductions-** Chair Sara Zhao, Commissioners Matt Lewis, James Lee, Eric Peterson, staff Jim Matzorkis, Lucy Zhao, and Abbie Tuning.
- II. **Discuss and Review updated Zhoushan Commission Brochure-**
 - Commissioners opted to review the brochure before the next meeting. Chair Zhao will resend the PDF.
 - Commissioners discussed providing links to the Zhoushan tourism webpages on the Commission's site.
- III. **Discuss 501c3 Status- Vote tabled until next meeting with quorum.**
 - Staff member Jim Matzorkis provided a review of the Commission's current standing- The Friends of Zhoushan was meant to act as the fundraising branch of the Commission, the purpose of reestablishment would be to enable fundraising.
 - The Commissioners acknowledge the need to reevaluate the purpose and goals of the Friends of Zhoushan as part of the reestablishment process, including setting yearly fundraising goals.
 - The Commission should seek donations from entities that have consistently benefitted from the Commission's work, such as restaurants and hotels visited during exchange trips.
 - A buffet dinner fundraiser suggested as a future donation event.
 - Staff member Lucy Zhou can no longer act as the treasurer for the Friends of Zhoushan since she has joined the Port of Richmond as an employee. She plans to be in contact with Council Liaison Trina Jackson in order to terminate her access to banking services.
 - Vote to reestablish Friends of Zhoushan was tabled until the next meeting due to a lack of quorum.
- IV. **Status Reports on Prospective Exchange Programs-**
 - Peterson is working on a pilot student exchange program with his school, but is still waiting for formal approvals. He has been in contact with Zhoushan affiliates and is waiting until after the Chinese New Year to reach out again.

- Commissioner Peterson discussed the success of other Chinese exchange programs in focusing first on teacher exchanges, and then exploring student visits once a culture of exchange has been established through teachers.
- The Commission discussed encouraging short student and parent visits, and partnering with an established travel agency to generate interest, instead of working only with school districts.

V. **Review Request Responses from the December Meeting-**

- a) Commissioner's reviewed the timeline for Zhoushan tourism conferences and expos.
 - Many Commissioners feel it's more important to attend the conference than the expos.
 - Language is the biggest challenge at the expos. Commissioners discussed the need for more translated materials and partnership with travel agencies.
- b) Commission received information on how officials from Guangdong selected Richmond-the city is similar in size and governance structure, as well as proximity to a major city.
- c) Update on documents uploaded to the website, including the Mutual Agreement and the Delegation Presentation.

VI. **Other Matters of Interest**

- The Commissioners discussed the development of Hilltop Mall at length, and discussed the opportunity to incorporate increased Chinese tourism as a development goal.
- The Commission hopes to reach out to Hilltop Mall management and the Marina Bay Inn to discuss tourism partnership and increasing access.
- Meeting attendance is discussed as an issue.
 - Chair Zhao suggested alternating meetings between afternoon start times and evening start times.
 - At the next meeting the Commissioners will discuss removing members who are no longer active or are unable to attend regular meetings.
 - Commissioners discussed diversifying membership to include teachers and Hilltop management.

VII. **Adjourn**