

Richmond-Shimada Friendship Commission Meeting

MINUTES

August 7, 2019

6:00pm

Shimada Room, City Council Chambers

1. Call to Order

Present: Commissioners Marilyn Lee, Evan Sirchuk, Valerie Snider, Robyn Rickansrud, Yas Aoki, Josh Miklich, Maryann Jacobson, Esther Takeuchi, Zelda Holland and staff Trina Jackson

Summer Ambassadors: Daniel Puggeda - Hercules High, Connie He- El Cerrito, Chaperone Angela Anthony- Librarian at Hercules, Tuomas Rickansrud – El Cerrito, Helen Zhao Chen -El Cerrito, William Kikuchi from El Cerrito,

2. Reading and approval of minutes from previous meeting.

Minutes approved as written. Motion by Marilyn Lee and seconded by Valerie Snider to approve as written. Approved by a unanimous vote.

3. Input on Agenda

No input

4. Commissioner Reports

Esther Takeuchi - The J-SEI Festival is on Sept 8th. The ambassadors suggested selling Boba drinks. Boba shop will prepare individual drinks and donate 25% with the group or groups can purchase and keep the proceeds. Esther will check with organizers of festival about selling the Boba drinks. The commission doesn't have enough tea to sell in bulk. It was suggested that the commission could use the tea as a promotional gift.

Outreach Ideas:

a) Utilize the former ambassadors and commissioners ie. An alumni dinner or potluck or bbq at a commissioner's home, park of community gathering space.

b) Participate in the Solano Stroll, but don't focus on several tabling activities.

No other reports

4. Important Business

- Shimada Ambassador Reflection Presentations.

Angela – Highlights included experiencing the culture, host families were great, the officials were very accommodating and welcoming. There were no major challenges; however, some classes had lesson plans and others didn't. Some had detailed plans and the others just had her lecture to the class. Evan suggested samples of expectations from Shimada teachers.

Ambassador - the elementary schools had lesson plans prepared - we showed them American games to play - the middle schools and the high schools had interactive activities planned.

Evan suggested asking Shimada teachers to compile the questions in English

Ambassador - the school visits included a lot of observing, most schools had a set plan, except one elementary school.

Ambassadors were able to tolerate the weather; a suggestion was made that ambassadors should bring many pairs of socks because they're always removing their shoes. The families were very welcoming and made them feel like a member of the family. The host families invited extended family members and friends to meet student ambassadors. The families were very attentive to the interests of the ambassadors. The ambassadors enjoyed spending time with students that they met during previous visits.

Ambassadors appreciated learning about the Japanese culture. There were expressions of feeling more independent since the trip. The ambassadors gained honorary siblings, due to the bonds that were made with the host families and students. The ambassadors had

conversational English sessions with the students during the school visits. There were many questions about public transportation in America.

Suggestion - prepare for mosquitoes, bring small gifts in a separate bag, learn a few phrases in Japanese to help communication, do not over pack, be gracious and appreciative. Don't be afraid to interact with the students. Remember to finish the food on your plate.

There are better exchange rates when using debit cards. Exchange money at the airport or when there is a visit to the bank. Remember to buy Sims cards at the airport or arrange to have an internet data plan to help the host families and ambassadors to share information and plan visits/trips.

The group was able to meet up with former Shimada/Richmond ambassadors to spend a couple of sightseeing opportunities in Tokyo prior to leaving.

Contributions - ambassadors want to meet ambassadors from Japan, fundraising events and volunteer opportunities. Those that can host will continue to host. Would like to help spread the word in Richmond about Shimada.

Angela - would like to know if there will be a visit from Shimada rotary to Richmond rotary. She would like to participate.

- Presentation to the City Council – **The Commission will continue to plan**
 - Format
 - 10 Minute Presentation + 5min Q&A
 - Presenters
 - Chaperones, Students, Teachers
 - Theme
 - TBD
 - Materials (What we can show)
 - Historical and present

■ Photo slides

● Obi Matsuri Festival in October – **Commissioners *Evan Sirchuk, Josh Miklich, Robyn Rickanrud and wife, Councilmember Bates & Trina Jackson (tentative) plan on attending. Responses from Councilmembers Johnson and Martinez are pending.***

- 12th - 14th of October
- Current attendees, Valerie and Evan

- R/S business connection plan
 - Create a list of Richmond businesses in primary sectors
 - Form a plan for an adult visit to Richmond in the summer
 - Homestays
 - Mostly Business mixers/tours
 - Connect with Shimada folk during the Obi Festival to discuss possible interested businesses on the Shimada side

5. Goof of the Order/Adjournment