

Richmond-Shimada Friendship Commission
Wednesday, September 4th, 2019
6:00 p.m. Shimada Room
440 Civic Center Plaza, Richmond, Ca.

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

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

Guests: Forest Borie, John Henry High and Raija Rickansrud

Absent: Commissioners Marilyn Leong Lee and Josh Miklich

2. Reading and approval of minutes

Motion made by Commissioner Takeuchi to approve and seconded by Commissioner Rickansrud. The minutes were approved as written.

3. Input on Agenda

Guest Borie informed the commission of his idea to have a Pen Pal program between John Henry High School in Richmond and a High School in Shimada, Japan. He and another teacher potentially have 90 students to participate. The commission was agreeable to exploring the idea. Chair Sirchuk indicated that he would mention the idea to Shimada officials during the upcoming visit to Shimada for the Obi Festival.

4. Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Takeuchi mentioned that the commission will not participate in the annual J-SEI Festival in late September. She also informed the commission of the Family Day event hosted by J-SEI on 9/8 at the El Cerrito Community Center.

Chair Sirchuk mentioned a call from Steve Kirby requesting the commission to potentially endorse or sponsor an upcoming art exhibit at the Richmond Art Center. Sirchuk further stated that an alternative could be to bring youth ambassadors to the art center, if the exhibit is displayed during the Shimada ambassador visit in March.

There were no other reports.

5. Important Business

- **Review commission finances.**
 - **Current Commission fund is \$14,629.**
As stated on the August bank statement.
 - **How much do we spend per year?**

Chair Sirchuk indicated approximately \$1,500 per year to pay for Travel Insurance for the Ambassador Program participants and other expenses related to hosting guests/ambassadors from Shimada, Japan ie. Transportation, meals & misc. expenses.

- **How much income do we have per year?**
Additional funds in the amount of \$1,000 are allocated by the City per fiscal year

- **Set new yearly budget and fundraising goals.**
The commission agreed to set a goal of \$500. Potential fundraising ideas include Dollar Days at Golden Gate Fields and Bingo

- **Alumni Event**
 - **Date: Sunday, September 29th**
Commissioner Rickansrud suggested holding the event during the Christmas Break to make it convenient for former student ambassadors and others to attend. The tentative date is December 21.

 - **Miso Hotpot Dinner at Evan's house**
Approximately 40 ppl. Prep time is at 4pm w/ dinner from 6-8pm.
 - Volunteers needed to help with ingredient prep, cutting vegetables etc.
 - This will also be a potluck, but side dishes can be small
 - Please no desserts.
 - Volunteer needed to draft the email invite and or phone invites
 - The current contact list can be found here:
 - <https://richmondfriendship.org/contactsheet.html>
 - You must first request access
 - Can we get an initial estimate of attendees?

- **Obi Matsuri Festival in October**
 - 12th - 14th of October
 - Current attendees:
 - Valerie Snider
 - Evan Sirchuk
 - Raija Rickansrud
 - Josh Miklich
 - City Council Members / City Staff

- Currently being worked out

Staff Liaison Jackson informed the commission that she may attend along with Councilmembers Johnson, Bates and Martinez (tentatively).

Per Commissioner Takeuchi, attendees are welcome to bring their Happi Coats. Shimada officials will more than likely, provide Happi Coats for the current year.

Commissioner Jacobson inquired about gifts from the commission. Liaison Jackson indicated that she would obtain gifts for the Shimada Friendship Association and the Shimada Officials. Commissioners were advised to bring small tokens of appreciation for homestay hosts and others.

- **Richmond Shimada business connection plan**

- Found a list of Richmond business in primary sectors.
 - Richmond Chamber of Commerce website:
 - <https://web.richmondchamber.com/search>
- Scale back the summer visit idea for now.
 - Try a pilot program with simply connecting two businesses, via email, see if it works.
- Connect with Shimada folk during the obi festival to discuss possible interested businesses on the Shimada side.

Chair Evans indicated that the purpose of the business connection plan is to increase visibility and knowledge of the commission to local businesses. He further suggested scaling the goal of a pilot project down to connecting two local businesses w/ two businesses in Shimada. This effort could provide a greater possibility to obtain sponsorship for the commission by opening doors on the business front.

Commissioner Jacobson suggested looking at cultural exchanges between artists. Richmond has several artists in metal works and other forms of art. There may be artists in Shimada that would be interested in such an exchange. Other ideas included plant nurseries and student projects. She plans on attending the next Chamber of Commerce mixer to network with businesses.

Guest Forest indicated that Kennedy High has a welding program which could be a potential area of exchange.

Commissioner Rickansrud mentioned that potential sponsorships don't have to be associated with businesses from Shimada. The commission should also be prepared to inform potential sponsors of the benefits of sponsoring the commission.

6. Good of the Order/Adjournment