

Alexandria-Caen Sister City Committee

Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 9, 2023

Alexandria City Hall – Room 1101

I. Welcome and Call to Order

ACSCC Chair Angelique Moss called the meeting to order at 7:12 p.m. There was a quorum present.

II. Approve Minutes from December

Angelique distributed a draft of the December 12, 2022, meeting minutes to committee members to review prior to the January meeting. At the meeting, ACSCC member Leslie Tourigny offered some changes to the draft. Angelique introduced a motion, seconded by ACSCC member Wesley Thomas, to accept the minutes, as corrected.

III. 2023 Calendar

Angelique reminded committee members that meetings are held on the 2nd Monday of each month, with some exceptions. She said that the committee's practice had been to not meet during one of the summer months, either July or August. There was discussion about which month we would not meet during in 2023. The consensus was that we would not meet in July, although Angelique suggested that we might want to have a social event just for committee members, as we did last year in July.

Angelique also said that the 2nd Monday of October, October 9, is a federal holiday, so she asked committee members to change the date to either the Monday before or after October 9. The consensus was that October's meeting would be on Monday, October 2nd. Angelique reminded committee members of the City of Alexandria attendance policy for members of committees, which is spelled out in the city's *Boards and Commissions Member Handbook*. She indicated that we have 11 committee meetings a year and members are not expected to miss more than three meetings (25%) in a calendar year for unexcused reasons.

Angelique informed committee members that both Scott Campbell and Alex Jevgrafov were no longer committee members because their terms had expired.

IV. Ongoing Business

A. Recap of Arlington-Reims Sister City Committee Holiday Party 12/13

The Arlington-Reims Sister City Committee invited ACSCC members to their holiday party on December 13, 2022. ACSCC member Elodie Guillon coordinated RSVPs and attendance from our committee members. In addition to Elodie, ACSCC members Angelique, Laura Withers, Jennie Reading, and Kerem Bilge attended. Laura said the party was lovely, and that she learned a lot about the Arlington Committee. She says that they have a very organized student exchange program that is engrained with their local school system. Several members of their committee are teachers in the school system, and over many years they have built strong relationships with the schools that they continue to nurture.

There was discussion about how the Arlington Committee had maintained good relationships with the school administration. Because the committee is not run by Arlington County, they do not have as many limits on what they do as we do, but they do receive support from the county and its elected officials.

ACSCC member Ashlee Harper-Johnson suggested that we see if the Arlington Committee is willing to brief ACSCC on their school exchange program.

Angelique said someone from the Arlington committee applauded our Beaujolais event. Elodie said we should keep on inviting them to our events because they do not do many activities, certainly not fun events.

B. Cocktails and Confections 2/9/23

The first item discussed was the flyer that Angelique developed and sent out to ACSCC members prior to the meeting. Everyone agreed that it was great. ACSCC member Leslie Tourigny concurred and suggested several small changes that were adopted.

Angelique said that we need to sell 85 tickets to fill the room at the Lyceum. This would also allow room for committee members who need to volunteer at the event.

Then there was a discussion about how best to advertise this event, which morphed into a lengthy discussion about how we should be advertising all our events. There were many suggestions, including:

1. Send event announcements to the mailing lists used by the other Sister City Committee (for Dundee) for their whisky tasting event and by the Office of Historic Alexandria for the Cider Festival
2. Send digital copies of the flyer to the contact/ mailing lists of many of our ACSSC members, especially Elodie and Jennie Reading
3. Post on the committee website, our Facebook page, as a Facebook event, on Instagram, and on the calendars in the *Alexandria Times* and the *Alexandria Gazette*.
4. Contact VisitAlexandria to see about having our recurring events included in their tourist information
5. Angelique said the reporter from the *The Zebra*, who attended the Beaujolais Soirée, interviewed her, and wrote the great article, asked her about ACSCC advertising in *The Zebra*. There was then a discussion at the meeting about whether we should develop an annual advertising budget. Laura said based on her experience she is reluctant to pay for local media coverage because there are so many opportunities for free coverage. She also suggested that the City may have procured advertising packages with various media for the year that we might be able to avail ourselves of and save money.

Angelique asked for volunteers to form an advertising subcommittee to explore what options are out there, and ACSCC member Antoine Dula Lopez volunteered, as did Ashlee and Elodie.

ACSCC member Kyly Larriviere questioned whether we have ever surveyed the attendees at our events to find out how they found out about the event. The answer was “no.” She suggested that we query people attending the upcoming Cocktails and Confections event to find out how they found out about the event. In conversation with Jim Holloway, the City of Alexandria liaison to

ACSCC, it was agreed to set up a tablet at the Cocktails and Confections event to ask attendees how they found out about that event.

C. Dr. Paxton Lecture– Caesar’s Conquest of Gaul 3/30/23

Angelique gave a short update on this lecture. It will be in-person at the Lyceum, and the space has already been reserved. She will do a flyer for this event.

D. Spring Concert-April 2023

Angelique told the committee that although ACSCC member Michael Skardon was unable to attend this January meeting, he did send her an email providing some additional information about the spring Adriano Spampinato concert at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church that he proposed at the December committee meeting for April. Angelique shared the highlights of Michael’s email with ACSCC members:

- Spampinato confirmed that he was available on **Friday, April 14th**. There was a consensus of the committee that this date was acceptable.
- St. Paul’s rector already supports the concept for this event, but Michael needs to confirm the availability of the sanctuary on April 14th.
- Michael will ask the performer to play for 45 minutes minimum and focus the music program on French composers.
- The performer requests an honorarium of at least \$600. Michael said that if the committee cannot support this through ticket sales, he is willing to fund the difference through a private donation.
- Marketing, ticket sales, and on-site ushers will be needed as committee support.

Committee members agreed with the basic outline of the event, but the consensus was that we need the planning document from Michael so we had all the information we need in order to determine what ticket prices will be.

E. Zoom Across the Atlantic

Elodie said that there was no news to report on scheduling this.

F. Intern Exchange

Angelique said that it was time to start working on the Alexandria-Caen Sister City Intern Exchange for this summer. She explained that former committee member Holly Beardow had handled this in the past. Alexandria and Caen each select one intern to send to the other city during the summer month of July, and the respective city government pays a stipend to the incoming intern, as well as provides housing while they are on the internship. In the past, the Alexandria intern who went to Caen worked in their City Hall giving English language tours.

Angelique presented a general timeline from the past for the selection process for our outgoing intern. Advertising begins in February, applications due by 5 pm March 24, interviews held on March 30, and the selection made in early April. She also said that ACSCC would have some duties pertaining to the incoming intern, such as providing some cultural and social activities for them while they are in Alexandria.

Committee members continued a conversation they have had in the past, i.e., how much of a financial contribution should ACSCC make to support the outgoing intern to Caen. Because the

intern will have to pay all expenses not covered by their stipend from Caen City government and the free housing provided, committee members have been concerned that only students whose families have financial means can participate. In the past, committee members wrestled with how to determine intern candidates who had financial need. Ashlee suggested a different lens to look through. She suggested that we require as a mandatory condition of the internship experience that the intern perform certain enumerated duties for the committee before and after their internship, such as help at a committee event before they go on the internship and brief the committee after their return. In return for their performing the duties, ACSCC will give the intern a financial contribution to help defray some of the other expenses of their internship. No specific amount has been decided upon yet.

Angelique asked for ACSCC members to serve on an intern exchange subcommittee. Elodie, Wesley, Ashlee, Laura, and Leslie volunteered.

V. New Business

A. Advertising and Social Media

This was discussed earlier in the meeting during the segment on the Cocktails and Confections event and summarized in these minutes at IV.B.

B. Open Floor

No other new business was introduced.

VI. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

VII. Adjournment

Angelique adjourned the meeting at 8:49 p.m.

2023 Calendar

January –

February – Cocktails & Confections 2.9.23

March – Caesar’s Conquest of Gaul Lecture 3.30.23

April – Adriano Spampinato spring concert 4.14.23

May –

June –

July –

August –

September –

October –

November –

December –

ACSSC Member Attendees:

Kerem Bilge

Elodie Guillon

Ashlee Harper-Johnson

Alex Jevgrafovs

Kyly Larriviere

Antoine Dula Lopez

Angelique Moss
Jennifer Reading
Miguel Serrano
Wesley Thomas
Leslie Tourigny
Laura Withers

City of Alexandria Government Attendee:
Jim Holloway

Public:
No attendees

Leslie Tourigny
ACSCC Secretary