

# Alexandria-Caen Sister City Committee

## Meeting Minutes

Monday, May 8, 2023

Alexandria City Hall – Room 1101

I. **Welcome and Call to Order** ACSCC Chair Angelique Moss called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. There was a quorum.

### II. **Approve Minutes from April**

Angelique had distributed a draft of the April 10, 2023, meeting minutes to committee members to review prior to the May 8, 2023, meeting. At the meeting, ACSCC secretary Leslie Tourigny raised two changes to the draft minutes. The committee voted to accept the minutes as changed.

### III. **Ongoing Business**

#### A. **Recap of An Evening of French Classical Music – 4/14/23**

Members thanked ACSCC member Michael Skardon for suggesting that the committee sponsor the concert and for all the work he did on planning and carrying it out. He said that he thought the concert was successful, especially since it was the committee's first time presenting a concert. There were 111 tickets sold at \$12 per ticket, which brought in \$1,332. A number of these tickets were sold at the door. The expenses were \$1,105, most of which was for the \$800 honorarium paid to performer Adriano Spampinato. The committee netted a profit of \$227 for the event.

Michael assessed that the content of the concert was great, as was partnering with another organization, which was St. Paul's Episcopal Church. He said that the only shortcoming was in the marketing, and he knows that the committee has been taking actions to improve marketing in the future. He thanked committee members who volunteered at the event and recognized all the assistance provided by Jim Holloway, liaison to the committee from the Office of Historic Alexandria (OHA).

Michael said he now has a lot of ideas about what we can do differently in a future concert. He suggested that we could combine the concert with another one of our events, such as Cocktails and Confections, and hold it at the Lyceum. Also, he suggested that there be more information about the music and composers presented; we should look for community partners; and we should have our own American and French flags and stands to use at our events.

Angelique said that we should come up with more ideas for programs because the only event we have on the calendar for the rest of the year is Beaujolais Nouveau. Leslie pointed out the date on the calendar for that was incorrect, and it was corrected to November 16.

ACSCC member Walter Nicklin said that his daughter lives in France as an expat and suggested that we could have a panel presentation with her and other expats about their experiences living in France. There was discussion about this idea, and members suggested various ways we could build a program around this theme, perhaps during the summer.

Angelique reminded everyone that we do not have a July meeting, but will be back to meeting

in August. ACSCC member Laura Withers volunteered to host the committee's summer cookout at her home on August 12, 2023.

### **B. D-Day Commemoration and Lecture – 6/4/23 and 6/1/23**

ACSSC member and D-Day subcommittee chair Kerem Bilge went over a handout he distributed and briefed the committee members on the status of the many components to the event.

He reported that the City Council would be considering the D-Day proclamation at its May 23, 2023, meeting, which begins at 7 p.m. Kerem told members to get there by 6:45 p.m. <sup>1</sup>

Following this, there was then discussion about the June 1 lecture:

- Kerem said that ACSCC member Alex Jevgrafovs would be the Food & Beverage Coordinator and would send out an email asking what snacks members want to contribute.
- ACSCC member Jennie Redding said that local bookstore *Hooray for Books* would set up a table to sell books. Leslie suggested it would be great if they would sell copies of the book *D-Day Girls: The Spies Who Armed the Resistance, Sabotaged the Nazis, and Helped Win World War II* by Sarah Rose, and emailed Jennie information about it.
- Alex reminded members that C-SPAN would be filming the lecture and there would be a link to it afterwards on the committee's Facebook page.
- Angelique will not be able to attend the lecture.
- Kerem said that committee members are needed to volunteer in various capacities at the lecture. He mentioned that members were needed to sign in ticket holders, and Leslie and ACSCC member Elodie Guillon volunteered. Also, ACSCC member Ashlee Harper-Johnson had volunteered to do this as well. Leslie also volunteered for set-up, and Jennie for clean-up.
- Angelique explained that there had been problems with the City's online ticket purchasing system and the city was looking to purchase a new system, but not in time for the lecture. She said that in the meantime, Jim made some changes in the automated email response that ticket purchasers receive.

Kerem went over various aspects of the June 4, 2023, commemoration:

- The City will hang American and French flags on the lampposts around Market Square. Also, Jim has already obtained the sound and weapons permits.
- There was a discussion about how best we could add to our contact list the names of people attending the commemoration who want to be notified of our future events. Several suggestions that were discussed and dismissed were: (1) asking attendees to

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<sup>1</sup> Subsequent to the May 8 meeting, the Mayor's office notified Gretchen Bulova, OHA Director, that instead of presenting the proclamation at the May 23 City Council meeting, they will present it during the June 4 program.

register in advance; and (2) having mailing list signup sheets at the event. The committee agreed to use a QR code on the commemoration flyer which would allow interested parties to sign up for our mailing list. ACSCC member Antoine Dula Lopez said it was easy to prepare a QR code and went ahead and prepared one during the meeting.

- Walter said he will prepare a press release for local papers.
- Elodie said that she will use MailChimp to send out announcements about the lecture and commemoration.
- Laura said we should see if we could post the D-Day lecture and commemoration on calendars of local media, such as *Patch*, *Alexandria Times*, and the *Alexandria Gazette*, as well as *Visit Alexandria*.
- Laura agreed to serve as photographer, and Kerem said he would give her a list of photos that should be taken. Also, she said she would bring water and ice.
- Kerem updated on which reenactors, exhibitors, and musical performers were confirmed and which we were still waiting for confirmation from.
- Kerem said that committee members who can help with setup should arrive at 11 a.m. Ting, in addition to being a sponsor, will also send some employees to volunteer during the day, and Kerem suggested that they arrive at 10:30 a.m. to start doing set-up. Reenactors, exhibitors, and musical performers should arrive by 12. There will be 10 spaces on North Royal Street on the west side of Market Square set aside for loading and unloading, and two spaces on King Street reserved for the Kona Ice truck.
- There was much discussion about the required number and placement of exhibitor tables, chairs, and canopies. After reviewing all of the exhibitors, presenters, and potential audience, Kerem asked ACSCC member and treasurer Stephen Hartka to increase the number of tables and chairs he ordered to 15 tables and 100 chairs and to coordinate with Jim to get the canopies out of storage, along with weights to hold them down.
- The commemoration ends at 4:00 p.m. Exhibitors can start breaking down their exhibits then, but need to be done by 6:00 p.m., when we have to be out of Market Square.
- There was consensus among committee members that one of the readings during the formal program should be in French, and Elodie agreed to do that.
- There was a lot of discussion about signage, before the event and on the day of the event, including how to showcase the sponsors properly.
- Jennie said if the weather on June 4 is hot and humid, we might think about ordering paper hand fans from Amazon to hand out.

#### **IV. New Business**

##### **A. Open Floor**

Elodie said that the committee purchased the Mailchimp Essentials Plan, and they've already imported almost 1,000 contacts. They will be ready to send out a professional-looking email to publicize the June 1, 2023, D-Day lecture, followed by the June 4 commemoration. Also, she said that Antoinette, Jennie, and Dan indicated that they would be interested in the onboarding training Mailchimp will provide to those who want to know how to use their software.

Elodie also said that Paul Glenshaw, who presented a Sip and Sketch event for the committee in the past, would be interested in doing it again. The maximum in a session would be 25 people and would include a tour of the National Gallery. There is a cost involved for his services. There was some discussion and September was raised as a possible time to schedule this.

Antoine thanked committee members for all of the feedback he has received about the website.

#### **V. Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

#### **VI. Adjournment**

Angelique adjourned the meeting at 8:43 p.m.

##### 2023 Calendar

January –

February – Cocktails & Confections 2.9.23

March – France and the Gauls: From Caesar to Astérix Lecture 3.30.23

April – An Evening of French Classical Music 4.14.23

May –

June – D-Day Lecture 6.1.23, D-Day Commemoration 6.4.23

July –

August –

September –

October –

November – Beaujolais Nouveau 11.16.23

December –

##### **ACSCC Member Attendees:**

Kerem Bilge

Elodie Guillon

Stephen Hartka

Alex Jevgrafovs

Antoine Dula Lopez

Angelique Moss

Walter Nicklin

Jennifer Reading

Michael Skardon

Wesley Thomas

Leslie Tourigny

Eric Trimble  
Laura Withers

**ACSCC Members With Excused Absences:**

Ashlee Harper-Johnson  
Kyly Larriviere  
Dan Morrison

Leslie Tourigny  
ACSCC Secretary