

Alexandria-Caen Sister City Committee

Draft Meeting Minutes for Approval

Monday, October 2, 2023

Lloyd House – 220 North Washington Street, Alexandria

I. Welcome and Call to Order

ACSCC Secretary Leslie Tourigny called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. when there was a quorum.

II. Welcome new members

Leslie announced that the City Council appointed two new members to the committee—Donna Kenley and Karen McKeon. Jim Holloway, the Office of Historic Alexandria (OHA) liaison to the committee, said that he had been in touch with both of them so that they could start attending meetings in November.

III. Approve Minutes from September

ACSCC Chair Angelique Moss had distributed a draft of the September 11, 2023, meeting minutes to committee members for review prior to the October 2, 2023, meeting. The committee voted unanimously to accept the minutes as distributed.

IV. Guest: Emmanuel Dubois, composer of “Requiem for the Fallen”

Emmanuel DuBois had previously approached the committee about the possibility of our sponsoring a public performance of his symphonic piece, *Oratorio: Requiem for the Fallen*. At the committee’s invitation, he briefed us. His wife, Susie, accompanied him.

Mr. Dubois introduced himself to the committee and talked about his musical composition, which he said “provides an opportunity to teach our children and to remind our fellow citizens of our own history and the sacrifices made by our forbearers, relatives and friends.” He said he wrote the *Requiem* between 2015-2017 in commemoration of the centennial of the end of WWI. It is an oratorio for soprano, choir, and orchestra, based on the text of the poem “In Flanders Fields.” He recounted how he passed Flanders Fields growing up in Belgium. The *Requiem* has been produced in Fleurance, France; New York City’s Carnegie Hall; and twice in Moscow, once underwritten by the American Embassy in Moscow, before Russia’s invasion of Ukraine,

Mr. Dubois spoke of his hope that the committee would help sponsor a performance of the *Requiem* in Alexandria, maybe as part of the D-Day Celebration or at some other time. Committee members were receptive of this idea, although there are many details that would need to be worked out before we could commit to such a project. Members asked Mr. Dubois many questions, such as how big a venue would be needed, what instruments would be needed, if he knew a soprano and a conductor, and how large a choir would be needed. The venue question looms large, especially whether a large venue would exceed the Committee’s finances. Jim said he would contact the Masonic Temple to see what they would charge. ACSCC member Jennie Reading said she would contact some people about possible venues also. Committee members raised the possibility that maybe we could get students involved in the performance.

V. Ongoing Business

A. Beaujolais Nouveau Event

ACSSC member Elodie Guillon, chair of the Beaujolais Nouveau event, was traveling and could not attend the meeting. However, during her absence, she kept Leslie and ACSSC member Antoine Dula Lopez informed of her interactions with the two vendors from last year's event, i.e., Marc Lotterie, Elite Wines, and Hugh Cossard, Food Expression. There had been consensus in the past among committee members that these vendors did a great job, and we should try to replicate, as much as possible and budget permitting, last year's wine and food menu.

Elodie proposed to the board that they approve a \$65 per person ticket price for the event, with no discount for attendees over 65 years of age. Last year's ticket price was \$55 per person, with no discounts. Leslie reported that last year's tickets brought in revenue of \$4400 based on 80 paying attendees. With the proposed ticket price increase, an additional \$800 in revenue will be generated, which according to Elodie would cover any increases in expenditures.

In addition to the expenses for food and wine, the committee reviewed the categories on the budget from last year to see if there were any where expenditures could rise. There was a discussion about the custom stemless wine glasses, which ACSSC member Ashlee Harper-Johnson is handling again this year. Ashlee will price the glasses for this year, but members felt that any increase in price could be covered by the additional revenue. Members agreed that glasses will no longer feature the date of the event so that any glasses not distributed in one year can be used in subsequent years. ACSSC member Alex Jevgrafovs suggested that we donate the remaining glasses from last year to ALIVE!, a local nonprofit. There was a consensus among committee members to do this.

ACSSC member Eric Trimble introduced the motion that the ticket price for the 2023 Beaujolais Nouveau event be \$65 per person. There was a very robust discussion. Alex and Antoine spoke against the motion, both expressing that as a committee we had a moral responsibility to the community to price our events so that most people could afford to attend them. Alex pointed out that our senior discounts in the past on some of our events helped seniors who were on fixed incomes. Ashlee suggested that this topic needed to be a focus during our committee planning session in January. Other committee members coalesced around this suggestion, feeling that it was too late to make changes in the Beaujolais event at such short notice. The motion passed by a 7-2 vote.

B. Cider Festival

Jim reminded committee members that volunteers were needed for the Cider Festival on November 18, 1-5 p.m. Several members volunteered.

C. Other Fall Events

Leslie said that OHA Director Gretchen Bulova said that our committee could participate again in the Scottish Walk Parade on a complimentary basis, but needed to submit an application by October 13, 2023. ACSSC member Kyly Larrivere said she would submit it.

Jennie said she spoke with DJ Joseph Gueron, Glo Beats, who has provided music in the past for us, to see if he could play at a February event for us at the Lyceum, possibly with a

Valentine's theme. She said he was available on February 8, 15,22, and 29. There was a committee consensus that February 22 would be the best date. Jennie said that in the past he just gave us his time and had not charged us for his services, but she would get back in touch with him about the date choice and whether there would be a fee charged.

D. Possible Concert Sponsorship

This topic was raised by ACSCC member Laura Withers at the last meeting where she reported that she had reached out to the Alexandria Symphony. However, Laura was not present at this October meeting so there was no further discussion.

VI. New Business

There was no new business.

VII. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

VIII. Adjournment

Leslie adjourned the meeting at 8:48 p.m.

ACSCC Member Attendees:

Ashlee Harper-Johnson
Stephen Hartka
Alex Jevgrafov
Kyly Larriviere
Antoine Dula Lopez
Jennifer Reading
Wesley Thomas
Leslie Tourigny
Eric Trimble

City of Alexandria Government Liaison:

Jim Holloway

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 event, 11.16.23; Cider Festival 11.18.2023
December – Scottish Walk Parade, 12.2.23

Leslie Tourigny, Secretary