

Alexandria-Caen Sister City Committee

Draft Meeting Minutes for Approval

Monday, December 11, 2023

Alexandria City Hall – Room 1101

I. Welcome and Call to Order

ACSCC Chair Angelique Moss called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. when there was a quorum.

II. Approve Minutes from November

Angelique had emailed a draft of the November 13, 2023, meeting minutes to committee members for review prior to the December 11, 2023, meeting. The committee voted unanimously to accept the minutes as distributed.

III. Welcome New Member

Angelique welcomed Beth Reister as a new member to the committee. Beth introduced herself and said that she was attracted to the committee because she has always been somewhat of a Francophile. She explained that she met ACSCC member Alex Jevgrafovs, who told her about the committee and how to apply to serve on the committee, which she did. Following Beth's introduction, each of the ACSCC members in attendance then gave a short introduction of themselves to Beth and welcomed her to the committee.

IV. Ongoing Business

A. Recap of Beaujolais Nouveau – 11/16/23

ACSCC member Elodie Guillon, who chaired this event, reported that it sold out and made a profit. She said that, once again, Chef Hugh Cossard of Food Expression and Marc Lotterie of Elite Wines, did a great job. ACSCC member Jennie Reading complimented Elodie on the great coordination during the event—a sentiment that was echoed by other committee members. Jennie also described an ad hoc feature at Beaujolais Nouveau—auctioning off several remaining bottles of Beaujolais Nouveau, which brought in an extra \$250.

B. January/February Event

At previous meetings committee members discussed whether they wanted to schedule a fundraising event in the winter, similar to Cocktails and Confections, which was held in February 2023. At the December 2023 meeting, Elodie suggested that we plan an event toward the end of January featuring the French holiday tradition involving Galette des Rois. ACSCC Secretary Leslie Tourigny said she did not believe there would be enough time to plan and advertise an event in January, especially with the holiday season beginning shortly. Other members concurred. Jennie pointed out that the January 6, 2024, ACSCC Alumni Party that she is hosting already will be highlighting the same theme. Conversation quickly turned to sponsoring a pre-Valentine's Day event at the Lyceum on February 8 themed around crêpes. Elodie said she would contact Chef Hugh to see if he is available and interested in working with us on this.

C. Recap of Cider Festival – 11/18/23

ACSCC member Eric Trimble, one of the committee members who volunteered at this annual Office of Historic Alexandria (OHA)-sponsored event, said that judging by the attendance, the

event was very popular. Jim Holloway, OHA liaison to ACSCC, said that this year there was a Breton and Norman cider, including one from Caen.

D. Recap of Scottish Walk

Angelique reported that on December 2, 2023, ACSCC participated, once again, in the annual Scottish Walk Parade. She thanked ACSCC member Kyly Larriviere for coordinating the arrangements for the committee's participation prior to the parade; Leslie for serving as the committee's day-of coordinator for the parade; and the group of current and former ACSCC members, family members, and animals, for proudly walking behind our banner.

Jennie pointed out that the Scottish Walk was one of several parades held each year in the City of Alexandria. Others include the St. Patrick's Day and George Washington Parades. She asked whether ACSCC should be rotating which parade we participate in each year. Leslie offered that because OHA manages Alexandria's Sister City relationships with Dundee and Helsingborg through the Sister Cities Committee, and Caen, through ACSCC, it seems appropriate to continue participating in the Scottish Walk Parade. There was a consensus among committee members to do this in future years.

E. Alumni Party-1/6/24

Jennie apologized for having to cancel the 2023 alumni party at her house because of illness, but said it is rescheduled for January 6, 2024, from 11:30 a.m.- 3:00 p.m. It is being held that day to celebrate a French holiday together and enjoy the traditional Galette des Rois. Jennie will provide the galettes and suggested that others bring side dishes.

F. Mailchimp

Elodie explained that Mailchimp has instituted a new pay-as-you-go plan, in addition to the current plan that we have which requires that we pay every single month, whether or not we send out emails during a particular month. She said that since we signed up for Mailchimp, we have only sent out 6-7 emails so she will check on the pricing of the new plan to see if it would be advantageous for us to change plans. Elodie also volunteered to send out a Happy Holidays e-mail with a recap of our year in review. Angelique said she has seen video reels posted on Facebook, and she would take on developing one showing ACSCC activities for 2023 that we could send out and post on our Facebook page. Also, Antoinette said that ACSCC member Antoine Dula Lopez could post the reel on our website. Antoine said we could make a YouTube video which can be sent out via Mailchimp.

V. New Business

A. Intern Exchange

Angelique said that she and Jennie met with OHA Director Gretchen Bulova on December 8, 2023, to discuss several topics, one of which was whether Alexandria and Caen would be participating in a summer intern exchange during 2024. Angelique said she first contacted Gretchen back in October about this, and Gretchen emailed the Caen city officials, but has not heard back. Gretchen said she would follow-up again.

Angelique and Jennie explained that the intern exchange has happened in the past, usually in July, but it had always been easier for Caen to accommodate an incoming intern from Alexandria rather than Alexandria to accommodate an incoming intern from Caen. They said

that Caen has an almost made-to-order position for an incoming intern, i.e., giving tours in English of the Abbaye-Aux-Hommes, which now houses the Caen City Council, and housing in college dorms. In the past, Alexandria has had more difficulty finding a meaningful position for an incoming intern from Caen, along with affordable housing located accessible to public transportation. If the program is a “go,” Gretchen said she would figure out the job, and ACSCC would be responsible for planning some social activities for the incoming intern. Angelique and Jennie said we should ask if Alexandria is not able to accommodate an incoming intern, would Caen still be willing to accept an intern from Alexandria.

Angelique said that Leslie had volunteered to chair the intern committee if the program moves forward. Leslie said the committee met in January 2023 and went forward with a list of questions/considerations that needed to be decided before we could announce the program.

B. D-Day Commemoration 6.2.24

Angelique announced that Jennie will be chairing the 80th D-Day Commemoration and lecture in 2024 and asked for other volunteers. Eric, Leslie, Alex and ACSCC member Donna Kenley volunteered. Angelique applauded Jennie’s success last year getting sponsorships for D-Day and said our objective in 2024 should be to increase sponsorships. Jennie said she would ask Kyly to volunteer because she believed Kyly had fundraising experience and could help bring in sponsorships. Also, Jennie indicated that the Caen Deputy Mayor may attend our commemoration on June 2.

C. D-Day Lecture 6.6.24

Jim said that Dr. Kim Holien, who has delivered the D-Day lecture in previous years, had contacted him to find out about the 2024 plans. Committee members discussed whether we should change the format in 2024 since it is the 80th anniversary of D-Day and plan a panel discussion instead of a lecture. Beth suggested that the movie from the Mémorial de Caen would make for a good movie night. No decisions were made on any of these suggestions.

D. Lafayette Bicentennial 10.16-17.24

Angelique reported that at the December 8, 2023, meeting she and Jennie had with Gretchen Bulova they discussed at length the city’s plans for the Lafayette Bicentennial celebration.

On October 16, 2024, the present-day owners of the house on South St. Asaph Street near Duke Street where Lafayette stayed when he visited Alexandria in 1824 will host a by-invitation-only reception for about 200 people. It will last for two hours and start at 4:00 or 5:00 p.m.

Following that, at 7 p.m. at the Lyceum, historian Elizabeth Reese will deliver a lecture and book signing focused on her soon-to-be released book *Marquis de Lafayette Returns: A Tour of America's National Capital Region*. On October 17, 2024, there will be a dinner at Gadsby’s Tavern commemorating the bicentennial of Lafayette’s visit, organized by the City of Alexandria and the American Friends of Lafayette. The latter has a Lafayette re-enactor who will attend the dinner and may also come to the lecture and book signing.

There was a discussion about whether ACSCC should arrange for Alexandria Lafayette walking tours, either in person or by developing a self-guided route and map. Stephen said that both he and Kyly are tour guides with OHA and know through experience that it takes a long time to develop a script and for guides to remember it. There was some discussion about approaching Elizabeth Reese to see if she might be interested in giving tours.

E. Petanque (Boules/Bocce) Tournament

Antoine said that he followed up on his idea, which he raised at a previous committee meeting, to explore how ACSCC could sponsor a Petanque tournament during the summer of 2024. He explained that he contacted Gustave from the Gustave Boulangerie in Del Ray, who has space and was receptive to our holding this event at his restaurant on July 14. Antoine also said that Gustave allows groups to hold “garage sales” at his restaurant and raised the suggestion that perhaps we wanted to collaborate with other groups for the Petanque tournament. After some discussion, committee members were very interested in sponsoring this tournament, but without the collaboration suggestion. Antoine said he would convey this to Gustave. Elodie said that she knew Gustave and would speak to him also.

F. 2024 Budget

Stephen briefed committee members on the FY23 final budget report, the FY24 budget to date, and the draft FY25 budget.

- Total expenditures during FY23 for committee events and other activities were \$11,150.90; revenues were \$14,605.19, which resulted in a net profit of \$2,824.29. As in other years, the only event that did not result in a profit, was the D-Day Commemoration. However, we received more sponsorships this past year than ever before, which increased the revenues, and decreased the loss.
- The only event sponsored so far in FY24 was Beaujolais Nouveau. In his budget report, Stephen indicated that the expenditures were \$3,365.00, revenues were \$5,460.00, and the net profit was \$2,095.00. However, he says this does not reflect the \$250 raised during the event by auctioning off several bottle of Beaujolais Nouveau so he will add that to the revenue and recalculate the net profit.
- He explained that the committee has about \$10,000 in its lifetime budget, which is the equivalent of our bank account.

G. Open Floor

Nothing additional was raised by committee members.

VI. Public Comment

Emmanuel and Susie DuBois were initially were on the agenda at the October 2, 2023, meeting to speak about the possibility of the committee supporting a public performance in Alexandria of his oratorio, *Requiem for the Fallen*. They returned to update the committee:

- Their thinking is that the public performance should be scheduled in November or December 2024, if possible, in conjunction with the 80th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge.
- They suggested that our D-Day commemoration and lecture would be appropriate venues for us to focus some of the advertising for the *Requiem* performance because a similar audience may be attracted.
- They approached Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic Orchestra about performing the *Requiem*. They won't be finalizing their planning for 2024 until January.
- They know a renowned European soprano who is interested in participating in the presentation and would need to know as soon as possible when the performance would

be so she could plan her 2024 calendar accordingly.

VII. Adjournment

Angelique adjourned the meeting at 9:15 p.m.

ACSCC Member Attendees:

Elodie Guillon
Stephen Hartka
Alex Jevgrafovs
Donna Kenley
Antoine Dula Lopez
Angelique Moss
Jennifer Reading
Elizabeth Reister
Wesley Thomas
Leslie Tourigny
Eric Trimble

City of Alexandria Government Liaison:

Jim Holloway

Public Attendees:

Emmanuel DuBois
Susie DuBois

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 – Summer Cookout 8.12.23
September –
October –
November – Beaujolais Nouveau 11.16.23; Cider Festival 11.18.23
December – Scottish Walk Parade 12.2.23

Leslie Tourigny
ACSCC Secretary