

NOTES
Hickory International Council
Thursday, August 18, 2016, 5:30 pm

A regular meeting of the Hickory International Council (HIC) was held on Thursday, August 18, 2016, 5:30 pm, in the Moretz Board Room at the Arts & Science Center of Catawba Valley.

Members Present: Hani Nassar, Ken Humphreys, Marion Love, Marc Swinnen, and Gretchen Oetting

Members Absent: Cynthia Ferrell, Karl Wolfe, Ira Roberts, Toshiaki Satake, Joe Getlein, Claire McCrea, Jack Crawford, Bella Fields, Becky Mich and Maria Jose Daily

Guests Present: Efrain “Fez” Palafox, Gabriele Weinberger (LRU & WPSC) and Terri Berndt (Hickory Public Schools)

Staff Present: Purchasing Manager Bo Weichel and Minutes Clerk Anne Starnes

A quorum was **not** present.

Call to Order: Hani Nassar, Chair, convened the meeting at 5:35 pm and thanked everyone for attending.

Approval of July 21, 2016 Minutes: Minutes of the previous meeting in July were distributed to members in advance. Due to the lack of a quorum, the minutes were not approved.

Introduction of Guests and Board Membership Changes: Mr. Nassar introduced Terri Berndt from Hickory Public Schools.

Old Business:

HIC Monthly Financial Statement – City Purchasing Manager Bo Weichel said there were very few changes since the previous meeting. The City budget provides \$13,000 to the HIC, and \$12,925 remains; just over \$8,000 remains in the Spring Fest budget.

HIC/Footcandle Short Films Summary – Mr. Nassar said an evening of international short films was held following the July HIC meeting, a part of the HIC’s collaboration with the Footcandle Film Society. Some of the films from the International Film Festival for Children were shown, and he suggested adding this as an annual HIC activity. Marc Swinnen suggested it be held at the Carolina Theater, where the sound system is much better.

Hickory Playground Project Summary – The “One Act Play Festival” was held on Saturday, July 23, raising \$10,000 for arts programs in the Hickory Public Schools. Members agreed that some of the plays presented were offensive, and needed more appropriate introduction to warn parents in advance that they should leave with their children. The plays appropriate for youth were mixed in with all of the others, instead of the “youth appropriate” ones being at the beginning. The HIC did not donate funds toward the project. Mr. Nassar said they hope to repeat the project again next year, with a new set of plays.

Folkmoot USA Summary – Folkmoot was held on Sunday, July 24, with four groups of international performers. The group from China was unable to obtain visas in time, and Poland took their place. The

other groups were from Japan, Peru, and a blended U.S./Mexico group. Members congratulated Ms. Oetting on her role as emcee this year, and they suggested making this permanent. Mr. Nassar said the 3:00 pm “public” performance sold out just before the show began, and the 6:00 pm “private” performance for sponsors and their guests was attended by approximately 125 people. Ken Humphreys said that having each group present their entire performance was much better this year, rather than splitting it in two parts. Members also liked having four groups of performers, with two performing before and two after the intermission. Marc Swinnen suggested the groups arrive 30 minutes earlier next year, and perform their sound checks in advance. It was noted it was extremely hot on July 24, and the performers traveled to Hickory from Waynesville in old school buses with no air conditioning. Possibly a sponsor could provide funds next year to contract their transportation on modern buses air conditioning. Mr. Nassar suggested having more publicity next year, especially if the second show is held again, and tickets are made available to the public by the sponsors. He said all accounting would be finalized in the next week, and a check sent to Folkmoot.

Great Decisions Discussions – The program will be held on consecutive Tuesday evenings, September 6 – October 25, 2016, in the Keiser Community Room (SALT Block, West Wing), with eight topics discussed. Mr. Nassar said only a few open seats remain. Guest speakers are still needed, and Dr. Ralph Griffith from the Entrepreneurship program at LRU may have ideas of professors who could participate.

HIC Grants – Dr. Humphreys said his plan for this year’s grants program is to ask the City communications staff to send a news release mid-month during September, October and November, with a December 15 application deadline. He noted the major change this year is that grant requests can be in amounts up to \$500, with either a cash match or in-kind/volunteer hour match accepted this year. He said that when a cash match was required, it was a struggle for churches and schools to participate, and few HIC grant applications were submitted.

Marion Love discussed the two grants approved last year, and said the *Hickory Daily Record* printed an article on Michael Lee’s grant project last weekend. He is Assistant Principal at St. Stephens Elementary School, and received a HIC grant to conduct a free, two-week Day Camp for Hmong Scholars this summer, for 30 children in 3rd grade and up. The second approved grant, Hispanic Family Caregiver Project, was submitted by the Western Piedmont Council of Governments’ Area Agency on Aging. The proposal requested seed money to provide the growing Hispanic community with Spanish language resources and guide Hispanic caregivers.

Dr. Humphreys said the international Boy Scout from Brazil, Matt Semiao, had attended the HIC meeting last month. His visit to the U.S. this summer was partially supported by a HIC grant from three years ago, which was not used for the year it was approved, due to a visa issue.

HIC Website Upgrade Update – Mr. Nassar shared the proposed website color template, using the City’s theme and branding colors. Communications Director Dana Kaminske is currently reviewing it. Mr. Nassar said the expense of the website upgrade would be paid after all work is completed, in one payment of \$900, from the HIC’s Spring Fest account. All information on the current site will be updated.

Fez Palafox offered his suggestions for the website update, including putting the mission statement first, changing the blocky layout, and changing the horizontal and vertical portions for readability. Mr. Nassar said the only website upgrade done at this point is the color scheme; next, they will work on design/layout portions, and Mr. Nassar will share Mr. Palafox’s input with them.

HIC Retreat – Mr. Nassar recently e-mailed the August 27 retreat agenda to members. He said all eight of the current programs and events would be discussed, with any recommendations for changes made at the retreat and brought before the full HIC membership.

New Business: none

Other Business: none

Next Meeting: Great Decisions will be held throughout September, so there will be no HIC meeting. The next meeting will be on Thursday, October 20, 2016, 5:30 pm, in the Moretz Board Room, 2nd floor of the Arts & Science Center.

Adjournment: There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:20 pm.

Hani Nassar, Chair
Hickory International Council

Anne Starnes, Minutes Clerk
City of Hickory