

Hickory International Council
Thursday, November 17, 2016, 5:30 pm

A regular meeting of the Hickory International Council (HIC) was held on Thursday, November 17, 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, Jack Crawford, Joe Getlein, Claire McCrea, Bella Fields, Justin Davis, Ira Roberts, Gretchen Oetting, Toshiaki Satake, and Aaron Kohrs.

Members Absent: Cynthia Ferrell, Karl Wolfe, Becky Mich, and Maria Jose Daily.

Guests Present: Efrain “Fez” Palafox, Eric Brandon (LRU), and Cady Ray (Hickory Crawdads Baseball).

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

A quorum was present.

Call to Order: Hani Nassar, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm and thanked everyone for attending.

Approval of October 20, 2016 Minutes: Minutes from the previous meeting in October were distributed to members in advance. Ken Humphreys moved, seconded by Jack Crawford, to approve the October 20, 2016 minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Dr. Humphreys noted that the October minutes state he requested the City copy him on news releases they send related to the HIC grants, but he has not received copies of any news releases yet. He needs to receive the news releases, and requests the City staff send another one soon.

Introduction of Guests and Board Membership Changes: Mr. Nassar welcomed new HIC member Aaron Kohrs, and he introduced himself. Cady Ray was attending as a guest, and she introduced herself. Mr. Nassar will add her to the e-mail list: cray@hickorycrawdads.com.

Announcement of Legislative Reception: Mr. Nassar said the City of Hickory would hold a Community Update & Fall Legislative Reception today at Café Rule and Wine Bar, 5:30 to 7:30 pm.

Old Business:

HIC Monthly Financial Statement – Mr. Nassar said \$10,569.84 remains of the original \$13,000 City HIC budget, and \$8,305.95 remains in the SpringFest budget after the \$900 expense to update the HIC website.

Great Decisions Summary – The Great Decisions program was held September 6 through October 25, 2016, with an average of 25 people attending each week. Currently, 15 people have already signed up to participate in the 2017 program, so let Mr. Nassar know if you are interested; a maximum of 31 can participate. He said all 8 new topics will be discussed again next year, and they are listed on the HIC website. He gave a recap of the various topics this year, and all agreed the four guest speakers was a good addition.

HIC Grants Update – Dr. Humphreys said the grant application deadline is December 15; he has received one application. He stressed that publicity is needed now, and requested the City send another press release.

Marion Love said the City's communications staff included an HIC grant article with photos in the *City Snippets* publication enclosed with the monthly water bills. Dr. Love suggested an HIC member volunteer to communicate with the communications staff regarding press releases, as needed; Aaron Kohrs agreed to be responsible. Dr. Love suggested forming a small Publicity Sub-committee of 3-4 members, including her and Mr. Kohrs. She said press releases are sometimes needed both before and after HIC programs or events are held.

Website Upgrade – The HIC website underwent an upgrade recently and it should be more helpful when using a smart phone now. Mr. Nassar said it went “live” a month ago, and changes can be made during the first six months at no cost. Karl Wolfe has already offered his comments, and Mr. Nassar requested that other members also send him their comments, as soon as possible.

HIC Retreat – The first HIC retreat was held on August 27, 2016. Gretchen Oetting recorded minutes, which were distributed to members and others. Last month, next steps were discussed and Mr. Nassar suggested revising the HIC brochure, which was created six years ago. He said publicity was another topic discussed at the retreat, and this was addressed earlier in the meeting. Marc Swinnen requested re-sending the retreat minutes to members. Ms. Oetting said the members currently named (under the Events Sub-committee) as working on the brochure are Mr. Nassar and Dr. Love; Gretchen Oetting, Bella Fields, Fez Palafox and Aaron Kohrs volunteered to serve with them. Before the revised brochure is printed, Bo Weichel said it would need final approval from the City.

HIC & Footcandle Film Society – Foreign film suggestions for the fourth quarter were discussed at the previous meeting. Mr. Swinnen had proposed two 2016 foreign films, both highly rated. Mr. Nassar said Alan Jackson would be able to access both of the films, and would find out if one could be scheduled during the first week of December. In the future, a Foreign Film Sub-committee will select the quarterly films each year; Marc Swinnen, Jack Crawford and Justin Davis will serve, along with Mr. Nassar and Dr. Love.

International Christmas Concert Update – The concert will be held in the Drendel Auditorium on Saturday, December 10, 6:00 to 7:30 pm, with music provided by the choir from the Romanian Baptist Church and local pianist Rick Setzer. Ms. Oetting has arranged to borrow choir risers for 40 people. In the future, Mr. Nassar said that other music groups would be considered for the concert. New regulations are in place; food service is no longer allowed in the corridors and walkways of the building, so post-concert refreshments will be served in the Keiser Community Room of the West Wing building next door.

Children's International Film Festival – The festival dates will be April 24-27, 2017, Monday through Thursday, following spring break. Mr. Nassar said students in the 4th, 5th and 6th grades will attend the festival again this year. The 2017 dates were agreed on by the three public school systems and confirmed. He named the three sites where each public school system will attend the films, along with participating private schools. A request for short films (of 20 minutes or less) was sent out last year, and 300+ were received from 49 countries. He said the school systems and private schools all need to approve the films in advance, before they are shown to their students. Ms. Oetting said the members on this sub-committee are currently Mr. Nassar, Dr. Love, Ms. Oetting and Kathryn Grandganett; others volunteering to serve were Eric Brandon, Cady Ray, Claire McCrea, Bella Fields, Justin Davis, and Aaron Kohrs. All sub-committee members will help preview the films in advance, before sending them to the school systems and private schools for approval.

New Business:

HIC Christmas Dinner – Marc Swinnen and Toshiaki Satake scheduled the Christmas Dinner at Thai Lotus restaurant on Thursday, December 15, at 5:30 pm. Mr. Swinnen will select the buffet menu again this year,

but add some vegetarian items. Members will pay \$20 for each person attending, all- inclusive, and pay Mr. Swinnen in advance if possible. The dinner is open to all HIC members and guests. Everyone should RSVP to Mr. Swinnen by December 10th. Members discussed the “Dirty Santa” game, which is optional, but those who do plan to play should bring a wrapped/bagged gift, valued at \$15-20, and it should be non-alcoholic and gender-neutral this year.

2017 MUN Planning – Dr. Love said planning is underway for the PANGEA Model United Nations Conference on March 7-8, 2017 (Tuesday and Wednesday) on the LRU campus. A second planning meeting was held last night and they approved their budget. The keynote speaker, Keith Humphreys, is a full professor at Stanford, and noted authority on clinical psychology, narcotics and drugs. He is the son of HIC member Ken Humphreys. Eric Brandon reported that seven committee chairs have committed, and three more will be identified. Dr. Love said volunteers are still needed to write background papers on the conference topics, of two-pages in length this year.

Other – Mr. Nassar asked that each HIC sub-committee appoint one member as the leader; they should set up the meetings and notify all of their members, and present a summary report at each monthly HIC meeting.

Aaron Kohrs discussed social media as the best way to let teenagers know about the HIC’s activities and events. HIC member Karl Wolfe is an employee of Facebook, and he maintains the HIC’s Facebook page. Information is also shared through the City of Hickory’s social media outlets. Mr. Kohrs said he served an internship at the International House in Charlotte. They have a citizen diplomacy department, and he has talked with their director about possibly bringing a State Department group here for a future day trip. He advised that each group visiting Charlotte has a theme for their visit. He previously brought a group to visit the Catawba County Economic Development Corporation (EDC), and was open to the idea of another visit here in the future.

Next Meeting: In place of the regular meeting on Thursday, December 15, 2016, a “Dutch treat” dinner will be held, 5:30 pm at Thai Lotus, including a 10 minute meeting. The next regular meeting will be on Thursday, January 19, 2017, 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 6:30 pm.

Hani Nassar, Chair
Hickory International Council

Anne Starnes, Minutes Clerk
City of Hickory