

Hickory International Council
Thursday, October 20, 2016, 5:30 pm

A regular meeting of the Hickory International Council (HIC) was held on Thursday, October 20, 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, Joe Getlein, Claire McCrea, Bella Fields and Justin Davis

Members Absent: Cynthia Ferrell, Karl Wolfe, Ira Roberts, Toshiaki Satake, Jack Crawford, Marc Swinnen, Ira Roberts, Gretchen Oetting, Becky Mich and Maria Jose Daily

Guests Present: Terri Berndt (Hickory Public Schools), Efrain “Fez” Palafox, Ingrid Keller (W. Pied. Symphony), Ibiyeni Carrol (LRU student), Gabriele Weinberger (LRU & W. Piedmont Sister Cities), Michael Lee (St. Stephens Elem. School), Eric Brandon (LRU), Farisha & Mohammad Rahman (ZIA Web Solutions), Laura Dobson (LRU) and Ines Mueller (LRU)

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 5:35 pm and thanked everyone for attending.

Approval of August 18, 2016 Notes: Mr. Nassar said no meeting was held in September, due to the Great Decisions discussions being held weekly.

Notes from the previous meeting in August were distributed to members in advance. Ken Humphreys moved, seconded by Marion Love, to approve the notes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Introduction of Guests and Board Membership Changes: Mr. Nassar welcomed new HIC member Justin Davis, and he introduced himself. Various guests attending also introduced themselves.

Old Business:

HIC Monthly Financial Statement – Mr. Nassar said \$10,829 remains in the City Budget for the HIC, and approximately \$8,400 remains in the SpringFest budget. Purchasing Manager Bo Weichel said the website update expense would be paid from SpringFest funds, since it was not an approved budget item.

Great Decisions Discussions – Mr. Nassar said the Great Decisions discussions have been held each Tuesday evening since September 6, and will conclude on October 25, 2016. They might hold an extra discussion on November 1, to discuss and debate the upcoming Presidential election.

HIC Grants – Dr. Humphreys is responsible for the grant process this year. The guidelines and application are on the website. Mr. Nassar said the City would handle grant publicity this year. Dr. Humphreys requested the Communications Dept. staff send him a copy of all press releases they send out.

Michael Lee, Assistant Principal at St. Stephens Elementary School, gave members an update on his HIC Grant project from last year. He held a free “Day Camp for Hmong Scholars” this past July. He said the local newspaper offered good coverage for the camp, attended by 27 students for five days. The students

developed a traditional Hmong history “story cloth” and learned the language, which most of the Hmong children have lost, having learned the English language from birth. Catawba County Schools provided lunches each day. The evaluations were extremely good, with the main complaint being that only one week of camp was too short. He thanked the HIC for providing the grant, and said that finding volunteers to work the 5-day camp was a challenge; he hopes to hold it again next year, but it depends on volunteers. Mr. Nassar suggested paying the workers, versus having volunteers next year.

HIC Website Update – Mr. Nassar suggested waiting until after the meeting adjourns to discuss questions and suggestions regarding website upgrades with Farisha and Mohammad Rahman of ZIA Web Solutions. All members interested in participating will remain and offer their input.

HIC Retreat Summary – Mr. Nassar said the retreat was held on Saturday, August 27, at Maple Grove. A bullet point summary, prepared by Gretchen Oetting, was distributed to members. He said it was important for members to review the bullet points and decide on next steps, possibly forming a sub-committee to work on and develop future action items. He said one item discussed was the HIC brochure. He distributed copies to members to take home for review, and asked them to bring suggestions for improvements to the next meeting, or e-mail them to him. Dr. Love will work on organizing a sub-committee to work on action items from the retreat.

New Business:

HIC & Footcandle – Mr. Nassar said the HIC helps the Footcandle Film Society select their foreign film for each quarter. He shared a list of recent foreign films Marc Swinnen has suggested for this quarter. He will speak to Alan Jackson about possible dates in November. Dr. Humphreys suggested not scheduling the foreign film at the Carolina Theater if it is on the same evening as the November HIC meeting, although he welcomed having it screened in the Drendel Auditorium, immediately following the HIC meeting. Dr. Love noted that having the “short films” shown in Drendel Auditorium, following the HIC meeting a few months ago, was very convenient and, also, well attended by Footcandle members.

International Christmas Night – Mr. Nassar said Drendel Auditorium is reserved for the concert on Saturday, December 10. He discussed possibly changing the concert name from the “Romanian Baptist Church Christmas Concert” to “International Christmas Night.” He said the Romanian Baptist Church choir performs, in both their native language and English, and that other groups come to Hickory and perform with them. This year, a group from Atlanta will join them. Fez Palafox said “International Christmas” is too broad, and suggested keeping Romanian in the name. Dr. Humphreys suggested calling it “International Christmas Concert” this year; Mr. Nassar said that adding, “Brought to you by the Romanian Baptist Church Choir” would cover all the bases. He will speak with the choir’s conductor about possibly changing the concert name this year.

Collaboration with WPS – Mr. Nassar introduced Ingrid Keller, Executive Director of Western Piedmont Symphony Orchestra (WPS). He said the HIC worked with Hickory Museum of Art on a couple recent projects, and might choose to collaborate on a project with WPS. Ms. Keller discussed the Tesla Quartet, in residence here for four performances between September 17, 2016 and April 8, 2017, in addition to participating in community outreach and Masterworks concerts. She suggested the two organizations partner on a “Hickory International Night” at their Saturday, April 8, 2017 String Quartet performance in Drendel Auditorium, with a block of tickets available for HIC members. Ms. Keller said a reception follows each quartet performance and suggested they could add international foods to the April 8 menu. Members agreed the HIC should pursue the partnership with WPS. Mr. Nassar suggested forming a sub-committee to work with Ms. Keller, and Dr. Love will help identify members to serve.

International Film Festival for Children – Mr. Nassar said the festival dates April 24-27, 2017 have been confirmed, agreed on by the three public school systems. The dates follow spring break in 2017. He named the three sites where each public school system will attend the films, along with participating private schools. He said that changing the event name was discussed at the HIC retreat in August, with “Children’s International Film Festival” being suggested. The members present agreed on the name change, and no others were suggested.

Model UN 2017 – Mr. Nassar said the next PANGEA Model United Nations Conference would be on March 7-8, 2017 (Tuesday and Wednesday) on the LRU campus. Dr. Love discussed the various activities during the 2-day conference, with high school students participating in a simulation of how the United Nations operates. The three partners organizing the event are the HIC, Boy Scouts of America, and LRU. Last year, close to 200 students participated. She discussed ways volunteers could help this year, and said anyone interested should contact her.

Other Business: Laura Dobson, Director of the Office for International Education at LRU, shared a flyer on International Education Week. She said the mission of their office is expanding, from study abroad to helping students on campus engage with the community, understand global issues, and explore numerous international matters. She said International Education Week begins with a public event on Sunday, November 13, 7:00-8:30 pm in Grace Chapel, with the author Todd Green as guest speaker. It will be a free event, but attendees must have a ticket, which she offered to provide for HIC members. She discussed other activities planned during the week, and distributed flyers.

Mr. Nassar said it has become a custom to hold a HIC Christmas Dinner, in place of the regular December meeting each year. It was held at Thai Lotus in Hickory in the last two years. Marc Swinnen and Toshiaki Satake have volunteered to make the arrangements again, including the menu. Last year, a buffet was arranged in advance, but fewer people than expected attended; this year, Mr. Swinnen suggests each person pre-pay, approximately \$20.00, inclusive. Members discussed the dates of either Thursday, December 8 or 15, and agreed on the 15th, since it is the regular meeting date. The dinner is open to all HIC members and guests, and choosing to participate in the “Dirty Santa” game is optional.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be on Thursday, November 17, 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 6:35 pm. A discussion of the website update followed the meeting.

Hani Nassar, Chair
Hickory International Council

Anne Starnes, Minutes Clerk
City of Hickory