

Hickory International Council
Thursday, July 20, 2017, 5:30 pm

A regular meeting of the Hickory International Council (HIC) was held on Thursday, July 20, 2017, 5:30 pm, in the Moretz Board Room of the Arts & Science Center of Catawba Valley.

Members Present: Hani Nassar, Gretchen Oetting, Karl Wolfe, Justin Davis, Toshiaki Satake, Marion Love, Ira Roberts and Eric Brandon

Members Absent: Bella Fields, Ibiyemi Carrol, Claire McCrea, Marc Swinnen, Jack Crawford, Becky Mich and Aaron Kohrs

Guests Present: Dale Hamilton and Efrain “Fez” Palafox

Others Present: 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 June 15, 2017 Minutes: Minutes from the previous meeting were distributed to members in advance. Gretchen Oetting moved, seconded by Marion Love, to approve the June 15, 2017 minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Introduction of Guests, Board Changes & Special Announcements: Mr. Nassar said the Rev. David Roberts from Morning Star Baptist Church hopes to attend a future HIC meeting. The current membership status remains the same, with no word from Jack Crawford or Becky Mich. Mr. Nassar suggested waiting until after the next mayor is elected and the future of the HIC is clear to make a decision on removing members due to continued non-attendance. He asked for members’ opinions on how to proceed, and there was support for both waiting until after the mayoral election this fall and for acting to open up the two seats in question for other interested persons now. Dr. Love noted there are many annual HIC activities that need volunteer help from members.

Mr. Nassar said Ken Humphreys resigned from the HIC earlier this summer. He is moving to Morganton and plans to help when he can in the future.

Old Business:

Monthly Financial Statement – Mr. Nassar shared the year-end financials for FY 2016-17. He said a balance of \$4,072.17 remained in the HIC City budget at year-end. The City has advised him that the funds raised for the Int’l Film Festival for Children needed to be used toward those event expenses before spending the City budget. The logic was that any funds raised for a specific purpose need to be spent as was intended, prior to spending the available City funds. The outcome of this is that adjustments were made to the SpringFest budget; specifically, the City moved \$3,200 from the SpringFest budget into the HIC City budget, leaving a remaining balance of \$4,072.17. Mr. Nassar said any funds remaining in the HIC budget at year-end revert back to the City’s general fund. Members discussed this development, and

he explained it further, saying if the HIC raises any funds in the future, they may need to be unrestricted donations and not designated for specific events or activities.

Mr. Nassar said the beginning budget balances for FY 2017-18 are \$13,000 in the HIC City budget, and \$6,719.21 in the SpringFest budget.

Folk moot USA – Folk moot will be on Sunday, July 23, 2017, with two performances in Drendel Auditorium again this year, the public show at 3:00 pm, and a second private show at 6:00 pm. The groups coming to Hickory this year are Slovenia, Argentina, India and Russia. Mr. Nassar said the pre-sale of tickets was lower than expected, including on Footcandle film nights and the usual outlets. About 100 tickets were sold on-line and each year the greatest amount of ticket sales occurs on event day, so a good attendance is still expected. Marion Love is coordinating the volunteer schedule.

Members agreed that a stronger advertising push is needed next year, including banners at major intersections, yard signs, etc., with the goal of selling all seats.

The Hickory Playground – Dylan Tashjian attended the HIC meeting last month to discuss The Hickory Playground project that he and two friends are producing again this summer. The evening of ten one-act plays will be held the evening before Folk moot, Saturday, July 22, 2017, 7:00 to 9:00 pm, in Drendel Auditorium. All monies raised go toward arts education in the local public schools.

Great Decisions Discussions Update – Great Decisions will be held on consecutive Tuesday evenings, September 5 through October 24, 2017, 6:00 to 8:00 pm in the Keiser Community Room on the SALT Block. There are six seats open.

HIC Brochure – Fez Palafox shared copies of the final brochure which will be printed tomorrow, 2,000 copies for \$220. He said they would use a heavier weight paper than used for the examples and are working to correct the fold. Mr. Nassar thanked him for arranging the printing, and requested having copies to give out at Folk moot this weekend.

International Seminars/Activities – The “Sail the Seven Seas” seminar and social will be held on Tuesday, August 15, 7:00 to 8:30 pm, at Patrick Beaver Memorial Library. Aaron Kohrs was not present to discuss the seminar/social he has planned. There was discussion on having more input from members regarding future seminars and events that are sponsored by the HIC, especially when supported by the HIC budget. It was suggested a sub-committee be formed, with multiple HIC members involved in planning future seminars. The sub-committee should develop seminar ideas and recommend them to the full council for further discussion and a final decision.

Mayor Wright Farewell – Since the previous meeting, Mr. Nassar met with Donna Wright and their daughter to discuss ideas on how to honor Mayor Wright, since he was instrumental in forming the HIC back in 2002. Mr. Nassar shared a list of “memorial ideas” developed when he met with the Wright family members. He said the City would likely honor Mayor Wright in some way, and the HIC would not want to duplicate their efforts. He also noted any event or activity planned by members would use the HIC budget from the City, unless they fund it themselves.

Members especially liked idea #3 on the list, installing flag tiles in the ground on Union Square, either all together or scattered around, which children could use to make “rubbings” on paper. Mr. Nassar said whatever is done should be approved by the City. He had already spoken with City Manager Warren Wood, but they plan to meet again to discuss it further. Mr. Wood had noted “The Rudy Project” is currently underway, a partnership between the Wright Family and Habitat for Humanity of Catawba

Valley, with support from the Hickory Crawdads. Mr. Nassar read aloud a news article describing the partnership, which stated the kick-off was held at the Crawdads game on July 6, which would have been Mayor Wright's 70th birthday. He said the Wright family suggested that anything done by the HIC should be implemented on either May 11 (the day of Mayor Wright's memorial service on Union Square) or July 6 (his birthday).

Mr. Nassar said Wright family members also prefer idea #3. He said that the metal tree would be expensive and could have safety issues. One idea not on the list, suggested by Marc Swinnen, was to name the annual HIC community grants program for Mayor Wright. Dr. Love suggested that, instead, an additional grant could be offered and named specifically for Mayor Wright, which keeps the HIC's name on the community grants. There was again discussion re: the unknown future of the HIC. Mr. Nassar said the HIC is funded through June 30, 2018, so it is safe to assume City leadership supports the council's efforts for at least the current fiscal year.

Ms. Oetting proposed May 11, 2018 for any event the HIC decides to hold, saying it would be a Friday, and that it should be cooler on Union Square during May than July. Members decided to table further discussion until the next meeting. In the meantime, Mr. Nassar will discuss the proposed list of ideas with City leadership and update members next month.

Connecting with Diverse Populations – Mr. Nassar said representatives from the Hickory Young Professionals (HYP) and Hickory Community Relations Council (CRC) had attended the previous meeting. He said Ibiyemi Carrol had recently sent him an e-mail proposing a collaborative event but was not present to discuss it, so it will be added to the August agenda.

New Business:

Zambia Volunteer Trip – Ira Roberts recently looked into doing volunteer work abroad through the International Volunteer Headquarters and shared his plans to participate in a construction project through their Zambia Mission, August 21 through September 9, 2017. He has established a GoFundMe page, and asked members for other ideas for funding his trip. Dr. Love discussed a neighbor who makes trips to Kenya, using money made through yard sales, and Ms. Oetting suggested reaching out to area churches. Mr. Roberts discussed some options available to him, and said he currently has \$500 of the \$3,000 needed. If unable to raise the full amount, he will donate the collected funds to International Volunteer Headquarters. It was noted he could apply for a HIC community grant later this year, but that would require postponing his volunteer trip.

Discussion of the Next Mayor of Hickory – There are currently three candidates for mayor. The deadline is tomorrow, so there could also be other candidates. Mr. Nassar said that having three candidates requires holding a run-off, prior to the November election.

Discussion of HIC's Future – Mr. Nassar said that earlier, the members had briefly discussed the fate of the HIC after this year. He said more will be known as the year progresses, and that the new mayor could decide to keep the HIC in place or dissolve it on July 1, 2018.

Other Business: Marion Love shared her plans to take a leave of absence from the HIC following Folkmoot, although she does plan to assist in planning and conducting the Model UN 2018 program. She will no longer attend HIC meetings or serve as Vice-Chair. Dr. Love's work on behalf of the HIC has been appreciated by everyone, and she will definitely be missed.

All members helping as Folkmoot volunteers on Sunday were asked to remain after the meeting to discuss their assignments with Dr. Love.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be on Thursday, August 17, 2017, 5:30 pm, in the Moretz Board Room, 2nd floor of the Arts & Science Center.

Adjournment: Mr. Nassar thanked everyone for attending. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:50 pm.

Hani Nassar, Chair
Hickory International Council

Anne Starnes, Minutes Clerk
City of Hickory