

**Hickory International Council**  
**Thursday, June 15, 2017, 5:30 pm**

A regular meeting of the Hickory International Council (HIC) was held on Thursday, June 15, 2017, 5:30 pm, in the Keiser Community Room in the West Wing of the Arts & Science Center of Catawba Valley.

**Members Present:** Hani Nassar, Gretchen Oetting, Karl Wolfe, Ibiyemi Carrol, Eric Brandon, Claire McCrea, Ira Roberts, and Aaron Kohrs

**Members Absent:** Bella Fields, Toshiaki Satake, Marion Love, Marc Swinnen, Justin Davis, Jack Crawford, and Becky Mich

**Guests Present:** Dylan Tashjian, Zach de la Rosa, Clise Plant, 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 5:30 pm and thanked everyone for attending.

**Approval of May 18, 2017 Minutes:** Minutes from the previous meeting were distributed to members in advance. Hani Nassar moved, seconded by Aaron Kohrs, to approve the May 18, 2017 minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

**Introduction of Guests, Board Changes & Special Announcements:** Guests attending were introduced. Rev. David Roberts II of Morning Star Baptist Church had planned to attend, but apparently had a conflict.

Clise Plant, chair of the City’s Community Relations Council (CRC), said she would like to see the two Councils work together on a project or seminar in the future. She said the CRC had recently selected Mr. Nassar as one of the four recipients of a 2017 Community Relations Award. He received the award at their Human Relations Banquet on May 23rd, in recognition of his efforts throughout the community.

Zach de la Rosa briefly discussed the local organization he chairs, the Hickory Young Professionals (HYP).

Dylan Tashjian discussed The Hickory Playground project that he and two friends plan to produce in Hickory again this summer. The evening of one-act plays will be held on Saturday, July 22, 2017 in the Drendel Auditorium, and they hope to raise \$10,000 for arts education in the Hickory Public Schools.

Mr. Nassar said that in addition to Ken Humphreys’ recent resignation from the HIC, Joe Getlein had also resigned.

Mr. Nassar again discussed with members how to handle the continued consecutive absences by a few HIC members. Last month, staff liaison Bo Weichel noted that the City attendance policy is clearly stated on the monthly HIC agenda, and advised that City Council should be informed of any board membership changes since they appoint the members. He said that sending a member a letter of notification stating they are being dropped from the Council, due to continued absences, would be appropriate. Prior to the July meeting, Mr. Nassar will make a decision on how to proceed.

## **Old Business:**

HIC Monthly Financial Statement – A total \$11,862.19 has been spent to-date from the City budget of \$13,000, with a balance of \$1,137.81 available through June 30, 2017. Outstanding expenses to be paid from the remaining budget include \$75 to the Footcandle Film Society and the purchase of Model UN badge holders. Funds in the SpringFest budget stand at \$8,459.95.

Eric Brandon asked what time of year SpringFest donations are solicited. Mr. Nassar said at various times, prior to events and activities such as the Children’s Film Festival, Folkmoot, and Great Decisions.

Folkmoot USA Update – The first Folkmoot performance is the public one at 3:00 pm on Sunday, July 23, 2017, with a second “private” show at 6:00 pm; both shows will be held in Drendel Auditorium. Mr. Nassar noted the groups coming to Waynesville this year include The Netherlands, Slovenia, Argentina, Israel, and Russia. Dylan Tashjian will sell tickets during his Hickory Playground event on the evening prior to Folkmoot. Mr. Nassar provided tickets to members interested in selling them to friends and family in advance. Ticket prices this year are \$5 for youth (12 years and under) and \$10 for adults (13 years and up). Additional volunteers are still needed for the 3:00 pm performance, and members should contact Marion Love to sign up.

Great Decisions Update – Mr. Nassar said one person has dropped out and there are four seats open for Great Decisions. It 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.

HIC Brochure Update – Mr. Nassar said he and Karl Wolfe had suggested a few changes following the previous meeting, regarding the Footcandle Film Society’s quarterly foreign films and the Children’s International Film Festival. Members discussed how many brochures to print, and decided 2,000 would be printed through Alex Lee at a cost of \$220. A new date has not been set for the Crawdads Hispanic Heritage Night, but Mr. Nassar would like the brochures to be printed in time to give them out at the event. Fez Palafox will make the requested changes and e-mail the final version to Mr. Nassar for review.

International Seminars & Activities – Aaron Kohrs discussed the Global Trade Gala held on Thursday, May 18 at Patrick Beaver Memorial Library (PBML). He also discussed a new seminar idea which would be co-hosted by the HIC and Hickory Community Relations Council (CRC), with members of the two Councils and any others interested attending to discuss their travels and experiences abroad. Last week, he presented the idea to the CRC members at their monthly meeting and said they were interested in participating. It would be held in early August at PBML, for approximately 1½ hours during the evening. Members offered ideas for activities during the event. Mr. Kohrs proposed several names for the event, including “Meeting the World” and “Stories from the Seven Continents.” Members discussed how the HIC budget can be spent. Mr. Nassar said the funds cannot go to volunteers at events such as this one, but can be used to pay speaker fees for Great Decisions and other events, for the chairs who coordinate Model UN, and for expenses such as refreshments.

Youth Council Member Announcement – Claire McCrea represents the Hickory Youth Council on the HIC. She announced that she has received a scholarship to study language abroad for 6-weeks this summer, through the National Security Language Initiative for Youth. She will go to South Korea, staying with a host family from June 26 to August 14. The program for high school students is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State for the purpose of international communications. Members congratulated her, and look forward to hearing an account of her trip later this summer.

Mayor Wright Farewell – At the previous meeting, Mr. Nassar said former Mayor Rudy Wright was instrumental in the formation of the Hickory International Council, and had continued to be very supportive of activities through the years. In light of Mayor Wright’s recent passing, Mr. Nassar had suggested the HIC do something to recognize him. He had asked members to come to the June meeting with ideas to discuss. Suggestions included finding a green space where plants from international countries could be planted as a memorial to Mayor Wright; honoring him in various languages on a sign; incorporating a salute to him on the HIC sign downtown in front of Lulu’s; and, reaching out to his hometown in Virginia to create some type of partnership. Mr. Nassar thanked them for their ideas. He also plans to talk with Mayor Wright’s wife, Donna, and ask for her ideas.

**New Business:**

Connecting with Diverse Populations – Zach de la Rosa discussed ideas for the Hickory Young Professionals (HYP) and HIC to collaborate. He said HYP currently has nearly 100 members, ages 21-40, and their focus is on creating leaders within the community. A \$50 annual fee is paid by the individual or their company. He noted that minorities are under-represented in their organization, and that the results of a membership poll had shown that a diversity event would not be well attended. He suggested an event be held in the future, but not until after he does some research and lays the groundwork for a successful effort. Members offered their ideas and suggestions.

Crawdads Hispanic Heritage Night – The Hispanic Heritage Night on Friday, May 12 was cancelled, due to rain. Ira Roberts attended the game as planned, and threw out the first pitch. He said less than 100 people had attended. Members agreed they did not see much by way of marketing and advertising for the event. Mr. Nassar said it would be rescheduled, and he will contact Cady Ray about setting a future date.

**Other Business:** Karl Wolfe announced he is planning to move away from Hickory and closer to his job in Forest City, NC.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be on Thursday, July 20, 2017, 5:30 pm, in the Moretz Board Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Arts & Science Center.

**Adjournment:** There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:40 pm.

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Hani Nassar, Chair  
Hickory International Council

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Anne Starnes, Minutes Clerk  
City of Hickory