

Hickory International Council
Thursday, October 19, 2017, 5:30 pm

A regular meeting of the Hickory International Council (HIC) was held on Thursday, October 19, 2017, 5:30 pm, in the Moretz Board Room of the Arts & Science Center of Catawba Valley.

Members Present: Hani Nassar, Marion Love, Toshiaki Satake, Marc Swinnen, Aaron Kohrs, Eric Brandon, Claire McCrea, Sophie Rice, Ira Roberts, Nahrain Kamber and Jack Crawford

Members Absent: Karl Wolfe, Gretchen Oetting, Ibiyemi Carrol and Justin Davis

Guests Present: Steven Chuang, Ashley Wright, Luis Millan and Lia Gil

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 July 20, 2017 Minutes: Minutes from the July meeting were distributed to members in advance, but could not be approved in August without a quorum present. Aaron Kohrs moved, seconded by Eric Brandon, to approve the July 20, 2017 minutes as presented. No additions, deletions or corrections were stated, and the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of August 17, 2017 Notes: Notes from the previous meeting, held without a quorum, were distributed to members in advance. Eric Brandon moved, seconded by Aaron Kohrs, to approve the August 17, 2017 notes as presented. No additions, deletions or corrections were stated, and the motion carried unanimously.

Introduction of Guests, Board Membership Changes, and Special Announcements: Guests attending the meeting were introduced: Steven Chuang, Ashley Wright, Luis Millan and Lia Gil. Mr. Nassar introduced two new members, Sophie Rice (Youth Council) and Dr. Nahrain Kamber. He announced that, following a recent promotion, Bo Weichel would continue to serve as staff liaison to the HIC and prepare the monthly financial report, but he will not be able to attend the monthly meetings. Mr. Nassar compiled a member attendance record for fiscal year 2016-17; copies were distributed and discussed. He reviewed the section of City Code, printed at the bottom of HIC monthly agendas, addressing member attendance at board, commission and council meetings. He said the attendance policy does not apply to the HIC because it has no by-laws. An Advisory Board to the HIC was created recently for in-active members; they will serve as advisors to the HIC, will not participate in regular meetings, and have no voting rights. He said Becky Mich and Jack Crawford would move to the Advisory Board, if they elect to do so.

Old Business:

HIC Monthly Financial Statement – Mr. Nassar said total expenses to-date were \$3,298.67, with the majority going toward Folkmoot USA costs. A balance of \$9,130.29 remains in the City budget, through June 30, 2018. Also, \$6,719.21 remains in the FilmFest budget, carry-over funds from last year.

Great Decisions Discussion – The Great Decisions program began on Tuesday, September 5, and the last session is next week. Mr. Nassar said the series has been excellent this year, with around 25 participants each week. With the current interest, he said they might begin offering the program twice a year in the future.

HIC Brochure – There was some confusion regarding the number of new brochures printed by MDI recently, and Mr. Nassar said the HIC did not receive the full run of 2,000 copies, per the quote. The HIC paid the invoice for 2,000 copies in August, and offered to print more himself, if needed. Dr. Love will discuss it with Fez Palafox, who coordinated the print job through MDI.

International Seminars/Activities –

Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria Seminar – Ashley Wright, daughter of Rudy Wright, was introduced. She currently lives in Puerto Rico, where she operates a tourism-based business. She discussed the destructive hurricane and aftermath, and said one of her intentions in returning to Hickory a week afterward was to help get the word out about the humanitarian crisis that continues there. She thanked Mr. Nassar and Aaron Kohrs for arranging the “Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria” seminar held in Drendel Auditorium on very short notice. Mr. Kohrs summarized the seminar on October 5, saying 30-40 people attended. He said the *Hickory Daily Record* covered the seminar with a front page article. Some HIC members did not receive the seminar announcement e-mail, so Mr. Kohrs will review his address list.

Ms. Wright discussed the upcoming “vision trip” she organized, saying a small group of people would go on a humanitarian trip to Puerto Rico, November 1-5. She explained that people need to see the situation first-hand in order to fully understand it. While in Puerto Rico, the group will also deliver supplies, including water filters for people in remote areas. She said the filters would work for up to five years, a much better solution for providing clean water to a community than sending in bottled water which only lasts a few days and creates litter. She discussed the trip expenses, and will provide Mr. Nassar a flyer to share with members.

Seminar Committee – no discussion

Mayor Wright Farewell – Mr. Nassar said Mayor Wright was crucial to creating the HIC, and a few months ago he met with the Wright family members to discuss how the HIC might honor him. At the July meeting, he shared a list of their memorial ideas, and members had especially liked the idea of installing international flag tiles in the ground on Union Square to represent HIC members’ home countries, which children/students could use to make paper rubbings. Mr. Nassar and Ms. Wright recently discussed it further, and he asked her to present the concept to members.

Ms. Wright sketched out a design for the project, and suggested using the grassy area on Union Square, between the Tap Room and The Sails, for a pathway installation of 8½ x 11-inch stainless steel embossed plaques (\$242 each) with the 12 flags representing HIC member countries. If members from other countries join the HIC, additional plaques/flags could be added to the path. She suggested an additional plaque, which would have a quote from Mayor Wright during the time he helped to form the HIC, possibly something he said on the importance of inclusiveness and living in a world of international peace. She said Donna Wright suggests the HIC ask the City to handle the installation, with the HIC paying for materials.

Ms. Wright said the project could be installed in two phases, and the pathway idea would be Phase I of the project. Phase II would come later, with a table or chart off to the side, to offer more information on each member country, and possibly including a map of the world. It could be interactive, with a country selected by the user and “fun facts” and/or information on that country would then appear. Ms. Wright said this would provide an additional education component. She suggested proposing both project phases to the City of Hickory initially, to see what their interest would be. She expects the entire project could be constructed for between \$3,000 and \$7,000.

Luis Millan offered to assist Ms. Wright. Mr. Kohrs suggested lighting the installation, possibly using solar lights.

Connecting with Diverse Populations – Ibiyemi Carrol had planned to discuss ideas for collaboration with the HIC, Hickory Young Professionals (HYP) and Community Relations Council (CRC). He has not attended recently, so Mr. Nassar plans to remove this agenda item.

4th Quarter Foreign Film Ideas – Mr. Nassar spoke with Allen Jackson regarding ideas for the Footcandle Film Society’s next quarterly foreign film in November. Marc Swinnen suggested a number of interesting foreign films to screen for the 4th quarter.

HIC Grants – Gretchen Oetting will serve as chair for the 2017 HIC Community Grants. Mr. Nassar said the process would begin earlier this year, so the recipients can be chosen and grant checks awarded early in 2018.

International Christmas Concert – Mr. Nassar said the concert will be on Saturday, December 16, 2017 in Drendel Auditorium; it was announced incorrectly at the previous meeting. Members of the Western Piedmont Youth Orchestra will join the Romanian Baptist Church Choir in presenting the concert this year.

New Business:

German Play “In God’s Own Country” – Mr. Nassar said he has raised additional funds for the HIC to sponsor the play *In God’s Own Country*, presented by artists from a German theater near Dresden, on Monday, October 23, 5:00 pm. He shared information on the event, and said the group would also present a concert on Sunday, October 23, 7:00 pm. Both events will be in the Grace Chapel at LRU and are free to attend. Dr. Love suggested HIC members be notified in advance when they are asked to sponsor future events.

Christmas Dinner Ideas – Members discussed various restaurants and locations for the Christmas dinner, and suggested that international foods be served. Following discussion, Thursday, December 14 was chosen. Toshiaki Satake and Marc Swinnen will research the various locations discussed and report back at the November meeting. They will arrange a buffet at \$20 per person, inclusive, with a cash bar, for approximately 25 people.

MUN 2018 – Eric Brandon said he and Amy Green would be Co-Chairs for Model UN next year. The 2-day competition for high school students will be held March 6-7, 2018, on the LRU campus. They have a new Steering Committee structure this year, and are starting their planning process with a discussion of the eight topics needed. They still need a few people to serve on the Steering Committee, and Nahrain Kamber will consider helping.

Children’s International Film Festival 2018 – Mr. Nassar has contacted the three public school systems and private schools regarding the next film festival, and they are all on board. It will be held the last week of April 2018. He recently started recruiting short films for the festival and already received 92 of them. The films will be limited to a maximum of 15 minutes, and the submission deadline is December 1, 2017. He said that all interested HIC members would screen **all** of the films this year, so this work will be shared and there will be various member opinions on the films. The poster contest will also be announced earlier this year, with an earlier deadline, allowing HIC members more time to judge them. Mr. Nassar will ask for member volunteers for these tasks in the next few months, well ahead of the festival.

TEDxHickory – TEDxHickory will be on Saturday, November 18, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm in Belk Centrum on the LRU campus. Mr. Nassar said 30 tickets remain, including lunch, etc., and he needs a few volunteers to assist on that day.

Other Business: Mr. Nassar said Dr. Marion Love would remain as Vice-Chair of the HIC, but with limited responsibility.

Lia Gil said she is new to the area, and is interested in joining the HIC.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be on Thursday, November 16, 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 6:40 pm.

Hani Nassar, Chair
Hickory International Council

Anne Starnes, Minutes Clerk
City of Hickory