



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS BOARD

Meeting Minutes
June 11, 2015

Economic Development

1200 Third Avenue, 14th Floor, Large Conference Room, San Diego, CA 92101 - 619.236.6364

Present:	Present:	Excused:	Guests:
Bruce Abrams	Deborah Flores	Kathleen Charla	Rithy Chrong
Roberto Alcantar	Mark Leo	Rita Lim	Emily Hill
Emiliano Aragon	Jordan Marks	Patricia Waller	Jyothsna Konda
	Rebecca Morales	Unexcused:	Michelle Persante
		Bob Morris	

Mayoral Staff: Don Giaquinto
City Economic Development Staff: Adrienne Turner

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**Call to Order:** Bruce Abrams, Chair @ 2:12 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes:** May 14, 2015 minutes were approved

**Non-Agenda Public Comment:** None

**Guest Speaker:** None

**Action Items:**

David Edick, chair of the steering committee for San Diego Sister City Association (SanDISCA), gave a presentation on Panama City and the process for adding Panama City as a new Sister City. Panama City was founded in 1519 and similar to San Diego it was settled by Spain. In 1915-16 the City of San Diego held the Panama-California Exposition in Balboa Park to commemorate the opening of the Panama Canal. This year being the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the exposition it is fitting that the two cities establish a Sister City relationship. Both are Port cities and engaged in international trade. In April a delegation from COPA Airlines, based at Panama City’s Tocumen International Airport, visited San Diego to explore establishing direct flights between the two cities. Panama City is a major urban area far more densely populated than San Diego and is an important gateway to other global regions and trade passages.

Panama City Mayor Jose Isabel Blandon Figueroa, who was elected last year, is interested in making connections with San Diego. Mayor Faulconer reached out to him last year upon a request from a local group that wanted to develop a sister city relationship. Mayor Faulconer sent a letter in Spanish and English to reach out to Mayor Blandon.

The San Diego-Panama City Sister City Association has developed a solid membership, a stable financial position and strong support for future plans and programs.

The IAB voted to approve the Letter of Recommendation to the City Council for a new Sister City relationship between The City of San Diego and Panama City, Panama.

## **Discussion Items:**

### **a. Mayor Faulconer's office – Don Giaquinto**

Don announced there will be a committee meeting to vote on the Panama City Sister City proposal on June 25<sup>th</sup>. The IAB is encouraged to attend in support. He will send out additional information. The item is scheduled to go to Council on July 13<sup>th</sup> for a final vote. July 18<sup>th</sup> is the actual date for the planned signing between the two mayors, to be held in Balboa Park. Right now, it's just a 'save the date' as it has yet to be approved.

### **b. Annual event planning**

Bruce Abrams dissolved the subcommittee since it is not operative.

### **c. IAB Draft Recognition Letter**

The Letter of Recognition is now in final form. Board members can submit suggestions of who to recognize to the board for approval. Adrienne Turner informed the board that in the past qualifying criteria had been developed for potential candidates which she would send out to the board. Rebecca had brought information on an organization she felt should be recognized. It was decided to introduce it at the next meeting.

### **d. Centennial Activities (subcommittee)**

- On hold but the IAB may want to partner with the arts commission.
- Emiliano will serve as a liaison to the House of Pacific Relations (HPR) so the IAB can be more engaged. He will let members know if he needs help; interns can assist as well.
- Jordan Marks will give a formal presentation next month once he has had time to reach out to his contacts. He will also serve as the chair to the subcommittee and email Emily with updates on incorporating his presentation to the agenda.

### **e. Annual Report update**

- Bruce received information that the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter may be complete and is waiting to receive documents from David Slack.
- All board members should send their activity reports to Emily.

## **Board Chair Report – Bruce Abrams:**

Rita Lim's schedule is now too busy and she can no longer serve as vice chair, Kathleen Charla will take over as vice chair.

### **a. August retreat**

There will be a Board retreat in August. Members are needed to volunteer for the committee, or have interns to help. Meeting objectives will be: examine what the Board is missing at meetings or in terms of skills; determine what the Board wants to accomplish for the year; and make a strategic plan for the year. Rebecca Morales suggested not having presentations like last year. Bruce would like new members to get more involved. It would likely not be possible to get a city facilitator this year, but Bruce can reach out to some contacts to see if anyone would be interested in facilitating the retreat. Bruce will also look into finding someone to cater lunch for the meeting

### **b. December International Holiday Festival**

The Board will hold a brief business meeting and then hold the Holiday Festival (plans to be discussed at the August retreat).

## **Announcements:**

### **a. Intern program report**

- Emily Hill will stand in as the new intern coordinator until Patricia returns. David is unable to assist due to health issues. Bruce and the Board wished him well.
- Intern Jyothsna Konda has volunteered to draft the Agenda and take meeting notes.
- Rithy Chrong is doing a full internship.
- Michelle Persante, the newest intern was introduced. She will start on June 15<sup>th</sup>. She may either volunteer or try to get school credit.

Michelle is originally from Florida and went to New England Law in Boston. She came to San Diego to study for her final year at Cal Western School of Law. She has lived in Florence, Italy and also in Ireland and studied under Justice Scalia.

- Emily Hill will create an introductory packet for new interns and new Board members with explanations of roles, reference materials and ‘on the job training’

### **b. Update on Trans Border Directory**

Jyothsna Konda is working with Rebecca Morales to research developing a trans-border directory. The Board will have to decide the need and purpose in conjunction with the board’s mission.

### **c. Japan Airlines collaboration (Rithy Chrong)**

Since one of the objectives of the IAB is to promote relations with other communities, it would be a good opportunity to work with Japan airlines, especially since it has a direct flight from San Diego to Japan. Bruce stated that Japan will be one of the countries to focus on at the August retreat. In addition, Japan Airlines has an office in his building and stated they would like to work with the IAB. Rithy will research history of Japanese internment so that when IAB reaches out to the community, the IAB can briefly say something to recognize Japanese history.

Suggestions for events include doing something with the sister city program. Mark Leo was just in Japan and talked to people from Yokohama who came to San Diego to learn about micro brewing.

Jordan Marks stated that the Rotary program has strong ties to Japan. The IAB can reach out to a Rotary club to do some sort of promotion.

Bruce stated that the IAB will need to write a letter about what it wants to do and how it can become involved, stating the IAB cannot donate money but can promote events or programs.

The IAB will discuss at the August retreat possible options of collaborating with the Japanese community; perhaps for the next cherry blossom festival.

- ### **d. Reminder:**
- Deborah Flores, Emiliano Aragon and Kathleen Charla will be out of town for the July meeting.

**Report of member activities:**

- Rebecca will follow up regarding the International Relief Team (IRT)
- Deborah has been invited by the Sister City in Vladivostok, Russia to visit as a delegate from San Diego/California.
- Jordan Marks had a question about international promotion of San Diego through some sort of a letter to thank people or acknowledge them for encouraging people to come to San Diego. However, this role may be better suited for the Mayor's office since as it houses the protocol office. Jordan will follow up.

**Adjournment:** Bruce Abrams adjourned the meeting at 3:30 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** July 9, 2015

**Questions or comments contact: Adrienne Turner at 619.236.6364 or email at [aturner@sandiego.gov](mailto:aturner@sandiego.gov)**