

The City of Richmond

Sister City Committee Year In Review 2011



January

- Election took place for Chair of the Sister City Committee. Richard Toda requested nominations from the floor for chair. Sylvia Gwozd was nominated. Upon her acceptance of the nomination, she was declared elected by acclamation.
- Election of Sub-Committee Vice Chairs and Alternate Vice Chairs

The Chair requested nominations from the floor for the following positions:

a) **Pierrefonds Vice Chair**

Francis Turmeau was nominated, and upon his acceptance of the nomination, he was declared elected by acclamation.

Pierrefonds Alternate Vice Chair

Priscilla Bollo was nominated, and upon her acceptance of the nomination, she was declared elected by acclamation

b) **Wakayama Vice Chair**

Jim Kojima was nominated, upon his acceptance of the nomination, he was declared elected by acclamation.

Wakayama Alternate Vice Chair

Donalda Buie was nominated, and upon her acceptance of the nomination, she was declared elected by acclamation

c) **Qingdao Vice Chair**

Wei Liu was nominated, upon his acceptance of the nomination, he was declared elected by acclamation.

Qingdao Alternate Vice Chair

Carol Zheng was nominated, and she was declared elected by acclamation. Carol was not present to accept the nomination, and should she decline, another election will take place.

d) **Xiamen Vice Chair**

Weiping Liu was nominated, upon his acceptance of the nomination, he was declared elected by acclamation.

Xiamen Alternate Vice Chair

Juliana Yung was nominated, and elected by acclamation.

- Other sub-committees were formed
- Francis advised that Pierrefonds council members do wish to visit Richmond in 2011; however, they are unable to visit for Salmon Festival as it conflicts with events in Pierrefonds. It was suggested that they visit for the Tall Ships event in June.
- Jim spoke about arrangements he is coordinating with a travel agent for a school trip to Wakayama in May.

February

- A SCC New Years dinner was held Feb 4th which was hosted by the Qingdao Fellowship Association. During the celebration possible future activities were discussed.
- Sylvia Gwozd, Richard Toda, Amarjeet Rattan and Jim Kojima were invited to the Consul General of Japan's residence on February 15th for a dinner reception. Many officials across the Lower Mainland were asked to do a presentation on their Sister City Program. Our SCC was honoured to receive an email from Tetsuya Isono, *Consul for Cultural Affairs and Consulate General of Japan in Vancouver*, expressing that "I believe your Twin City relation is one of the best practice in Canada." As a result Mayor Wayne Wright, City of New Westminister invited Sylvia Gwozd to attend the New Westminister International Trade Committee. The City of New Westminister would like to discuss how they can expand their reach internationally through our SCC community participation model. Policies have been provided for their information.



- On February 16th there was a visit from the Trade Development Group who toured with the CFCC. A reception was held at City Hall in the morning. In the afternoon our Economic Development Officer took the group for a tour around Richmond. During the evening the CFCC hosted a dinner with guests from the Chinese Consulate, the Richmond Chamber of Commerce, and the SCC.



March

- Trustee Debbie Tablotney will follow-up on the French Immersion Programs in secondary schools and their relationship with Pierrefonds. She will also meet with the new Communications Manager to discuss social media opportunities in order to connect students from both the communities.
- Jim reported on the Wakayama school exchange program and the Richmond Schools visit to Japan this year. A total of 33 students will participate. Jim discussed the cost for students and is trying to keep the cost down. The dates are May 13 – May 24, 2011. Donalda will assist greeting students to and from the Airport and will arrange for flag pins.
- Qingdao Tourism delegation visited here March 21st to promote Qingdao Tourism through a seminar which will take place in Vancouver. Li Meng from the Qingdao Tourism Administration will be travelling with Mr. Wang Jiangong, the Director of Qingdao Tourism Administration. They have proposed and made a submission to sign a Cooperative Agreement with Tourism Richmond.

- Weiping reported on the official announcement of the new Mayor of Xiamen Mayor Keqing Liu
- Weiping reported on an upcoming visit by Vice Mayor Zhan in April or May. An official invitation letter has been issued by the Mayor. The FAO is in discussions with Richmond as to the agenda for the visit.
- Planning began for the participation of the Sister City Committee in the July 1st Steveston Salmon Festival Parade.
- Discussions were held on the additional requests for Friendship relations in China
- Discussions were also held on possible Sister City relations in other Countries such as China, Japan, Korea and India.
- The 2011-2012 Activity Plan and Budget was presented to the General Purposes Meeting and approved.
- International Relations Task Force meeting. Attending from the City of New Westminster was Mayor Wright, two City Councillors and senior staff. From the Sister City Committee Sylvia Gwozd and Richard Toda attended.
- Officially signed Tourism Agreement with the City of Qingdao, in Richmond on Monday March 21st.

April

- The school exchange to Wakayama was cancelled due to the Tsunami. In regards to the Japan earthquake, Steveston adopted a fishing village in Onagawa. The fundraiser walk raised \$110,000. The Mayor of Fukushima made a YouTube video with respect to the Nuclear Plant, expressing deep gratitude for all the support they have received.
- The Sister City Committee lends its support drafting a letter to endorse the “Catch and Release” project to be shown in Wakayama. The art exhibition "Catch and Release: Mapping Stories of Geographic and Cultural Transitions" was developed with federal support from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. It was well received at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery last year. The project is based on the idea of the fishing idea and how we are all connected to fishing. It is a collage of a video footage where we interviewed a biologist, salmon fishermen and a chef at the cannery etc.
- On April 12th Vice Mayor Zhan and his delegation visited the City of Richmond. The highlight of the visit was the signing of the letter of intent for a Sister City Relationship with the City of Xiamen.



May

- Received a letter from Dr. Iwahashi thanking the citizens of Richmond and the Sister City Committee for their concern and assistance after the earthquake in Japan. They are hoping to see exchange students for their 40th Anniversary. There was a request to bring a children's choir to Wakayama. Wakayama is also helping with Onagawa City.
- Mike Redpath went back to Onagawa with 3 boxes of children's materials from School District 38 which were given to seven schools in Onagawa. Some of the children are planning to go to Wakayama City in August and will billet the kids. The School Board will help find billets. The money raised will go directly to Onagawa, through the Mayor's office.
- Richmond quilters made 75 quilts for 75 children who lost everything as a result of the Tsunami.
- Passing of Councillor Yasukaza Ishitani. A letter of condolence was sent on behalf of the Sister City Committee.
- Qingdao plans to send a delegation of about 20 plus to attend an Officers Training Program as they are trying to get certification overseas. They contacted us to see if we can supply them with institutions for the program, noting that they only need contacts and Qingdao Personnel Bureau will negotiate with the institution; Kwantlen is interested in hosting and has forwarded the contact information. Trinity Western University could also be a possible suggestion, when they open in Richmond in 1 – 2 years.
- LED delegation arrived on the long weekend. Weiping spoke with the delegation, and they commented that "Richmond feels like home, but cleaner."
- Starting June 15th China Southern will have direct flights 3 days a week. Dora Kay, Senior Policy Advisor on Asia for YVR joined our advisory committee.
- The city received a donation from Richmond Steel to supply students with media opportunities. The committee will consider developing some type of legacy project that can be sent to Japan. Also, a video will be developed for future students, sponsors and parents. At present we do not have any multi-media to promote the SCC initiatives and this project will be a welcome addition.
- The possibility of the Sister City Committee having a Facebook page and all it entails is being considered. Work began to collect, classify and archive Sister City Documents.
- The Steveston Community Society has released a book called the Steveston Community History. Councillor Bill McNulty was hired to do the research. The book covers the year 1859 to present. The Steveston Community society is selling the book for \$20 of which \$10 goes to Onagawa and \$10 goes back to the community centre. There are 1000 copies available.
- Councillor Bill McNulty has started researching our Sister City history in time for our 50th anniversary with Wakayama

- An Artist Delegation held an exhibition in May. They visited the Lower Mainland which included a visit to Richmond for a day and a half. There will be an opportunity for someone in Richmond with an Arts background to visit Xiamen to participate in their Arts Program.





June

- A Delegation of nine from Yantai visited Richmond on June 13th -15th. Sylvia Gwozd stated that the SCC was hosted by the City of Yantai in 2007 and that they had also visited Richmond in 2008. We would like to maintain an informal relationship with Yantai. Along with a meeting with the Mayor, we also gave them a tour of Richmond which included a tour of the farm program, Lulu Island and Sandhuz wineries. Yantai has offered our wine producers booths at their annual wine festival.

July

- Steveston Salmon Festival Parade



September

- Kevin reported on his travels to Onagawa. While visiting he met with one of the teachers who was on a different island when the Tsunami hit. He circulated pictures of the devastation and shared how impressed he was with how much they had already done in cleaning the affected areas. Photos depicting shelters that had been made were shown. However, they were not being utilized since there was a cost to stay in the shelters. Instead they stayed at community centres where food and showers are free.
- Qingdao has been busy with festivals and the international trade show. They reported that the Municipal Personnel Bureau Training Program has found other resources. Qingdao will advise on future cooperative projects.
- Weiping Liu and Jim Kojima went to Xiamen for the CFIT ~ International Trade Show on September 8th – 11th. This is the 15th year for the trade fair. The China International Forum for Mayors of Sister Cities asked if our Mayor could attend this event. The decision was made that Weiping should attend the CFIT, as he was going for business anyway. Most of the costs have been sponsored by Xiamen and the agenda included their attendance at CFIT and spending a networking day at the friendship cities forum. We have been encouraged to work on education, post secondary education and tourism which can make our City more attractive. There is interest in working on partnerships with the Richmond Youth Concert Band. Xiamen sends 600 youth a year to Toronto for education. Xiamen advised that the new flights have 90 percent outbound loads. The pictures from Xiamen's cultural display at Aberdeen centre now belong to us and will be displayed at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery for market day. The pictures will also be displayed at city hall in the near future.
- The Sister City Committee attended the Moon Festival dinner on Monday September 12th.
- Tracy Lakeman CEO, Tourism Richmond, Dora Kay, Senior Policy Advisor Asia YVR, provided a presentation on current and future airport connections. Tracy Lakeman advised they had a strategic planning session and they discussed if we want to expand with China and what direction do we want to take. With finite resources they want to best anticipate the needs and volume of Chinese visitors. Moreover, they would like statistics on where they are staying and for how long, which is very difficult to pinpoint. Also, they would like to know how many of the visitors are here for business and how many were here for leisure. We are trying to gather that information with YVR's assistance. Once we find those key areas then we can expand in our areas. Discussed our image ~ are we Vancouver or Richmond or are we both? How do we get that message across? Working in partnership with Vancouver, so we both win. The goal is to be an economic driver and tourism is the tool.
- Nancy Duff, Chairperson of the Fine Arts Department of Kwantlen Polytechnic University, who hosted the Xiamen delegation of artists, invited the delegation to coffee at her home as they were en route to Vancouver for a city tour.

October

- Sylvia Gwozd reported on a front page news story on a quilter who made 62 comfort quilts in support of the children of Onagawa. Sylvia brought a few of the quilts to show the committee. It was mentioned that \$85,000 has been raised so far for school supplies and students will be invited in 2012 with the support of Richmond education and given respite care.
- Richard Hudson, Director of the International Student Program with the Richmond Board of Education attended the Sister City Committee to discuss the current status and future plans of International Education in the School District. When he first came into the program there were 164 students and now it's grown to 500 this year in Richmond and includes elementary and secondary students. Mr. Hudson expressed their eagerness to work with the Sister City Committee, not only concerning Xiamen but for Wakayama as well.
- Jim Kojima visited Wakayama on October 26th to discuss next year's trip to Richmond for the 40th anniversary; at this point they will be coming next year. Work continues in buying product. Some donations are still coming in and our money is going directly to Onagawa.
- Priscilla continued to work on collecting SCC minutes and material, video's or Xiamen performances at City Hall for archival purposes. Also, Xiamen has nice framed versions of signed documents that took place 40+ years displayed. It would be nice to bring in a display including these documents. It was agreed that the Sister City Committee will make a display for the end of next year.
- Debbie Tablotney circulated the Board of Education Policy for review, advising the purpose for revision is not required until January. It was sent to the Policy Committee because of all the trips last time and the policy is out-dated, and several items need to be revisited. The basic issue of funding availability and the requirement of the Board to commit to the program was discussed. We need to encourage and support the protocol requirements between sister cities and should add friendship to the policy. We are trying to encourage international education and relationships and that should start with a mission statement and values.





November

- Craig Jones, Executive Director, Richmond Chamber of Commerce attended the Sister City meeting to discuss the business climate and provide an update on activities with the Xiamen General Chamber of Commerce. Richmond Chamber has had visits with Xiamen Chamber and continues to exchange information and produce a quarterly report which is transferred into Mandarin for 6000 plus members. The Chamber is in direct dialogue with members of the community that are looking for certain opportunities; have embarked on a number of Chamber companies that have ventured over looking to expand; have had dialogue on business travel with Silkway Travel; real estate is still a high interest, however it has slowed a little with the provincial government referendum going back to PST.
- Jim Kojima visited Onagawa in November with school supplies.
- The Committee reported that next year it is making an official visit to Xiamen and asked what the Chamber feels is beneficial in our relationship. Our community is 65 percent Asian origin and reaching out is important as it makes a positive growth statement. The Chamber believes this bridge we are building is positive and making Xiamen a full sister city solidifies that statement.
- Weiping Liu reported that Xiamen would like the agreement signed as soon as possible, hopefully before the Chinese New Year. Councillor Linda Barnes advised that Council approved the agreement in principle and she will inquire where it is in the process. It still requires work on the details of the agreement and on what that relationship will look like. We will also need to draft terms of reference.

Weiping informed the Committee that he can get Xiamen’s standard agreement for us to use as a base for us to work with.

- Richmond Board of Education – Sister City Policy Review. Committee members discussed and recommended changes and additions to the proposed updates to the School Board’s Sister City Policy. These will be compiled by Debbie Tablotney and reported back to the School Board in 2012.
- Arrangements started for the Sister City Committee to participate in advertising in conjunction with the Parks Department Street Banner Program in 2013.

December

The Sister City Committee celebrated another busy year with a social at the home of Chair Sylvia Gwozd.