

Committee on Border Relations

BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Main Conference Room (City Hall)
March 20, 2019
12:00 P.M.

Board Members in Attendance:

Arturo Barrio
Kathleen Staudt
Mario Porras
Valeria Contreras
Carla Owen
Kenna Ramirez
Fabiola Campos Lopez

Staff Members Present:

Russell Abeln
Paola Gallegos
Jessica Herrera
Lydia Nesbitt-Arronte

MINUTES

1.) Call to Order, Roll Call, and Establishment of a Quorum:

Meeting called to order at 12:03 pm.

2.) Administrative Items:

Introductions – Board of Director Members and Staff

Board members and City of El Paso staff take turn introducing themselves.

Paola Gallegos states that she will be using dropbox to share and coordinate files with committee members, she receives board approval to share board members contact information.

3.) Discussion:

(a) Identify Ongoing Border Relations Initiative

Jessica Herrera recommends bringing in external partners into the conversation such as the County of El Paso. She continues by stating that we want to be mindful of board members time.

Kenna Ramirez states that as somebody who was present at Commissioner Stout's border relations event in 2018 she believes it was very successful. Kenna suggests that the board also be involved with the Mexican Consulates office.

Mario Porras asks for clarification on recommendation to have an additional board member from Ciudad Juarez.

Jessica Herrera states that we will need to check what our bylaws allow us to do. For now, we have two open chairs that need to be filled by two city council representatives.

Mario Porras suggests that we facilitate conversations with Ciudad Juarez so that they can implement their own committee on border relations.

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Arturo Barrio recommends having a similar model to what Arizona and Sonora are doing.

Fabiola Campos seconds the idea of us working closely with Ciudad Juarez.

Dr. Staudt seconds the ideas and asks if we can use the dropbox to put in any reports from previous committees. We can also use the dropbox to share initiatives. She suggests looking into the San Diego, Tijuana model as well. She suggests an ongoing list of initiatives that we can follow up.

Mario Porras suggests keeping the board local, we might be able to move things faster if we have a smaller group to work with. He reiterates participation from Juarez Regidores.

Jessica Herrera states that she would like this group to be very visible. Another suggestion is to have participation from this committee on the Sister Cities initiative that the City of El Paso has been working on.

Mario Porras states he thinks it is very important to continue having follow up on what initiatives each member is working on. Understanding whom from the board is working on each specific initiative.

Arturo Barrio agrees with Mario and states that he believes we can start locally but also have representation from the state and Ciudad Juarez.

Fabiola Campos states that we can bring the Mexican Consulate into this committee so they can learn about what the group is working on.

Dr. Staudt states that they need to look at the informal operations as well and what they are doing, for example the arts community is working on multiple initiatives that are along both sides of the border.

Carla Owen asks what other areas the committee should be focusing on.

Mario Porras mentions the arts and culture area.

Arturo Barrio brings up the Sister Cities initiative as an area of focus the board can work on.

Mario Porras brings up that El Paso will be hosting the 2020 US-Mexico Mayors Summit, Sister Cities conference.

Jessica Herrera agrees and mentions the 2019 Annual Sister Cities Conference in Houston, TX.

Dr. Staudt asks that the board keep in mind the policies and initiatives that are happening at a national and state level such as the recent Mexican president's initiative to double the minimum wage.

Mario Porras mentions the steering committee on bridges that meets monthly with about twenty-five people participating from regional and state level. That committee is planning on working on a yearlong survey on both sides of the border. He also mentions the El Paso Community Foundation led survey that looked at border perceptions along both sides of the border.

Jessica Herrera mentions that internally we are looking at how we can provide guidance to Mayor and City Council and how often we can go inform them by reports or updates.

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Mario Porras asks whether the members should share the initiatives.

Paola Gallegos states that she will most likely create a google drive and asks board members to provide their input so that the list can grow from there. She asks the board to move onto item 4a.

Valeria Contreras states that the board should look into working on a strategic plan.

Mario Porras asks if the board members can share a biography so that they are familiar with one another.

Arturo Barrio asks that when we are ready to approach Ciudad Juarez we have a strategic one pager, so that we can come out of the meeting with complete and tangible results.

Dr. Staudt recommends we identify who will be reaching out to Ciudad Juarez.

Paola Gallegos states that we do not have a chair and vice chair but wanted to be mindful of members and allowing them time to read the bylaws.

4.) Discussion and Action:

(a) Approve FY 2019 Meeting Schedule

Paola Gallegos recommends that the board look at meeting bimonthly in order to allow for more productive and effective meetings. If the board ever feels that, they need more than six meetings a year staff can organize emergency meetings. She further states that staff follow the Texas Open Meetings act similar to what is done with City Council.

Kenna Ramirez asks if once the initiatives are selected if subcommittees are created based on those initiatives.

Valeria Contreras states that if subcommittees are meeting regularly she is fine with four meetings.

Arturo Barrio asks if they can start with six meetings and reduce, the number once more has been established.

Mario Porras agrees with having six meetings.

Paola Gallegos recommends meeting the first Thursday of every other month.

Mario Porras, Carla Owen, and Kenna Ramirez recommend meeting Wednesdays.

Arturo Barrio asks if staff can organize a doodle to select the dates.

Kenna Ramirez motions to adopt schedule b with an amendment to change the meeting date by doodle. Arturo Barrio seconds the motion and it is approved unanimously.

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(b) Discuss Bylaws/Administration

Paola Gallegos states that she will place the bylaws on the dropbox for them to be reviewed as well. She asks that board members send edits and suggestions. She clarifies that it is an administrative documents on the management of the board.

Mario Porras asks for clarification on the role and involvement of the Economic Development department for the committee.

Paola Gallegos clarifies that the department has been selected to oversee the committee on border relations; they have also selected a secretary to oversee the committee. She states that the department can do as much as the committee wants them to do.

Jessica Herrera states that the department can provide updates when needed on economic development initiatives and can organize other updates by regional economic development entities.

5.) Identification of Items for Future Agenda

Paola Gallegos states that upcoming items will include adopting bylaws, selecting a chair and reviewing initiatives.

Fabiola Campos asks if staff have access to calendar events that the board can attend.

Jessica Herrera states that they can provide an update as far as events go.

Paola Gallegos suggests sharing a calendar with the committee that they can upload events to.

6.) Adjournment

The meeting is adjourned at 12:56 pm.

Approved: _____

Recording Secretary