

Hickory International Council
Thursday, November 15, 2018, 5:30 pm

A regular meeting of the Hickory International Council (HIC) was held Thursday, November 15, 2018, 5:30 pm, in the Moretz Board Room of the Arts & Science Center of Catawba Valley.

Members Present: Hani Nassar, Steven Chuang, Eric Brandon, Aaron Kohrs, Lea French and Marc Swinnen

Members Absent: Nahrain Kamber, Rick Bryant, Karl Wolfe, Ibiyemi Carrol and Macy White

Guests Present: Dale Hamilton

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 October 18, 2018 Minutes: Minutes from the previous meeting were distributed to members in advance. Marc Swinnen moved, seconded by Eric Brandon, to approve the October 18, 2018 minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Introduction of Guests, Membership Changes and Special Announcements: none

Old Business:

Financial Update – City Budget Office staff member Melissa Miller provided HIC financials, dated November 15, 2018. The remaining balance in the City budget is \$12,123.85, with \$6,269 in the private SpringFest budget. A \$1,500 donation was received recently from the TSH Charitable Trust. Mr. Nassar said this could be the final year TSH would be an International Film Festival sponsor. He noted the HIC provides all of the buses transporting students to and from the festival, and the school systems readily participate when the transportation is provided.

International Christmas Concert – The Christmas Concert will be on Saturday, December 22, 6:00 pm in Drendel Auditorium on the SALT Block. Immediately following the concert, refreshments will be served in the Kiser Community Room, in the West Wing building next door. He shared copies of the concert flyer posted on the HIC website. Participating with the choir this year are Rick Setzer, Pianist, and the Western Piedmont Youth Symphony String Quartet. The HIC typically provides \$500 to the Romanian Baptist Church to help with the expenses, but they have never requested the donation. Mr. Nassar proposed providing \$500 to the church again this year, or more if members are so inclined. This expense would come from the City budget.

Mr. Brandon asked if there is a facility fee to hold the concert activities at the SALT Block. Mr. Nassar said, currently, the fee is waived and the only HIC expense is the security. Next year, there will be a facility fee, plus the security. A question was raised whether separate fees for both buildings used would be charged next year, and Mr. Nassar was uncertain. Mr. Brandon suggested the concert could possibly be sponsored by LRU and held on the campus next year. Mr. Nassar said Kathy Greathouse plans to assist the HIC with possible grants that could help cover future the facility fees at the SALT Block.

Hani Nassar moved, seconded by Eric Brandon, for the HIC to donate \$500 to the Romanian Baptist Church to support their 2018 International Christmas Concert efforts. The motion carried unanimously.

International Seminars –

Brian Clement Health Seminar Summary – Mr. Nassar said Brian Clement, Director of the Hippocrates Health Institute, presented “The Power of Live Food to Conquer Disease” in Drendel Auditorium on the evening of Friday, November 2nd. His presentation was recorded, and Mr. Nassar will provide the link to anyone interested in watching it.

Democratic Discourse Seminar – Aaron Kohrs is currently organizing a Democratic Discourse Seminar on Tuesday, January 29, 2019, 6:30 pm at Patrick Beaver Memorial Library, with complimentary refreshments provided by Windy City Grill. Mr. Nassar confirmed the HIC would sponsor the seminar. Mr. Kohrs said it would focus on the general atmosphere in the U.S. and the world, including varying politics in the country, and being more civil. He noted a few speakers who have agreed to participate, including Mayor Hank Guess and a couple of university professors in NC. Mr. Nassar suggested setting up the Keiser Community Room as a back-up site, in case the meeting room at PBML is not available.

Plastics Waste Film & Panel Seminar – Mr. Nassar said John Ellis had contacted him regarding a seminar and panel discussion focused on plastics waste. A recycling program was held in Grace Chapel yesterday, presented by the founder and Executive Director of the non-profit “Don’t Waste Durham,” and he spoke with her afterwards. She indicated interest in participating in the seminar/panel discussion. It was noted the City has an active Recycling Advisory Board, whose members and staff (Andrew Ballentine) might want to assist with the seminar.

Other Topics – Mr. Nassar said he would like to hold one seminar per quarter in 2019, but it appears the first two will be held in the first quarter. He said if members have any topics to propose for the sub-committee to consider, to please let them know. He noted that related facility expenses for seminars were not included in the HIC cost structure projection. The first floor meeting room in Patrick Beaver Memorial Library was suggested as the best no-cost site for seminars, as long as no more than 50 attendees are expected.

2018-19 HIC Collaborations –

LR Visiting Writers Series – LRU will host Hmong author Kao Kalia Yang as their Visiting Writer at 7:00 pm on March 21, 2019. The HIC will help promote her visit.

Western Piedmont Youth Symphony – The International Christmas Concert and the symphony’s participation was discussed earlier.

HIC Christmas Dinner – Marc Swinnen said the Christmas Dinner would be on Thursday, December 13, 6-8:00 pm at Thai Lotus in Viewmont. The same 2017 menu and a cash bar will be provided this year. The cost per person for the buffet dinner will be \$20, inclusive, and Thai Lotus needs a firm headcount at least a week in advance. Mr. Nassar will send a Doodle Poll asking for reservations. Dirty Santa gifts of \$15 minimum value were suggested.

TEDxHickory Summary – Mr. Nassar said the TEDxHickory event was very good this year, held on Saturday, November 3 in Belk Centrum at LRU. He discussed a couple of the 2018 speakers, one of whom received the only standing ovation for a speaker during the entire seven years of TEDxHickory. He said the presentations should be posted on YouTube by the end of November.

2019 HIC Grants Update – Mr. Nassar said that, last spring, the HIC had received the unfunded grant applications from the City’s Community Relations Council (CRC) and considered them for HIC grant funding. The discussion is included in the March 2018 minutes of the HIC meeting. Mr. Nassar was out of town, so the meeting was chaired by Dr. Marion Love, the former Vice-Chair. Members had discussed the two unfunded CRC spring grant applications: 1) the Safe Harbor Rescue Mission grant application requesting \$825 for “Safe Harbor’s ReSource Warehouse” project, and 2) the Rising Hope Farms grant application requesting \$1,000 for the “Protective Equestrian Helmets for Riders” project. Mr. Kohrs serves on both the CRC and HIC, and had

said that CRC members agreed both were good projects, but were not a good fit with the Community Relations Council's mission and their budget funds were limited.

Neither unfunded 2018 CRC spring grant application was chosen for funding by the HIC during their March 15, 2018 meeting. Dr. Love had proposed that the two councils should have the same criteria, goals, dates, etc., for next year (2019), if they plan to consider each other's unfunded grant applications. This was stated in the minutes from the March 2018 meeting.

2019 Children's International Film Festival Update – Last month, Mr. Nassar advised members the film festival dates will be spread over two weeks in 2019, due to the varying Easter holiday dates set by local school systems. The 2019 festival schedule has been posted to the HIC website. The Newton-Conover school system have requested consideration that their middle school students be allowed to attend the festival this year, which would mean choosing the films accordingly. Allen Jackson (Footcandle Film Society) sent out a request for film submissions. When the films are received, Mr. Nassar needs members to help view them, so the effort will be being shared by more people this year.

HIC Website Maintenance Update – Mr. Nassar and Karl Wolfe recently made some needed changes to the HIC website. Mr. Nassar recently asked HIC members to review the website and suggest any additional changes needed, but none were received.

Non-profit Status: City Council Update – Mr. Nassar said he had forwarded discussion regarding the HIC non-profit status in the previous meeting minutes to Mayor Guess. He did not receive a response, so yesterday he spoke with Assistant City Manager Rodney Miller. Mr. Nassar said there was some confusion regarding who was responsible for completing and filing the non-profit paperwork. As it now stands, City of Hickory is willing to pay the fee for the HIC to become a non-profit, but the HIC must complete and file the paperwork. Mr. Nassar hopes to speak with a non-profit attorney soon, and will begin working on it right away. He said Allen Jackson had used LegalZoom when he filed the Footcandle's non-profit application, which cost \$1,400 at the time. Mr. Nassar expects to complete the application in time for consideration at the HIC's January meeting, but he will not submit it until members review it and suggest any changes. In the meantime, he will e-mail any updates or questions to members, since no meeting will be held in December.

Other Business: Eric Brandon said an initial discussion on the next Model United Nations (MUN) program was held. They plan to stay with the same 2018 fee structure, choose topic ideas, and confirm their keynote speaker. He said a "hot topic" was to change "human rights" to "the commission on the status of women," and test it for one year to see what happens, then evaluate it. Apparently, some of the MUN programs have made changes from the standard topics, and this was one of them. Mr. Brandon said local high school students brought this to the attention of Hickory's MUN steering committee.

Mr. Swinnen noted he no longer receives monthly e-mails from the Footcandle Film Society, and others agreed. Mr. Nassar will speak with Mr. Jackson, and re-send the HIC e-mail address list to him, if needed.

Next Meeting: There will be no regular meeting in December, but members will hold a Christmas dinner on Thursday, December 13, 6:00-8:00 pm at Thai Lotus restaurant in Viewmont.

The next regular meeting will be on Thursday, January 17, 2019, 5:30 pm, in the Moretz Board Room on 2nd floor of the Arts & Science Center.

Adjournment: There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm.

Hani Nassar, Chair
Hickory International Council

Anne Starnes, Minutes Clerk
City of Hickory