

# **Alexandria-Caen Sister City Committee**

## **Draft Minutes**

Monday, April 14, 2025

Alexandria City Hall

### **I. Welcome and Call to Order**

ACSCC Chair Angelique Moss called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. when there was a quorum present.

### **II. Approve March Minutes**

Prior to the meeting, Angelique sent out the draft minutes from the March meeting to committee members for review. ACSCC member Michael Bianco made a motion, seconded by ACSCC member Alex Jevgrafovs, that the committee approve the minutes as distributed. The motion passed unanimously.

### **III. New Business**

#### **A. Welcome New Member Brianna Meyer**

Brianna introduced herself to ACSCC members. She's from Indianapolis, Indiana, and has lived in Alexandria for 8 years. She is a teacher at St. Stephen's and St. Agnes School and has been on an exchange to Normandy, France, although to Bayeux and not Caen. ACSCC members each introduced themselves to Brianna.

#### **B. Commission of the Year Impact Award**

Angelique discussed that the City Clerk's office was soliciting nominations for the Annual Commission of The Year Impact Award by May 1. She expressed her belief that our committee is a good candidate for the award and asked the committee's liaison from the Office of Historic Alexandria, Jim Holloway, if he would determine if the committee met the meeting attendance criteria required to submit a nomination. He said he would.

#### **C. France and World War I Lecture**

Michael said he was interested in this topic and could deliver a lecture on it. Angelique asked him to complete a committee Event Planning Worksheet and suggest a potential date.

### **IV. Ongoing Business**

#### **A. Kick-Off of Caen's Millenium Celebration**

ACSCC Treasurer Stephen Hartka discussed that he joined Alexandria Mayor Alyia Gaskins and City Councilmember John Chapman and their families in Caen from March 19-23, 2025, to attend the kickoff of Caen's year-long 1000<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration. Stephen said that Caen had also invited representatives from their other sister cities to the event as well. There was the grand opening of the Chateau du Caen, which has been transformed from a derelict parking lot to an asset for the city, costing some 90 million euros. In May, the culminating event for the kickoff will be a huge operatic parade with moving stages throughout the city.

Stephen assessed that his trip to Caen was a fantastic experience that he found personally enriching. He said that he had good conversations with city officials about rejuvenating collaborations between Caen and Alexandria. According to Stephen, while previously the committee in Caen was our primary contact, moving forward it will be through Noémie

Dauchier, the Chargée de mission Relations Internationales. He said that Mayor Gaskins and the Caen Mayor had great conversations and were able to discuss shared experiences, such as city flooding. Stephen said Mayor Gaskins is full of ideas for the future between Alexandria and Caen and has scheduled a follow-up meeting with Angelique and him.

#### **B. Recap of French Flow Yoga 3/22**

Although ACSCC member Sydney Johnson did the planning for the event, a family emergency prevented her from being at the event. ACSCC member Kristi Waschull reported that there were about 14 participants attending the event, which was wonderful and very low cost to put on. The committee spent about \$50 and made \$210. Sydney had developed an excellent French music playlist that was used during the yoga.

#### **C. Sister Cities Committee Working Group**

ACSCC member Eric Trimble said that they planned to do a total of three lectures, i.e., one for each Sister City (Caen, Helsingborg, and Dundee) reflecting on Viking-related history pertaining to each city.

#### **D. Recap of Middle School Exchange 3/29 – 4/9**

Angelique paid accolades to ACSCC member Jennifer Reading for being the steady force from ACSCC working with the Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) to reactivate a middle school exchange program between Caen and Alexandria. While previously ACSCC played an oversized role in the program, that is no longer the case. The new exchange program that was inaugurated in the fall of 2024 belongs to ACPS, with Jennie working with them on behalf of ACSCC. Twenty-six Alexandria students and their teachers went to Caen in October 2024 as part of the new exchange, and from March 29-April 9, 2025, 26 French students and their teachers from Caen came to Alexandria. Jennie explained that the French students who visited recently lived with a host family and followed one of the Alexandria students during their normal day. During their free time they did things with their host family, and a number of events that ACPS and ACSCC planned, such as a White House tour and a baseball game. On April 3, 2025, there was a reception at the Lyceum for the students from Alexandria and Caen, their teachers, and their host families in Alexandria. Mayor Alyia Gaskins, introduced by Stephen, spoke to the group. Jennie thanked Jim, for facilitating the event, along with ACSCC members Leslie, Kristi, Eric, Candace Harman, and Reed Van Beveren who helped at the event.

Going forward, the exchange will be every two years in order to stagger the middle school German and French exchange programs so they occur in different years. The next French exchange program will occur in 2027.

#### **E. D-Day Lecture 6/1 and Commemoration 6/5**

Jennie provided an overview of where we are in planning this year's commemoration on June 1 and lecture on June 5:

- She applauded ACSCC member Timotheos Tam for developing a registration form on Google docs so that reenactors, community booths, and military members could register online to participate in the commemoration.
- Leslie agreed to prepare the proclamation and invite the town crier again.
- Stephen will once again handle the table and chair rentals.

- Candace has prepared a press release and Angelique said she will work on the flyers for the commemoration and lecture. Jim explained that there is a new city approval process for all press releases and flyers, i.e., they all have to be approved by the city before they can be distributed.

#### **F. French Liberation Lecture 9/25**

There is no update on this.

#### **V. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

#### **VI. Adjournment**

Angelique adjourned the meeting at 8:36 p.m.

#### **ACSCC Member Attendees in Person:**

Michael Bianco  
 Alex Jevgrafov  
 Brianna Meyer  
 Angelique Moss  
 Timotheos Tam  
 Leslie Tourigny  
 Eric Trimble  
 Kristi Waschull

#### **ACSCC Members Participating by Zoom:**

Stephen Hartka  
 Jennifer Reading

#### **City of Alexandria Government Liaison:**

Jim Holloway, Office of Historic Alexandria

#### **2025 Calendar**

January – Alumni Party 1/11

February –

March – French Flow Yoga 3/22; Middle School Exchange – French Students Visit 3/29 -4/9

April –

May –

June – D-Day Commemoration 6/1; D-Day Lecture 6/5

July –

August –

September – French Liberation Lecture 9/25

October –

November – Beaujolais Nouveau 11/20; Cider Festival 11/22

December – Scottish Walk Parade 12/6

Leslie Tourigny, Secretary