Alexandria Sister Cities Committee – August 2026 Meeting Minutes

Location: Zoom
Date: Monday, August 24, 2026
Time: 7:03 PM – 8:30 PM

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1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM.

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2. Attendance

Present: Dale Medearis, Whitney Umarov, Katelyn Bellus, David Anderson, Paul Anderson, Alina Launchbaugh, David Mitchell, Eric Compton, Vanessa Simpson, David Anderson, Alejandro (Alex) Perez-Reyes

Absent: Kate McMahon, Phil Dawit, Elisabeth Poppen, Lauren Smith

Excused: Carter Rice

Guest: Pat Scherchel

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3. Approval of Previous Minutes

The June 2026 meeting minutes were approved.

- **Motion:** David Anderson
- **Second:** David Mitchell

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4. Treasurer's Report

- **Phil:** Absent
- **Whitney:** Reported a current balance of **$11,006**

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5. Subcommittee Updates

Dundee Trip Recap

- Eric and David M. attended the Dundee visit. Dundee provided a warm welcome and hosted the delegation.
- Alexandria will host the Dundee delegation next year.
- **Action Item:** David M. will prepare a debrief of the visit, including lessons learned and ideas for hosting Dundee in Alexandria next year.

Strategy Subcommittee

- **Action Item:** Dale will propose a date for the next Strategy Subcommittee meeting.

Social Media

- Committee members are encouraged to continue sending photos and relevant links to Vanessa for social media posts.
- The committee is seeking additional members who can assist with social media coverage.

Gyumri / Sports

- Alex had no updates but will begin reestablishing communication and strengthening ties with Gyumri.
- Eric reported that he recently spoke with a former committee member who has connections to Gyumri.

NBA Event

- The NBA event is scheduled for **Saturday, November 7, at Lloyd House**.
- Phil has made contact with Earl Lloyd's son.

6. Ongoing Business

Upcoming Events

Sister City Dinner with Caen — Elisabeth

- The dinner has been postponed to **February 4, 2027**.

Swedish Coffee and Fika Event — Carter

- Scheduled for **October 25, 3:00–5:00 PM** at Buzz Bakery.
- Potential guest speakers include representatives from the Swedish Embassy, Christina, and Malin.
- **Next Steps:**

    - Begin OHA ticket sales.
    - Post event information on the website.
    - Create a volunteer sign-up list for committee members.

OHA Trivia / Tavern Games Night — Katelyn, Kate, Alina, Lauren

- Whitney will provide additional information.
- The committee discussed the possibility of partnering with Caen for a joint trivia event.

Artist-in-Residence Program

- The committee discussed seeking a grant or donation to help offset the artist's rent.

Alexandria Tapestry

- The Mayor expressed support for the idea; however, the project is not currently a committee priority.

Cider Festival

- Scheduled for **Saturday, November 21, at Lloyd House**.
- Whitney will provide additional information.
- The committee will determine its contribution to the event.

Scottish Christmas Walk

- Scheduled for **December 5**.
- A Sister City Dinner is also planned in conjunction with the event.

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7. New Business

Dundee–Alexandria Rugby Rematch

- Discussion began regarding a potential Dundee–Alexandria rugby rematch in **summer 2027**.

Scottish Authors Event — *How to Kill a Witch*

- The committee discussed a potential Scottish authors event in partnership with the Scottish American Women's Society (SAWS).
- Tentatively scheduled for **September 25 or 26**.

University Connections

- Virginia Tech is exploring a connection with Abertay University and potentially other universities.
- The committee discussed opportunities to strengthen university-to-university connections.

Business Connections

- Port City Brewing Company is beginning to sell products in Sweden.
- The committee discussed potential connections with Five Guys and McDonald's.

Helsingborg Student Visit

- Students from Helsingborg are scheduled to October 5-12.
- The committee discussed arranging a reception dinner for the students.
- A motion was made to create a subcommittee to coordinate the visit.
    - **Motion:** Eric
    - **Second:** Paul
- The committee also discussed connecting the students with local high schools and having OHA provide a presentation.

Committee Trip to Helsingborg

- The committee discussed a potential committee trip to Helsingborg in **2027 or 2028**.

8. Tentative Calendar of Committee Events

- Swedish Coffee and Fika Event – October 25, 2026
- NBA Event – November 7, 2026
- Cider Festival – November 21, 2026
- Scottish Christmas Walk – December 5, 2026
- Sister Cities Dinner (joint w/Caen) –February 4, 2027

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9. Reminders

- All committee communications must go through the Office of Communications.
- Notify Eric if you will be absent and require an excused absence.
- Meetings will continue to be held at Lloyd House.
- Regular meetings are scheduled for the fourth Monday of each month.

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10. Next Meeting

Monday, September 28, 2026
7:00 PM
Lloyd House

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11. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at **8:19 PM**.

Submitted by:
Katelyn Bellus, Secretary
29 Aug 2026