

# Partner City Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes – September 4, 2019

Harmon Conference Room, 1101 Poyntz Avenue, Manhattan, Kansas

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**Attendance:** Vern Wirka, Liz Beikmann, Dolly Anderson, Ed Klimek, and Bill Smriga. Also attending were Barry Michie, Jan Janasek, Ron Janasek, Ludmila Harascakova, Martha Seaton, Karen Hibbard, and students attending Kansas State University from the Czech Republic included Milan Zongor, Martin Vkoder, Petr Hron, Petr Skaba, and Antonie Brozova. Staff: Gary Fees.

At 4:05 p.m., Chair Vern Wirka called the meeting to order.

Chair Wirka welcomed the students attending the meeting. Introductions were exchanged and the students presented information on their home communities and academic majors.

After discussion, Liz Beikmann moved to approve the minutes from the August 7, 2019, meeting. Dolly Anderson seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.

Wirka highlighted prior discussions regarding hosting a Czech festival and possible next steps. He asked if any Committee members wanted to share items regarding opportunities and challenges in hosting a Czech festival.

Beikmann provided challenges and positives in doing a Czech festival. She highlighted the challenges in finding help, people to perform, and associated costs. Her positives included sharing information on our Czech heritage for the local area, sharing the Czech culture, and an opportunity for a family event. She suggested possible participants such as the Manhattan High School Orchestra, Flint Hills Masterworks Chorale, an accordion group, and possibly an evening venue with desserts and music. She preferred that the event start small and that it's done well.

Bill Smriga also discussed challenges and opportunities in hosting a Czech festival. He highlighted considerations for staffing, funding, organizing, facilities, food, vendors, publicity, and providing activities of interest for all ages. He said that Pottorff Hall at CiCo Park would provide an indoor and outdoor venue opportunity and has a kitchen.

Karen Hibbard provided additional items for consideration. She suggested the event should be different and unique from other Czech festivals. She discussed the importance to do the event well, to celebrate, to secure volunteers, and to tell the story of the Czech heritage.

Ed Klimek provided additional comments and stated the event needs to be successful the first year. He said the event could include an activity around the Flag Plaza and the indoor activities could be held in Peace Memorial Auditorium.

The Committee discussed possible venues, dates, and locations including City Park, Peace Memorial Auditorium, and Pottorff Hall that would provide opportunities for both indoor and outdoor activities. The Committee and those present also discussed planning efforts and the importance to highlight the history, culture, and to foster the relationship with our friends in Dobřichovice. as well as a focus that it be a fun, family-friendly event. In addition, there was a consensus that the event be fun and a family-friendly event as well as involvement with the

students and coordination between our Czech counterparts in the state and the Czech Consulate. Wirka stated that he appreciated the feedback received and would follow-up with Karen Hibbard, Liz Beikmann, Jan Janasek, and Petr Skaba for further discussion.

The Committee thanked the students for their participation and wished them all a good semester at K-State. Klimek encouraged the students to stay involved with the ongoing discussions and invited them to the December 4, 2019, Partner City meeting, where traditionally, students have provided presentations about their home communities and experiences at Kansas State University and Manhattan. He said the Committee members and friends also bring delicious foods to share.

Wirka thanked everyone for their attendance and announced that the next Partner City meeting would be at 4:00 p.m., October 2, 2019, in the Harmon Conference Room, City Hall.

The meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.