

Dixon Sister Cities Association
Special Meeting of the Association
City Council Chambers
Dixon IL
Sept. 9, 2015

This meeting with a state official from a Springfield government office was convened by Cathy Seagren, assisted by Ray Schmidt, who received the original telephone call from Jesus Solorio, Community Outreach, and by Ellen Mumford, who informed board members of the request by Mr. Solorio. Ray Schmidt contacted Dixon Mayor Li Arellano and arranged the venue of Dixon's City Council chambers. President Cathy Seagren was unable to be present due to recuperation from surgery. Dixon Sister Cities Association board members present were Meg Schmidt, Carol Jones, Laura Birr-Brown, Ellen Mumford, John Arnould, and David Nelson. Association members Ray Schmidt, Geoff Vanderlin, Judy Arnould and Claudia Nelson were also present. Mayor Li Arellano, honorary association president, was present and opened the meeting.

1. Mayor Arellano introduced Lt. Gov. Evelyn Sanguinetti, who will have visited all of the 102 Illinois counties by the end of 2015. She in turn introduced two staff assistants from her Springfield office, Mr. Jesus Solorio and Ms. Kellie Karney. The meeting lasted one hour and ten minutes.
2. Lt. Gov. Sanguinetti, although born in Florida, identified herself as a Latina, since her mother is Cuban and her father Ecuadorean. She was a city councilwoman in Wheaton before being elected as Lt. Gov. on the Republican ticket with current Governor Rauner. She is interested in international trade for the state of Illinois, as well as cultural and student exchanges. Once a state budget for this year has been approved, she will organize and head up a task force charged with strengthening Illinois' international business relationships, so important for our state.
3. She has a special interest in how this would happen with Latin American countries, citing Mexico, Cuba, Ecuador, and Brazil as likely countries for trade expansion.
4. She asked about our organization and was informed that we have sister city relationships in Russia, Germany, Ireland, and Kenya. Some of the history of Dixon's citizen to citizen exchange visits over the last 28 years was provided by those assembled. She inquired whether we had considered trade missions or international business ventures. Although the organization had a lot of contacts in this regard with Kenya, nothing really came of it, due to lack of finances and business clout.
5. The board clarified that we receive no government funds for our normal budget nor for paying for citizen or mayoral travel to our sister cities. We are a 501(c) 3 now and are following IRS rules and regulations in all fiscal matters.
6. She also inquired about whether our organization was involved in student exchanges. This has indeed happened in the past, but at the moment, the financial situation has not been such to permit student or teacher exchanges, even by other service organizations in our city. But the Association has recognized the need for this and will continue to pursue that opportunity, perhaps beginning with Herzberg, Germany.
7. Finally, Lt. Gov. Sanguinetti asked if the schools in Dixon had anything like a cultural festival which the Association could utilize to raise support for student exchange with our sister cities. It was agreed that the idea was a very good one. Based on her recommendation, we will pursue it.
8. The meeting adjourned with a group picture and handshakes all around.

Respectfully submitted,

David H. Nelson, Secretary