

## Bloomington-Normal Japanese Sister Cities Committee Meeting

**Place:** Zoom Meeting

**Date:** October 5, 2020

**Members in attendance:** Ryan Apple, Jeff Kroesch, Dawn McBride, Sally Modine, Darren Sampson, Ken Ota, Patrick Clapper, Brenda Guest, Chiko Tsukamoto

**Excused Absence:** Kyle Silver

**Absent without notice:** Laura Tepen

**Guest(s):** Katherine Scheck

Meeting was called to order at 6:33p.m. by Darren Sampson.

- **September Meeting Minutes:**

1. Board reviewed the minutes and Darren moved to accept September minutes as presented, seconded by Dawn and approved unanimously.

- **Chairman's report and discussion:** by Darren

1. Noha's resignation: Again appreciate her contribution to the committee.
2. Joint Executive Meeting with Asahikawa Committee: Darren explained the contents of discussion held with Asahikawa committee executives on September 24 (Bloomington time). Asahikawa Committee informed their decision to cancel both programs scheduled for 2021. Junior Ambassador program scheduled in March, 2021 has to begin the recruiting process in the next few weeks and it is not feasible to proceed under the situation. High School program for 2021-22 also requires immediate decision so that their selected student will not suffer by being kept in uncertain position for uncertain period. So, they decided to cancel the program and informed her so she can plan her 2021-22 school options. (Copy of discussion gist is attached.)
3. Upon hearing Asahikawa decision and discussion among the Board, Darren moved to suspend both 2021 Junior Ambassador and 2021-22 High School Exchange programs from B/N to Asahikawa due to COVID. The motion was seconded by Ryan and the Board unanimously approved.

- **Treasurer's Report:** by Dawn

1. Reports for May, June, July, August and September were submitted by Dawn with very small numbers. Darren moved to accept the reports as submitted and Jeff seconded, which then was approved by the Board unanimously.
2. Budget Update for 2021: Since the City of Bloomington needed the update by the end of the month, Dawn presented draft for revised budget on current fiscal year with major change for travel expense from \$9,500 to zero due to no activity during this period. Other adjustments were discussed to cope with pandemic situation introducing new programs and so on. After discussion Dawn moved to approve the numbers for updated 2021 budget to be submitted to the City which was seconded by Jeff and the Board approved unanimously.

- **New business:**

1. Alternative Plan to replace regular programs was discussed and the Board will continue to discuss the method. One of ideas is to have Zoom meeting among students supervised by the chaperons to keep relationships between the cities. Jeff will study concrete idea. Other members are also encouraged to submit ideas.

- **Sub-committees Reports:** N/A
- **Newsletter:**
  1. Ken wants to publish next Newsletter in the week of October 19<sup>th</sup>. Darren and Ryan were requested to come up with articles. Other members are also requested to submit articles and/pictures accordingly.

At 7:38 p.m., Darren motioned, and Ken seconded to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.

**Next Meeting: November 2, 2020 6:30 pm** at Airport Conference Room or Zoom, to be decided.

Respectfully submitted, Ken Ota.



# Asahikawa & Bloomington-Normal Sister Cities Joint Meeting

**Place: Zoom Meeting**

**Date/Time: Japan Time - September 25, 2020 9:00 a.m.**

**Bloomington time - September 24, 2020 7:00 p.m.**

**Attendees:** Madoka Ushio, Noriko Kurusu, Norihiro Sugai, Jeff Kroesch,  
Dawn McBride, Darren Sampson, Ken Ota,

Meeting was called to order at 7:00p.m. by Darren Sampson.

## 1. Greetings & Information Exchanges:

- All attendees exchanged hello over Zoom.
- Mrs. Takasugi, Vice Chair, was not available today.
- Both sides explained current situation under COVID-19. Public schools in Bloomington area are gradually sifting from Remote to In-Person starting mid October. But, it will be done on very cautious pace. Illinois State University is currently conducting 100% remote classes. Nothing has been officially decided for next year. But, it is highly likely the situation continues after January. Bars and restaurants are open under strict guidelines keeping social distance. State Farm, the largest company in the area, is doing business from home through the end of year.
- Meantime, all schools in Asahikawa are open on regular class room style. Businesses are operating in similar way as Bloomington.

## 2. Report by Asahikawa Committee:

- Had Board Meeting recently and made decisions to cancel 2021 Junior Ambassador program from Asahikawa. In order to send students in March, they will need to start recruiting process in October. Under the circumstances, there is no way to proceed such process and the decision was made.
- In similar situation, the committee also decided to cancel 2021-22 High School Exchange program. The student who was selected for 2020-21 agreed to postpone one year and still wishes to go. However, there is no guarantee for the improvement of situation in near future. Meantime, the committee decided that it is not fair to this student to keep unstable condition for unknown period so that other plans can be made for 2021-22 school year.
- Committee wants to study any possibility to keep our close relationship despite current crazy situation. Therefore, they are studying actual means like providing chatting opportunity for students across the ocean.

## 3. Bloomington/Normal Committee:

- Junior Ambassadors: Appreciate Asahikawa Committee's decision making process and agree with the decision. B/N side has to start recruiting process in two months for June trip which would also be difficult to do. It also needs to follow the protocol of reciprocation and the cancellation of trip to Asahikawa is therefore to be cancelled, as well.
- High School Exchange Student: Since Kayley Diaz, who was originally selected for 2020-21 and moved to 2021-22 slot, withdrew herself for next exchange student in August, B/N side needs to start recruiting process in November. After hearing Asahikawa decision B/N will also consider to cancel 2021-22 program and will decide at the next Board Meeting on 10/5/2020.

- B/N Board Meeting in September discussed various possibilities of new activities using internet or mailing system. Further discussion will be done and will exchange information with Asahikawa in future.

4. **Future Actions:**

- Both sides agreed to meet again to keep communication open as it turned out to be very effective vs. emailing back and forth. No fixed dates are decided but will call the meeting as needed.
- Both sides will study the ways to bridge between the students both sides under heavily restricted COVID-19 situation which might continue for a while.

At 7:47 p.m., the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Ken Ota.

