

**Helena International Affairs Council
DRAFT 3/20/07 Minutes
(prepared by Elaine Dahl)**

Welcome and Introductions

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE	MEMBERS NOT IN ATTENDANCE	AFFILIATES IN ATTENDANCE	GUESTS
Pat Murdo, Chair	Kay Hansen	Kiyomichi Nagata (Kumamoto Plaza)	Charlena Toro
Alex Rincon	Josh De Weese	Tom Stearns (Kumamoto Plaza)	
	Carla Wambaugh	Bill McBride	
Matt Kuntz			
Elaine Dahl, Sec.			
Gabe Furshong			
Will Garvin			

Current events

Iraq Given the Iraq referendum passed by the Commission and recent events involving Matt's step-brother, Pat suggested a forum on Iraq-related issues purely for educational purposes, perhaps with Mark Johnson from the World Affairs Council in Missoula, Prof. Mehrdad Kia from UM and Helena Peaceseekers. She brought an IR opinion article on the referendum issue. Bill expressed support for the idea, as the issue seems to be important, especially to those with military-age children. Will was concerned that we not exceed our authority under the bylaws (making recommendations to the Council, etc.). Gabe suggested we could perhaps limit the forum, at least at the outset, to the impacts on Helena, as that seems to be a difficult issue. Pat also brought a document from the National Conference of State Legislatures, noting that several states are adopting laws expanding veterans' programs. She also noted a resolution before the Montana Legislature regarding Congress' fast-tracking of trade laws, sponsored by Sen. Jim Elliott. Bill suggested a discussion of that issue might be more important than even the referendum, and he cautioned on HIAC making a recommendation on the vote, especially if a member is involved in the referendum. Pat agreed, stating it was not necessary. Will said that, if someone suggests HIAC should make a recommendation, then we should ask that person to make a formal request and then ask the city attorney—just to have a plan for a response. Pat stated that, absent a request from the City Commission, we would not make a recommendation and should focus solely on educational purposes.

Matt expressed gratitude to those who have contacted the Governor in relation to his IR publication and discussed the need for state involvement in National Guard issues involving returning veterans. Will suggested an open invitation to anyone whose living involves Iraq—for example the National Guard. In response to Gabe's suggestion for a subcommittee, Gabe, Matt and Will volunteered. Will volunteered to communicate with the city—with the caveat that it be held outdoors. Pat suggested September makes more sense to her due to the proximity to the vote and the return of Carroll students, and that outdoor events might have more distractions and need a good sound system. Gabe asked Matt's opinion of a Helena-focused Iraq forum, and Matt stated he thought it was

an excellent idea, so long as it is local and HIAC does not take a stand, but allows people to come to the table. His mentor in college wrote the new Iraq plan, and he suggested he might be able to attend and comment on counterinsurgency issues. Gabe stated the referendum was approved 5-0 so the question will be on the November ballot. Pat stated September would be good because of its proximity to the November election. Pat suggested Mark Johnson may be able to bring someone from the Middle East Institute—to draw more people.

Educators—Pat stated we have sent some e-mails around on placements for educators from other countries—China and Korea, and mentioned that people from other countries are interested in teaching foreign languages here. She also stated that, if those people are willing to spend the money to get here, it might be worthwhile to arrange for homestays/school placements of some sort. Alex asked for suggestions from Kumamoto Plaza folks, and Tom stated they have had courses offered once per year. Gabe asked if housing was the problem. Alex stated he assumed they would pay for all expenses. Will asked who was heading it up, and Alex said the e-mails were sent to him by Carroll. Bill stated he thought foreign language education might help expand our economic development. Tom suggested Daniel Bingham at HCT might be more receptive. Pat said Michele Lewis said there were no openings at Carroll, and Pat asked if workers' compensation might be needed, etc. Matt asked if private schools might be more willing and flexible due to lack of government involvement. Pat suggested we draft a letter informing HCT and private schools asking for a brainstorming effort—perhaps at our April meeting—of how to make this work. Bill suggested maybe we could cobble support from state, local and federal entities—and maybe the City of Helena would appreciate the opportunity to start this program. Will asked if this would start in September, and Alex said he assumed so. Alex suggested possibly the elementary schools/middle schools might be interested, and Matt suggested sending the letter to school district administrators and principals. Bill and Tom said a Japanese teacher was involved at the middle schools a while back, funded by Kumamoto Plaza and the state. The Front Street Learning Center is another possibility. Tom said he would mention it to the Center

Appreciation for Kiyō Pat gave a certificate of appreciation to Kiyō, who is going back to Japan. Kiyō stated he enjoyed the meetings and living here, and appreciated HIAC's help.

Josh DeWeese farewell Pat stated she would ask Josh to submit a letter of resignation, as she understands he is no longer in Helena.

Guests—Charlena was introduced.

Brochures—Pat agreed with Carla's e-mail suggestion that we not fold the brochures. Will noted Action's quote included the folding. Will recommended Action for 500 copies and, if they can't read the disk, we would work that out. Matt seconded. Motion carried.

Taiwan Bill stated Rotary International Committee has not met since HIAC's last meeting, but Bill had met with Robert Chen, director of Taipei Cultural and

Economic Dev. Office, and his colleague. They raised the issue of a partnership city, and mentioned they were struggling with that concept internally. Bill didn't comment, other than to say HIAC was still interested—so that door is still open. Pat said that Bill once had suggested that we see if the City would contribute with the State (kind of a co-op deal). Bill thinks it would be a good cooperative deal—to get Montana's Taiwan representative more space, etc. Bill had not talked to Mark Bisom. Pat asked how many people/businesses in Helena might be using Mei Mei's trade assistance, and Bill said he did not know, but thought it was a handful, with potential for much more.

Canada Counsel General from U.S. in Calgary representing Alberta, Saskatchewan and NW Territories, Tom Hoofacre, has been here in MT in response to Canadian interest in state. Bill, Mark and Tom H. discussed energy issues, transmission lines, carbon sequestration—from various coal liquefaction/gasification processes and what's going on in Canada, and movement of personnel across the border (immigration issues, etc.). Unusual for CG to come to Montana, so shows heightened interest in energy development. Also, Michael Fine from Canada Consul office in Denver came here earlier. Cooperative partnerships might be something for the future—for both Alberta and Taiwan. Alex asked about MT-Cuba trade. Bill said Sen. Max Baucus has had trade missions there—but it's still an open question. Alex said a couple years ago, MT sold grain to Cuba, approximately \$214 million. Pat thought this occurred before President Bush said no more relations with Cuba.

Argentina Alex reported that Carroll College hosted Christian Huy, from Argentina, who is on a Fulbright with the US Senate. Senor Huy compared senates of U.S., Venezuela, Nicaragua, Ecuador, and Argentina and spoke and attended classes.

Venezuela Alex said tonight at Carroll College, a U.S. delegation who was in Venezuela at the time of President Chavez' election will report on their observations and comment on the situation in Venezuela. Alex also said he had sent a list to Pat of upcoming events at Carroll, and Pat said she had forwarded it. Every other Thursday, Carroll is hosting films (3 or 4 left) in the old science building at 7 pm, and a professor will come to speak. The international fair is on Sunday, March 25--\$3 admission. Pat said we want to coordinate with this fair in the future. On the 22nd, there will be an Aikido demonstration at 11:30 a.m.

Incoming delegations—Tom said a group from UM is coming next Thursday, but Kumamoto Plaza has a conflict, going to Billings. Effie Koehn from UM FSSS (foreign students) will be in town to visit the Legislature.

April 4, the Nagata family will come in for a brief visit before Kiyoko returns to Japan. Pat and Tom urged Kiyoko to have the Legislature recognize them, and possibly the new director, as visitors.

Alex asked about the web page. Pat said Jeff Van Tyne had suggested we use a server for emails—but the page is currently done by the City.

Meeting adjourned at 6:30.