



CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

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CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

Meeting: June 15, 2021

Subject

Friendship City Applications

Recommended Action

Approve a new Friendship City relationship with New Taipei City and renew relationships with Tongxiang and Xianning.

Discussion

The Cupertino City Council established its Friendship City program in September 2016. Although less formal than a Sister City relationship, a Friendship City relationship is an additional way to foster international cooperation at a local level.

The Friendship City relationships between Cupertino and the affiliate cities are coordinated and managed by local committees of community members. These committees maintain communication with the affiliate city, while coordinating and implementing activities related to the Friendship City Program.

New Relationship

The City has received a formal request from New Taipei City, Taiwan (Republic of China) to establish a Friendship City relationship. The request is sponsored by Cupertino Mayor Darcy Paul and New Taipei City Mayor Hou Yu-Ih. A committee has been established and includes Committee Chair Jerry Liu, Committee Vice Chair and Secretary Angela Chen and Committee Vice Chair and Treasurer Sharon Lee.

The committee's formal application is listed as Attachment C.

Relationship Renewals

The City currently has five active Friendship City relationships, including two renewals. Three relationships are set to expire in July. The City reached out to the presidents of these committees to inquire about renewing. Two who responded with applications for renewal:

- Tongxiang, People's Republic of China
- Xianning, People's Republic of China

The Policies and Guidelines on Sister Cities, Friendship Cities, and International Delegations states that Councilmembers should review the following as part of the renewal process:

- Intent to renew letter from Friendship City official on official letterhead.
- Summary of Friendship City delegation visits to Cupertino hosted by the Committee over the last two years.
- Summary of Cupertino delegation visits hosted by the Friendship City.
- Description of activities held and outcomes.
- How the relationship has been mutually beneficial for Cupertino and the friendship community.
- An updated profile of the Friendship City Committee.

Activity Summaries

Tongxiang

In September 2019, former Mayor Steven Scharf and Committee President Angela Chen and Co-President Wendy Yang of the Cupertino-Tongxiang Friendship City Association visited Tongxiang City and attended Tongxiang City's annual international Economic and Trade Convention.

In the beginning of the California shelter-in-place orders, there was a shortage of face masks worldwide. Tongxiang City was experiencing severe attack by the pandemic and a serious shortage of supply of protective gear, but they immediately sent a box of masks to the Friendship City Association to ensure the Association members were adequately protected. Throughout 2020, Tongxiang staff and Friendship City Association members held monthly discussions online to update each other of the latest city information and plan future activities while waiting for the travel restrictions to be lifted.

The committee's formal application is listed as Attachment D.

Xianning

In September 2019, Vice Mayor Liu Fuxing led a delegation to visit the City and donated 50 simplified Chinese books introducing Chinese culture and celebrities to the Cupertino Library. In October 2019, Cupertino City Councilmember Darcy Paul and Xianning City Representative Song Min in California were invited to attend the 2019 "Belt & Road" International Tea Industry Development Forum and the Fifth China Tea Industry Conference. Wang Fanfei, then Vice Mayor, met with the delegation.

In February 2020, as the COVID-19 epidemic raged, Cupertino Mayor Steven Scharf sent a letter of condolence to Mayor Wang Yuanhe, saying, "As a sister city of Xianning, we will always be a strong supporter of the innocent people who have been tragically affected by this outbreak. We will always be with you through thick and thin." In May 2020, Mr. Song Min, the Representative of Xianning City to California and President of Cupertino - Xianning Sister City Association, donated 600 pieces of N95 masks to the

City of Cupertino on behalf of Xianning Municipal People's Government to support the fight against COVID-19.

The committee's formal application is listed as Attachment E.

Conclusion

The full applications are attached. Staff requested that Friendship City representatives attend the June 15, 2021 meeting to answer questions from Councilmembers. If approved, these Friendship City relationships would last for two years and expire in June 2023. They would be subject for renewal by the City Council at that time.

Fiscal Impact

The *Policies and Guidelines on Sister Cities, Friendship Cities, and International Delegations* states that each member of a delegation can receive a gift that shall not exceed \$25. There is staff time involved with the preparation of gifts and folders, presentations, and tours.

Prepared by: Brian Babcock, Communications Officer

Approved for Submission by: Dianne Thompson, Assistant City Manager

Attachments:

A – *Policies and Guidelines on Sister Cities, Friendship Cities, and International Delegations*

B – Cupertino Friendship Cities List

C – New Taipei City Application

D – Tongxiang Committee Activity Report

E – Xianning Committee Activity Report