

Minutes of the Meeting
Sparta, New Jersey Sister City Committee
Sparta Town Hall, Sparta, NJ
January 27, 2025

Presiding: Councilman Dan Chiariello

Secretary: Councilman Dan Chiariello

Present Constituting a Quorum:

- Andrew Buchanan, Sparta school district representative
- Dan Chiariello, municipal council representative
- Police Chief Jeff McCarrick
- Stella Trikouros, member of the public

Convening

Sparta Municipal Council liaison Dan Chiariello convened the public meeting at 7:00 pm, and seeing there was a quorum, the meeting of January 27, 2025, was called to order.

Discussion Summary

The meeting minutes from December 16, 2024 were unanimously approved.

With more than a year and a half before the 2026 conference, the committee decided we should focus our efforts on those tasks that require a lot of lead time. These include:

1. Contact other municipalities named ‘Sparta’. Dan and former mayor Chris Quinn will own that task.
2. Contact other universities: Several organizations had already been identified in the plan, for which we have also named a primary task owner, someone from the committee who already has ties to the organization.
3. Andrew has begun to engage leaders at Sparta High School who have expressed their support. Some tasks that may require a lot of lead time are:
 - a. Securing the auditorium for the conference
 - b. Securing use of the cafeteria and seating area for the conference
 - c. Scheduling a home football game for the Friday before the event
 - d. Engaging with the media group on audio and video productions
 - e. Engaging with the marching band
4. Contact other high schools, including those in Sparta (Pope John, Sussex Vo-Tech) and other Sussex County schools who may have an interest in the event.
5. We believe Zenon can help us begin to socialize this event with Greek cultural organizations.
6. Jeff spoke with Tammy Horsfield of the Sussex County Chamber of Commerce. We will invite her (her organization) to a future meeting. The Chamber may help us get businesses in the County involved. The Chamber may also help us with options for lodging.

7. We will also begin to contact other entities bearing the name of “Sparta”, such as businesses and universities. Andrew has already contacted a Scottish soccer club with that name. There are other, large clubs named after Sparta, including Sparta Prague and Sparta Rotterdam.
8. Dan will work with the Business Development Committee to determine if and how local Sparta NJ businesses would like to participate.
9. Dan will discuss opportunities for grants with the town manager.
10. We should make arrangements with the Lake Mohawk Country Club soon for a township-sponsored lunch/dinner on the Friday before the conference. Dan will contact the Club.
11. It may be helpful to reach out to public television to learn if there is interest in covering the event and the work leading up to it.

We want to solicit from each “Sparta” organization a statement describing why they have chosen “Sparta” and what significance that holds for the organization. We would like to collect written responses, but also a brief audio-video response if they are willing to provide that. We will craft a “template” that may be used as we reach out to organizations.

Several questions were raised concerning the translation services. We assume that the Sparta Institute will provide the translators. We also need to understand how to secure the required hardware. We will include this topic in a future discussion with the combined team from Greece.

We discussed options for housing. These include:

1. The Sussex County Chamber of Commerce may want to take the lead on making those arrangements.
2. Some people may offer a place to stay in their homes.
3. The bed-and-breakfast may be opening again in Sparta.

We discussed options for transportation. Transportation to and from the hotels will depend on what we decide on for lodging. We believe the recreation department can offer vans for transportation around Sparta, including between the High School and downtown area.

Some options for the location of the festival were discussed. The decision will ultimately rest with Chief McCarrick and the town manager based on traffic, safety, and facilities.

The committee is unsure of how many attendees to expect. We may ask people to pre-register to provide a sense of how many may come. As we engage with the Greek cultural organizations we can ask them about what experiences they have in attendance for events they hold.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm.