

ARTICLE 141

Sister City Commission

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141.01 PURPOSE, ESTABLISHMENT.

In order to celebrate shared history and create opportunities for cross-cultural collaboration, the Sister City Commission of the City of Bethlehem is hereby established. The City of Bethlehem has established six (6) Sister Cities: Tondabayashi, Japan (1972), Schwäbisch Gmünd in Baden-Württemberg, Germany (1991), Murska Sobota, Slovenia (1996), Corfu, Greece (2013), Foiano di Val Fortore, Italy (2018), and Patillas, Puerto Rico (2024). Each Sister City shall have its own committee, with flexibility to design its own mission and goals.

141.02 APPOINTMENT, TERM AND VACANCY.

The Sister City Commission of the City of Bethlehem is to be composed of no more than two (2) members from each of the six (6) recognized Sister Cities, to be appointed by the Mayor subject to the approval and confirmation of Council, and who shall serve without compensation. All appointments shall be for three-year terms. Any vacancy shall be filled for the unexpired term in the same manner as original appointments. The commission may meet as needed in accordance with the Sunshine Act.

141.03 DUTIES AND PROCEDURES.

To establish a new sister city relationship, an agreement between administrations of both the City of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania and the new city should be signed and be publicly announced. Once established, it is recommended that each Sister City committee establish by-laws, craft a mission statement, elect officers, hold regularly scheduled meetings, create an IRS approved non-profit in order to conduct business operations for the activities it intends to pursue.

141.04 SELF-SUSTAINING OPERATIONS.

Sister City Committees are intended to be self-sustaining with regard to staffing, planning, and financing activities it chooses to engage and pursuit. In the case a Sister City intends to request funding from the City budget to support its mission, it will be required to submit a bank account statement, annual budget, and proposal letter describing use(s) for the funding, to the Mayor's office, before the Labor Day holiday.

SECTION 2. That all ordinances and sections thereof that are inconsistent with this Ordinance are hereby repealed.

(Ord. 2025-17. Passed 4/3/25.)