

Minutes of the Meeting  
Sparta, New Jersey Sister City Committee  
Sparta Town Hall, Sparta, NJ  
October 21, 2024

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 McCarrik
- Kurt Morris, Board of Education president
- Stella Trikouros

Convening

Sparta Municipal Council liaison Dan Chiariello convened the public meeting at 7:00 p.m, and seeing there was a quorum, the meeting of October 21, 2024, was called to order.

Discussion Summary

Prospective/Proposed dates for the 2026 Conference:

1. The Sparta Institute asked us to consider whether we hold one combined event for both the academic conference and the “Sparta Network” gathering.
2. The committee believes that a single event over two or three days is preferable.
3. The committee considered different ranges of dates during the year and concluded the best option is to hold the conference at the end of September or the first half of October.
4. Holding the event over the Columbus Day weekend, October 10-11-12, is probably best. It offers a three-day event or a rain date if one is needed.

Proposed activities and events:

1. The academic presentations would be at Sparta High School. We want very much to hold the events in Sparta, New Jersey.
2. The presentations would be held over five blocks of time:
  - a. One day (first or second day): one in the morning and one in the early afternoon
  - b. Other day (first or second day): one in the morning, one in the early afternoon, and another in the late afternoon after a break
3. Academic theme:
  - a. Two themes were proposed:
    - i. “Why Sparta?” This is an exploration of ancient Sparta’s cultural projection in the world; why people are drawn to Sparta’s history.
    - ii. Evolution of democratic principles found in ancient Spartan law, and their influence in modern democracies
  - b. The committee feels that both themes can be explored at the same event.

- c. A discussion of democratic foundation is particularly topical given that we will be celebrating the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the United States in 2026.
- d. While the nature of the conference is academic, we should be mindful of what representatives from “other Sparta’s” would want to engage with and listen to. Many would be making a long trip, and we should make it engaging for an audience that may not be as deeply “academic” as what past conferences have served.
- 4. One day would feature a street fair in late afternoon and evening. This would include food, music and other art, vendor and other presenter booths, etc.
  - a. Each Sparta municipality/organization should have a booth.
  - b. The arts should be prominently represented.
- 5. Several sports activities were proposed.
  - a. We would like to see a home Sparta High School football game on the Friday night before the event. We could recognize honored guests at the game.
  - b. We could explore whether other towns (Sparta’s) involved may want to send club sports teams to participate in exhibition games.

Speakers, Organizers, Participants, and Guests:

- 1. The Sparta Institute will likely take the lead on setting the academic agenda and lining up lecturers.
- 2. The “New Jersey committee” can be the liaisons to local colleges and universities who may want to participate.
  - a. Any participating college or university would first be approved by the Sparta Institute.
  - b. These may include Drew University, Rutgers University, Sussex County Community College, and others.
- 3. We need a plan to contact other Sparta municipalities.
  - a. Dan has already stated this.
  - b. We may consider contacting the school districts of Sparta municipalities.
- 4. We need a plan to contact other Sparta organizations, including universities, businesses, and others.
- 5. We will need a plan to contact local Greek organizations. These include:
  - a. Daughters of Penelope
  - b. Hellenic Foundation
  - c. Local Greek churches
- 6. Dan will work with the New Jersey State Department to solicit participation from elected officials and other dignitaries.
- 7. Sparta NJ judge Paris Eliades may be able to help as he has contacts in the local Greek community.
- 8. We need a plan to identify volunteers to help with the event.

Next Steps:

- 1. The most immediate need is to lock in the dates so they may be socialized.
- 2. We should plan on meeting monthly until our planning becomes more mature.

3. We will meet on the third Monday of the month. Our next meeting will be Monday, November 18 at 7:00 pm in the Town Hall.