

**Public Comment Letter by Steven Lemmon.
Read to Sister City Board at 12/6/23 Meeting.**

"Dear Members of the Board,

I write to you on behalf of our shared commitment to the success and integrity of the Sister Cities program in Salt Lake.

In light of recent discussions regarding proposed changes to the Bylaws allowing members to miss more than 25% of meetings, we respectfully urge each member to consider the potential ramifications of such modifications. We strongly advocate for a stance that avoids any perception of imperiousness or desire for self-preservation of the Board as a body unto itself. Consequently, we kindly request your support in voting against this proposed Bylaws amendment.

During recent travels to several countries, it has been dismaying to learn that many people who have even heard of Salt Lake mainly associate us with the Olympic Scandal which made international news. In the face of this, it is doubly imperative that we take proactive measures to reshape this image rather than inadvertently contributing to a situation that, if amplified by the media, could further tarnish our standing. The recent decision to amend rules, permitting board members with more than a 25% meeting absenteeism to retain their positions, raises concerns regarding potential self-dealing. This scenario may allow individuals to maintain their roles, potentially impeding opportunities for others eager to contribute. Such actions could be perceived as prioritizing personal interests over our fiduciary to the public, posing a risk to the integrity and effectiveness of the board.

In addition, we address those members who have regrettably exceeded the stipulated attendance threshold of 25% (Sherri Sorensen, Olga Efimova, Missy Greis). While acknowledging the valuable contributions each member has made to the Sister Cities board, we firmly request that those who have surpassed this attendance limit step down. This gesture would not only uphold the principles of commitment and dedication to our collective cause but would also create opportunities for individuals eager to devote their time and energy to further elevate the Sister Cities board.

Our primary focus needs to re-center on identifying the desires of Salt Lakers and our sister cities abroad regarding exchanges and effectively supporting and facilitating these initiatives.

In our annual report to the mayor, we should be able to proudly state that due to our facilitating of all kinds of exchanges and removal of barriers, we've established 50 new thriving connections between our citizens and those of our Sister Cities. This stands in contrast to spending significant board time on initiatives like rewriting bylaws the public

and shortening meeting times. Our primary goal is clear: we exist to remove roadblocks to Sister Cities involvement, not to create more obstacles. The emphasis should remain on the tangible outcomes of increased connections and meaningful collaborations rather than bureaucratic measures that could impede community engagement.

Yours faithfully,

Steven Lemmon

Founding curator, Peace Gardens International Academy: A Salt Lake City recognized
Community Organization"