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"City of Heze, Friendship Agreement Proposal."

Mayor. Cr Lara Carli.
Melton City Council.

c.c. C.E.O. Kelvin Tori
c.c. Sean McManus
c.c. Cr. Sophia Ramsey
c.c. Cr. Bob Turner
c.c. Cr. Ken Hardy.

Mayor L. Carli:

Following a discussion with Mr Sean McManus, (of Melton City Council) late November 2019, it is my understanding that said proposal and his recommendations will be presented back to council in the first quarter of 2020 (March), as such, I take the opportunity to outline briefly the process to date.

In October, 2016, I was requested to approach Ex-Mayor Cr. Sophia Ramsey and present a proposal of interest, including a meeting with representatives from the Province of Shandong to discuss a relationship arrangement between the City of Melton and a compatible city in China.

In December, 2016, an informal luncheon meeting was arranged, between Maria Yang, Mr Duncan Tang, (representing Shandong Province Business & Traders Association), and Myself, with Cr. Sophia Ramsey & Cr. Ken Hardy to discuss said concept, from said discussion an interest was expressed in exploring further said concept.

That night Cr Ken Hardy attended a trade delegation dinner from Shandong and met with the Deputy Mayor of "The City of Heze", from the mutual interest which was expressed regarding said concept, the Deputy Mayor requested we investigate further some form of arrangement with Melton City Council.

In March 2017, following a formal request from the City of Heze to R.C. & C.C. Jackson Consultants, I approached Cr Sophia Ramsey and obtained a "Letter of Invitation" for Mr Ma, (Director of Heze Foreign and Overseas Chinese Affairs Office) plus seven other members of the delegation, representing the City of Heze & Local Business People.

Said delegation meeting was held on 14th June, 2017 at Melton Council Chambers, in attendance was Cr. Sophia Ramsey, C.E.O Kelvin Tori & two other council administration members, (included also was Maria Yang, Duncan Tang & Myself), at said meeting matters of mutual interest were discussed, due consideration was expressed by Melton Council and further investigation would be considered and undertaken, with Maria Yang & Duncan Tang to follow up and present a proposal.

Following a breakdown within the Shandong Representatives, I (Russ Jackson,) was invited to the City of Heze, China, (September 2018) and following several meetings and discussions, was issued with a "Letter of Entrustment" (dated, September, 2018) and requested to undertake further contact with Melton City Council for the purpose of reopening discussions in regards to forming an agreement of relationship.



In October, 2018, a formal "Proposal for Consideration" was submitted to Ex-Mayor Bob Turner, outlining and covering said "Letter of Entrustment" plus a "Friendship Agreement Proposal", these covered matters of mutual interest and concerns which would form the bases of said agreement, cost liabilities and absorbed by current departments, general benefits to both parties plus an invitation from the City of Heze, (which included), covering **all land based costs within China** (Accommodation, Meals, transport Etc) should Melton Council Representative's accept said invitation.

January & February 2019, I had ongoing brief discussions with Mayor Cr Bob Turner, outlining my brief and covering the aspects of undertaking and reopening discussions, following a favourable but non-committal response, I indicated steps would be taken to arrange a formal delegation from the City of Heze, subject too and following said proposal being submitted to council.

Said "Friendship Proposal Agreement" was presented to Melton City Council at its general meeting on 24th, April, 2019, along with comments from the respective department within Melton council, two motions were indicated by Cr Ken Hardy & Cr Sophia Ramsey, (Compatibility & Value of such a relationship) plus also there was a request to investigate the North Link Model as a comparison. (to-date, to my understanding, there has been no follow up or information as such been resubmitted to councillors to said motions for comment or voting)

On the 28th, June, 2019, a delegation of five members representing the City of Heze, including Mr Ma, (Director of Foreign Affairs) and the Mayor of Heze City, met with Mayor Bob Turner, C.E.O. Kelvin Tori, plus three other Melton Council administration members. A formal and visual presentation covering the City of Heze was undertaken, points relating to compatibility were discussed and tabled covering such issues as Waste Disposal & Recycling, (facing both developing cities), family violence, discrimination, child welfare and community values and expectations, to name but a few. It was expressed by C.E.O. Kelvin Tori, that said presentation would be taken into consideration and further investigation would be undertaken regarding a "Friendship Agreement Proposal", but was unable to comment as to the delay of the two motions, indicated in April's Council meeting.

If there is an opportunity, prior to the re-presentation (March 2020) to meet with yourself and obtain, discuss, any concerns relating to said "Friendship Agreement" or to discuss in anyway, matters or issues relating to the compatibility of the two cities, perceived cost involvement or beneficial values in entering into such an agreement, I would be appreciating such an opportunity.

Respectfully Yours,
Russell Jackson



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A Brief Overview and Introduction to the City of Heze.

Heze city is located in the southwest of the Province of Shandong, bordering Jiangsu, Henan and Anhui Provinces. It administers two districts, (Mudan District & Dingtao District) plus seven counties, (Caoxian, Chengwu, Shanxian, Juye, Yuncheng, Juancheng and Dongming) also one Provincial Economic Development Zone and one Provincial High-Tech Industrial Zone, covering an area of 12,239 square kilometers with a population of 10.18 million.

Heze city is known as the "Center of China" and has a long history and profound cultural heritage, has been an important political, economic and cultural center in the central plains many times.

According to the legend, tribal chiefs Yao, Shun and Yu, in ancient China lived in this area, there has also been generations of outstanding figures born in Heze: politicians, strategists, philosopher, agronomist, economist and litterateur etc., plus many historic events have happened here.

There are over 100 places of historic interest, including Emperor Qin's Summer Palace, it is also well known as the home town, of Peony, calligraphy, painting, opera, the martial arts and folk art.

Heze Peony Flower, enjoys the reputation of the finest Peony in the world, in addition to the ornamental and medical values, peony has been made for tea, seed oil, skincare products and health care products, currently Heze has become the largest base for Peony cultivation, sightseeing, research and exporter in the world.

Heze City has a superior location and perfect infrastructure. Located in the transitional zone between eastern developed areas and the central and western regions, it connects the coastal ports to the east and the hinterland of the central plains to the west, as such being one of the transportation hub cities, Heze has a very convenient traffic system.

The Beijing-Kowloon Railway and the new Yan-Shi railway meet here, currently under construction is the Heze-Qufu express-railway, Peony Airport (Heze) is expected to be completed early 2020. Heze has achieved direct access to Qingdao port, with customs, inspection, container transport and other foreign related institutions completed.

Heze is rich in resources, underground minerals include coal reserve of 28 billion ton, petrol and gas reserve respectively 56.25 million tons and 27.3 trillion cubic meters, based on its good industrial foundation, it has formed a working system that focuses on the production of electric power, machinery, chemical, medical, food, textile and forest products.

** The City of Heze has achieved rapid economic and social development in recent years, however like most councils it's awareness of the communities needs and expectations is a key priority, the demand for better social support in the areas of family violence, health and safety issues, youth expectations and care for the elderly, daycare services and the introduction of a multicultural growth as such, via the exchange of ideas, methods and constructive suggestions, much can be gained through a "Friendship Agreement".

** The exchange, based on mutual respect of understanding and acceptance of cultural differences, through exchange students, social and welfare groups, business people, interaction between council and the community can be beneficial to both cities, the growing concern over waste disposal and recycling and importantly environmental awareness would be one of the key issues for comparison and evaluation.

** The comparison, understanding of how council connects with it's community, the establishment and interaction of council with social welfare organizations, including but not limited to: family violence, drug abuse, health related groups, women in distress, welfare organizations plus council handling and procedures covering community concerns, disputes, restrictions, permits etc.

** Importantly there will be various ideas on community development, zoning policies and structure for industrial, commercial and domestic expansion, the requirement and expectation of services to these areas by the community and people involved, the pressure and impact on council resources to meet those demands are matters of mutual interest and concern.

MELTON City Council and the City of HEZE, currently both are going through expansion programs often involving 3,5 or 10 year forward planning, some are effected by government, council and or local investment, common to both cities, as such, through a process of exchange of ideas, concepts, options, new methods or procedures discussed during delegation visitations or from a request of information by council to council staff or members, ideas, knowledge etc., can be beneficial to both through said "Friendship Agreement"

The City of Heze and myself (Russ Jackson) would be happy to answer any addition questions or obtain additional information that may be of mutual benefit and would contribute towards the forthcoming presentation and recommendation to the City of Melton Council.

Shandong Province is located in the northern part of China, the City of Heze is a hub city, connecting major rail and express highway's to central China. It is approx. 598 klm, (7 hrs by car, 45 minutes by air) from the Capital of China, BEIJING.

It is approx.: 652 klm for Shanghai, so is centrally located.

International travelers would fly direct by air via Hong Kong or Shanghai or Beijing, then catch a domestic flight to "Jining Qufu Airport" (approx. 120 klm from Heze) coach or car 90 minutes.

A new domestic Heze Airport "Peony Airport" will be completed early 2020.

International Council Relationships.

As a point of general interest only, there are currently 49 Victorian Councils who have undertaken "Friendship Agreements or Sister City Agreements", of these, several have more than one overseas agreement, involving different countries.

(As listed in the "Sister Cities Directory" 2019)

Listed below are the major overseas countries with an agreement with a Victorian Council;

Peoples Republic of China:	26	Agreements
Japan:	18	" "
United States of America:	20	" "
United Kingdom:	14	" "
Greece:	6	" "
Canada:	6	" "

An additional 14 other countries, such as: Italy, Germany, Philippines, Turkey, East Timor, France, Malta, Etc, vary between one or two agreements each., with Victorian Councils.

Most Councils consider first entering into some form of "Friendship Agreement", then following an agreed period of time and the evaluation of said agreement, some councils may remain as a "Friendship" status, (or terminate by mutual agreement) while others will undertake a "Sister City Relationship Agreement."

Normally a "Sister City Agreement" is more commercially or Investment driven undertaking.