

**International Affairs Coordinating Council (IACC)  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, January 21, 2025**

Location: Fink Studio  
2506 Ponce de León Blvd., Coral Gables, Florida

Members:	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Commissioners
<b>Olga Ramudo</b>	P												Mayor Vince Lago
<b>Vicky Rua</b>	P												Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson
<b>Vacancy</b>	-												Comm. Kirk Menendez
<b>Raoul Cantero</b>	A												Comm. Ariel Fernandez
<b>Richard Montes de Oca</b>	P												Comm. Melissa Castro
<b>Ilsa Danielson</b>	P												Alberto Parjus
<b>Vacancy</b>	-												Council-at-Large Appointment

A = Absent P = Present E = Excused UA = Unexcused Absence X = No Meeting F = Former Member

The International Affairs Coordinating Council (IACC) meeting was called to order at 4:09 p.m. Chair Olga Ramudo welcomed everyone to the committee.

**Approval of the Minutes**

A motion to approve the minutes from December 16th, 2024, IACC meeting was made by Board member Victoria Rua and Vice Chair Richard Montes de Oca seconded the motion which was passed unanimously.

**COUNTRY REPORT**

**SEVILLA, SPAIN**

- Chair Ramudo gave updates on the upcoming Feria de Sevilla in Coral Gables. The event will take place in Alhambra Circle in Coral Gables with full support and unanimous approval from the Commission. Approximately 3,000 attendees are expected. The Feria will feature traditional Spanish casetas, hosted by corporations, flamenco classes, sevillanas attire, Spanish food and horse riding. The event is scheduled to begin on March 5<sup>th</sup> with “El Mercadito” at the Biltmore and will culminate on March 8<sup>th</sup>. Tickets are available for purchase for the March 8<sup>th</sup> event while the remaining activities will be by invitation only.  
Mrs. Belkys Perez added that event promotion includes details on the City’s Wednesday e-newsletter, posters by a local artist displayed in Kiosks, and collaboration with media outlets.

Concerns were raised about the event's impact on local businesses along Alhambra Circle due to the placement of casetas. Businesses like Demetrio, Chase, and The Globe may face access challenges. Organizers were urged to collaborate with these businesses, providing signage and solutions to mitigate disruptions.

Mrs. Belkys Perez also mentioned that the Feria de Sevilla has an active Instagram presence which was noted as a positive promotional tool.

Key follow-ups include ensuring continued promotion through multiple channels and addressing logistical concerns with affected businesses.

## AIX-EN-PROVENCE, FRANCE

- Belkys Perez provided the Board with updates of the upcoming French Month and Aix-en-Provence delegation visit.

Posters for promotion are expected this week. Family Day on February 8<sup>th</sup> will feature French-inspired art activities and workshops at the Coral Gables Museum, and the Art Cinema will host French movie screenings on February 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. A French Market is scheduled for February 23<sup>rd</sup> at the McBride Plaza.

Mayor Sophie Joissains and the Aix-en-Provence delegation will arrive on the night of February 24<sup>th</sup>, and will begin with their program on February 25<sup>th</sup> with a proclamation during the morning commission meeting, followed by a trolley tour of the city. Efforts are underway to secure a French-speaking guide. On the evening, a conference at the Coral Gables Museum will feature a discussion on Paul Cezanne and the impressionist movement, followed by a reception for 140 attendees. Sponsorship opportunities, including Air France, are being explored to cover event expenses. A dinner with Mayor Lago and representatives is planned for the following evening. Action items include finalizing event details, securing a guide, and arranging sponsorships.

Key events for February 27<sup>th</sup> include a meeting with Raimundo Rodulfo, Coral Gables IT Director to discuss smart city initiatives, a roundtable with the Mayor Jossains of Aix-en-Provence, to engage local tech companies, and a closing reception at Books and Books where the Sister City agreement will be re-signed, and Mayor Lago will present the key to the city.

Action items include finalizing event details, securing a guide, and arranging sponsorships.

## QUITO, ECUADOR

- Vice Chair Montes de Oca discussed the status of the Sister City relationship with Quito, Ecuador. He mentioned the lack of response from Quito, despite multiple attempts over the past two years, including a formal re-engagement letter from Mayor Lago's office. As a result, he is considering moving Quito's sister city status to emeritus, making it easier to reactivate the relationship in the future. He also would like to explore a sister city relationship with Manta, Ecuador, which had expressed interest by sending a delegation in the past.

The Board ultimately agreed to proceed with the emeritus status for Quito. **Vice Chair Montes de Oca made a motion to designate Quito as a sister city in emeritus status until further notice,**

pending verification that no response had been received from the Quito Mayor's office. **Board member Rua seconded, and all members voted in favor.**

#### OPEN DISCUSSION

- The board discussed the election of the Board as a Whole, highlighting the need for candidates with strong knowledge of international affairs and Sister City relations. While a candidate with a real estate background was suggested, the council agreed that experience with international affairs would be more beneficial. Resumes will be collected, and a vote will take place at the next meeting.
- The Sister City fund was briefly discussed with updates to be reviewed at the next meeting. Additionally procedural matters regarding the City's election process for the Board as a Whole were clarified, confirming that the City Clerk's office involvement is not required. Further details will be addressed in future meetings.
- The Board considered new partnerships, focusing on Mexico and Guatemala. San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, was noted for its artisan community and potential collaborations on Miracle Mile. La Antigua, Guatemala, was recognized for its cultural and artistic significance, and follow-up with Natalia Samayoa, Trade Commissioner, who is working with Guatemalan officials, was planned.
- Updates on Santa Tecla, El Salvador, and San Isidro, Argentina, were reviewed. Members agreed to confirm if responses to previous correspondence had been received, with additional follow-up needed for San Isidro.
- Potential sister cities must show genuine interest, align with Coral Gables' values, and offer mutual benefits. The Board will verify responses from Quito, Santa Tecla, and San Isidro, pursue reengagement with La Antigua, and assess San Miguel de Allende. Other Latin American cities will also be explored.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned.

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Respectfully submitted,  
Leticia Perez  
International Business Development Representative  
Economic Development Department  
City of Coral Gables