



International Affairs Coordinating Council (IACC)
 Meeting Minutes
 Wednesday, February 28, 2024

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

Members:	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Commissioners
Olga Ramudo	P	A											Mayor Vince Lago
Vicky Rua	P	P											Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson
Sadia M. Raja	P	P											Comm. Kirk Menendez
Raoul Cantero	P	P											Comm. Ariel Fernandez
Richard Montes de Oca	P	A											Comm. Melissa Castro
Alejandra Collarte	E	P											Peter Iglesias, City Manager
Rafael Gavarrete	E	P											Council-at-Large Appointment

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

The International Affairs Coordinating Council (IACC) meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m. Mr. Rafael Gavarrete welcomed everyone to the committee and led today’s meeting as the acting Chair.

Approval of the Minutes (August 21, 2023; October 23, 2023; January 22, 2024)

A motion to approve the minutes of August 21, 2023; October 23, 2023, and January 22, 2024, was made by Board member Vicky Rua. Board member Alejandra Collarte seconded the motion which was passed unanimously.

Excused Board Members’ Absence (January 22, 2024)

Board member Rua made a motion to excuse Rafael Gavarrete and Alejandra Collarte. Raoul Cantero seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Excused Board Members’ Absences (September 2023 & November 2023 Meetings)

Board member Cantero made a motion to excuse Alejandra Collarte and Victoria Rua. Mr. Rafael Gavarrete seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Board member Rua made a motion to excuse Raoul Cantero from the September 2023 IACC meeting. Alejandra Collarte seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

COUNTRY REPORT

SANTA TECLA, EL SALVADOR

Board member Gavarrete informed the Board that El Salvador is merging 240 municipalities into 80 municipalities. Santa Tecla will become a city and no longer will be a municipality. After going through a presidential election recently, El Salvador will soon go through the election process for Mayors. Board member Gavarrete plans to contact the new Mayor of Santa Tecla as soon as they are elected.

LA ANTIGUA, GUATEMALA

Board member Gavarrete reported that on January 15, 2024, Mr. Juan Manuel Asturias was sworn in as the new Mayor of La Antigua, Guatemala. Board member Gavarrete will be contacting Mayor Lago's office to request a welcome letter to be sent to Mr. Asturias.

AIX-EN-PROVENCE, FRANCE

Board member Rua reported that the City of Aix-en-Provence (AEP) has invited Mayor Lago to go to the Olympic Torch event they are having in Aix in May. She added that Mayor Lago would be taking with him two athletes from the University of Miami. She also met with Elvis at the Coral Gables Museum to see if they both can coordinate some type of architectural presentation for the 2025 Coral Gables Centennial. She informed the members that AEP had a big expansion in the 1980's and 1990's, she is trying to find out if they can find a presentation within the AEP Universities and or the city regarding this expansion that they can showcase at the Coral Gables Museum.

Board member Rua announced that in 2025, Aix-en-Provence is planning a big event with different museums loaning art from Cezanne. She added that Elvis knows a professor that has a book about Cezanne, perhaps he can come to Coral Gables for a lecture series or conference regarding this great French artist.

CARTAGENA, COLOMBIA

Board member Cantero reported that he has been in contact with the office of the Mayor in Cartagena regarding a fire fighter training request with the City of Coral Gables Fire Department (CGFD). He added that he is waiting for the approval from Cartagena for these fire fighters to travel to Coral Gables to receive training.

Ms. Leticia Perez added that she spoke to Deputy Fire Chief Gilberto Hernandez at the CGFD regarding this request and later sent an email with a preliminary 1-week program to train 4-5 fire fighters. She then forwarded the preliminary 1-week program to the representative of the International Cooperation in Cartagena, who is assisting with the coordination of this training from Cartagena.

STELLENBOSCH, SOUTH AFRICA

Board member Sadia Raja reported that she received a response back from the municipality secretary regarding their registration with Sister City International (SCI). They are working on the registration process and will advise as soon as it's complete. Apparently, the budget was approved, they now need to send the final payment to SCI. She added that once the payment goes through, and she receives notification from SCI she will then get an official letter from Mayor Lago.

SAN ISIDRO, ARGENTINA

Board member Collarte reported that Argentina has a new President, Javier Milei, who has an approval of 57%. She announced that the new administration has been able to fund the Central Bank in Argentina which was in the red. She has been trying to contact Mayor Ramon Lanus but has not been able to reach him. She will try to call him again to find out if he is interested in connecting and continuing a Sister City relationship with Coral Gables.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned.

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