

CORAL GABLES

THE CITY BEAUTIFUL

International Affairs Coordinating Council (IACC)
Meeting Minutes
Monday, July 17, 2023

Location: City Hall Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL 33134

Members:	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Commissioners
Olga Ramudo							P						Mayor Vince Lago
Vicky Rua						X	P						Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson
Sadia M. Raja						X	P						Comm. Kirk Menendez
Raoul Cantero						X	A						Comm. Ariel Fernandez
Richard Montes de Oca						X	P						Comm. Melissa Castro
Alejandra Collarte						X	A						Peter Iglesias, City Manager
Rafael Gavarrete						X	A						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 4:10 p.m.

Mr. Richard Montes de Oca welcomed everyone to the committee and led today’s meeting as the acting Chair. Incoming and standing committee members as well as city staff introduced themselves.

Mrs. Belkys Perez went over the new member orientation guidelines which included the mission and objectives of the IACC.

Mrs. Perez suggested to hold off from selecting a chairperson until there was a full committee present (7) since only 4 members were participating today.

- IACC Meeting minutes of May 15, 2023: The minutes were deferred to the next Committee meeting.
- Acting Chair Mr. Montes de Oca invited Mr. Volker Anding, an immediate past IACC member, to the podium to provide a brief presentation about the Sister City relationship between Coral Gables and Aix-en-Provence.

COUNTRY REPORTS

- **AIX-EN-PROVENCE, FRANCE - A SISTER CITY RECAP BY MR. VOLKER ANDING**

Mr. Anding introduced himself and provided some background information on his role with the IACC. He was the representative for the City's sister cities relationship with Aix-en-Provence.

Mr. Anding was working on request made by his Aix-en-Provence counterpart, who suggested connecting the University of Miami's football team with the team from Aix-en-Provence. Mr. Anding has had several conversations with former Mayor Raul Valdes Fauli and Police Chief Ed Hudak who is also a former UM football player. All had been trying to connect the Hurricanes' coach with the coach of the Aix-en-Provence team. Unfortunately, the request was made during the COVID pandemic.

Mr. Anding says he was able to connect with the Assistant Athletic Director of UM, Jennifer Strawley, whom he met with. Mr. Anding has kept his French counterpart informed of the developments. The Argonauts, Aix-en-Provence's football team, remain interested in visiting Miami.

Mr. Anding thank Committee members with whom he had the pleasure to serve on the Committee and wished much success to the new IACC members. Acting Chair Montes de Oca, thanked Mr. Anding for his service on the IACC.

- **STELLENBOSCH, SOUTH AFRICA – A RECAP BY MR. BRETT GILLIS**

Mr. Gillis told Committee members that he was appointed to the IACC 2 years ago. He had noticed a need for more diversity and began efforts to make the City of Stellenbosch a sister city to Coral Gables.

Mr. Gillis explained that he had been recruited to another board in the city but was hoping Committee member Sadia Raja or Vicky Rua would continue the process of formally establishing the Sister Cities relationship with Stellenbosch. Stellenbosch is in the final stages of becoming a member of the Sister City International. Coral Gables would be their first Sister City.

Mr. Gillis wished everyone a very successful year.

Acting Chair Montes de Oca, thanked Mr. Gillis for his service, time, and effort in the planning of a future Sister City agreement with Stellenbosch.

- **QUITO, ECUADOR**

Acting Chair Montes de Oca told the new committee members that he was assigned to represent the City of Quito, Ecuador but he did not have any updates to report. He told the committee members that in June he was appointed Chairman of the International law section of the Florida Bar. Among his responsibilities is to enter into cooperation agreements with the Bar Associations of other countries. Mr. Montes de Oca says, as part of his chairmanship, he wanted to add Quito, Ecuador to help facilitate, expand, and move the effort to enter into the Sister City agreement.

CORAL GABLES SISTER CITIES

Acting Chair Montes de Oca asked how many Sister Cities (SC) Coral Gables has, Ms. Perez responded that there are seven Sister Cities. After some discussion among the members, some Sister Cities were assigned:

1. Sadia Raja, Stellenbosch, SOUTH AFRICA
2. Olga Ramudo, Sevilla, SPAIN
3. Vicky Rua, Aix-en-Provence, FRANCE
4. Richard Montes de Oca, Quito, ECUADOR

SISTER CITY CRITERIA

Ms. Leticia Perez briefly explained the Sister City criteria to the new members. She told them that it was important to have a list of criteria to assist and guide them when choosing a Sister City for Coral Gables. She added that she compiled some of this information reviewing criteria from other Sister Cities programs in Florida and across the US. She asked the new members to review the criteria for next meeting and to provide feedback.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned.

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