

# CORAL GABLES

THE CITY BEAUTIFUL

International Affairs Coordinating Council (IACC)

Sister Cities Committee

Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, February 28, 2022

Location: City Hall Commission Chambers

405 Biltmore Way, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Coral Gables, FL 33134

Members:	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Commissioners
Raul Valdes-Fauli	P	P											Mayor Vince Lago
Volker R. Anding	P	P											Vice Mayor Michael Mena
Brett Gillis	P	P											Comm. Rhonda Anderson
Richard Montes de Oca	P	E											Comm. Jorge L. Fors, Jr.
Carlos Hernandez	P	E											Comm. Kirk R. Menendez
Alejandra Collarte	P	A											Peter Iglesias, City Manager
Rafael Gavarrete	P	P											Council-at-Large Appointment

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

- Chairperson Valdes-Fauli welcomed everyone to the International Affairs Coordinating Council (IACC) meeting and called the meeting to order at 4:08 pm, and asked Mr. Perez, Economic Development Director to start the meeting.
- Mr. Perez introduced himself and spoke on the set agenda for today’s meeting. He informed the board members that Billy Urquia from the City Clerk’s office was invited to explain the Commission approval process for new Sister Cities Program. He then asked Chairman Chairman Valdes-Fauli to approve the minutes of the January 24, 2022, meeting.

### **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES (January 24, 2022)**

- Vice Chair Anding made a motion to approve the minutes, Mr. Gavarrete second the motion and the rest of the board members voted in favor.
- Mr. Perez shield the floor to Mr. Urquia to talk about new Siter Cities and the Commission Approval process. Mr. Urquia explained to the members that the way it works is a resolution of the board that then gets presented to the city commission by either the Chairperson or a designee of the board. The Board must present a report to the Commission supporting its Sister City recommendation. From there the commission would take action and that’s when the official process begins.

- Mr. Urquia added that this process is not only for this board that it applies to any boards in the city that is not a Quasi-Judicial Board.
- Chairperson Valdes-Fauli, informed Mr. Urquia and the board, that the committee did not have any pending Sister City, and asked Mr. Perez to give a brief report on the meeting with the representatives of the City of Cartagena. He added that Cartagena had been a Sister City with the City of Coral Gables for the last 50 years.
- Mr. Urquia stated that the last sister city that the board recommended was San Isidro, which was not a recommendation of the board but of the city commission at the time.
- Mr. Gillis made a motion that this board approach the city commission to request that Stellenbosch be established as a potential Sister City if the Coral Gables Commission and the City of Stellenbosch agree to it.
- Chairman Valdes-Fauli asked if there is a referral or a request from the City of Stellenbosch and Mr. Gillis, answered that there is none. Mr. Gillis stated that he met with Mayor Lago and said that this is the process he was supposed to go through. Chairman Valdes-Fauli reiterated it if there was any interest from Stellenbosch to establish a Sister City relation with Coral Gables.
- Mr. Gillis explained that his reasoning for making this motion was to have the Commission decide as a body. Chairman Valdes-Fauli, Vice Chair Anding and Mr. Urquia agree that before any process begins, there must be communication from the Mayor of Stellenbosch expressing his interest in Coral Gables; second, there should be a collection of facts/information on the City of Stellenbosch to present to the Commission for approval. After some discussion, Chairman Valdes-Fauli, offered himself to make the first call to the office of the Mayor of Stellenbosch.

### **COUNTRY REPORT**

#### AIX-EN-PROVENCE, FRANCE

- Vice Chair Anding, reported that Mayor Valdes-Fauli sent letters to the former Mayor and new Mayor of Aix-en-Provence on October 21<sup>st</sup> and one day after the January 24<sup>th</sup> meeting the office of the new Mayor of Aix-en-Provence sent a nice short letter to former Mayor Valdes-Fauli. Vice Chair Anding asked the Chairman for permission to read the letter to the board. On the letter, the new Mayor of Aix-en-Provence expressed her commitment to continuing the international actions that were initiated by her predecessors and assures Former Mayor Valdes-Fauli that this partnership agreement between the 2 cities will last.

#### CARTAGENA, COLOMBIA

- Mr. Perez gave a brief report on the zoom meeting with the representatives of the City of Cartagena. They are very interested in reconnecting the Sister City relationship and

pointed out that this was one of the oldest Sister Cities relationships that goes back to the 70's. He added that currently there is a new Mayor in the City of Cartagena, who is very interested in bringing back the sister city relationship. He has also developed a new program to make sure the government is transparent and ethical. The Mayor of Cartagena also expressed that he would like to put together a group that is made up of Sister Cities throughout the world to be part of this inclusive and transparent group. Lastly, the representatives of Cartagena extended an invitation to go and visit Cartagena, so we can discuss the relationship further.

- Chairman Valdes-Fauli commented that he did his due diligence on the Mayor of Cartagena and found out he is very qualified and has the most impeccable credentials. He used to be with Blackstone, a US company and has led the fight against corruption. Chairman Valdes-Fauli added that it would be very fruitful to establish a relationship with him and added that moving forward he will let the board know what the next steps will be.
- Vice Chair Anding made a comment to the board and said that there is no need for an approval of the Commission since this is an ongoing relationship.

#### LA ANTIGUA, GUATEMALA

- Mr. Gavarrete informed the board members that he spoke to Mayor del Pozo and he said that things are very quiet in La Antigua but soon things will get moving again.

#### SANTA TECLA, EL SALVADOR

- The City of Santa Tecla is still very quiet; Mr. Gavarrete will keep on trying.

#### SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA

Mr. Gavarrete told the board that presidential elections are scheduled for the end of this month, and he will wait for the next administration to take over.

#### **FOREIGN GOVERNMENT VISIT- Buenos Aires, Argentina**

- Mr. Perez, announced to the board that he had another Country report; about a week ago, Vice Chair Anding and the rest of the team met with the Secretary of Gender Equality from Buenos Aires, Argentina. She was very interested to learn about the Smart City Program (SCP) and the technology we have in the City of Coral Gables. The meeting lasted about 2 ½ hour, there was a lot of exchange of information. Secretary Marisa Bircher was very impressed and excited about all the things we were doing in Coral Gables, specifically how we are integrating all the disciplines into the SCP. Mayor Lago also joined the meeting and participated in the discussion. Overall, it was a very successful meeting.
- Vice Chair Anding added that Mr. Perez provided an excellent presentation to the group followed by Mr. Raimundo Rodulfo presentation, City's IT Director & Chief Innovation

Officer. Ms. Bircher not only was impressed but also very appreciative for a very substantial meeting.

- Mr. Perez briefed the board on the International Cultural events initiatives. He noted that Colombia is going through the special event committee process for their event and Mexico will be doing the same thing during the last quarter of FY 2022. He added that other countries may also participate. Apparently, we have learned that some of the issues that are preventing the consulates in doing these high magnitude events have to do with, needing more time to prepare and coordinate an event; new consuls come into Miami and getting adjusted and, Consulates that are preparing for new elections.
- Vice Chair Anding announced the March 22<sup>nd</sup> Cyber Security event with the consular Corps of Miami that will be hosted in the new Police Department from 10-12pm with the help of Leticia Perez. The subject matter is Cyber Security Best Practices, how to negotiate, and manage the future challenges. Raymundo Rodulfo, IT Director will be giving presentation.
- Mr. Perez added that this event will be the first one on a series of lectures. He also announced that on the last week of March the Economic Development Department will be moving to Fink Studio. As soon as we have a date you will be invited to the opening reception.
- Before the meeting was over, Mrs. Perez requested from the board a motion to excuse Richard Montes de Oca and Carlos Hernandez for not attending today's meeting. The Board approved the request unanimously.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

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