

# CORAL GABLES

THE CITY BEAUTIFUL

International Affairs Coordinating Council (IACC)  
 Sister Cities Committee  
 Committee Meeting Minutes  
 Monday, June 21, 2021  
 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
<b>Raul Valdes-Fauli</b>			-	-	-	P	-	-	-	-	-	-	Mayor Vince Lago
<b>Volker R. Anding</b>			-	-	-	P	-	-	-	-	-	-	Vice Mayor Michael Mena
<b>Brett Gillis</b>			-	-	-	P	-	-	-	-	-	-	Comm. Rhonda Anderson
<b>Richard Montes de Oca</b>			-	-	-	P	-	-	-	-	-	-	Comm. Jorge L. Fors, Jr.
<b>Carlos Hernandez</b>			-	-	-	E	-	-	-	-	-	-	Comm. Kirk R. Menendez
<b>Alejandra Collarte</b>			-	-	-	P	-	-	-	-	-	-	Peter Iglesias, City Manager
<b>Rafael Gavarrete</b>			-	-	-	P	-	-	-	-	-	-	Council-at-Large Appointment

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

## WELCOME & MISSION REMARKS

Mr. Julian H. Perez, Economic Development Director welcomed the members of the IACC and provided brief overview of the Council responsibilities. Mr. Perez, called the “Workshop” meeting to order at 3:00 p.m., and went over each item in the agenda. Ms. Imelys Sansores from the City Clerk’s Office provided an overview of the protocols and procedures for the new members and distributed the City of Coral Gables ID cards and parking passes to the members for future meetings. The following provides an overview of the Council discussions.

- Mr. Perez informed the IACC members that the Council will be reside within the Economic Development Department, and introduced Ms. Leticia Perez, as the Staff Liaison for the IACC/Sister Cities Committee. Mr. Perez informed the members that Leticia’s will be a great addition to this council because of her background and experience with the Consular Corps of Miami, International Companies and anything else that deals with foreign affairs. Additionally, Mr. Perez thanked Mayor Valdes-Fauli and the rest of the members for their participation and experience they bring to the Council. He told the members, “I think we are going to be very successful with everything we are going to do.”
- Mr. Perez briefly highlighted the scope of the IACC including a description of the Membership, Chairperson, Meeting, Quorum, Function, Annual Report, Resident Requirement and Liaison’s name and contact information. This information is available on the City of Coral Gables website. In addition, he discussed today’s election of the Committee’s Chair and Council-at-Large members.

- Ms. Imelys Sansores, from the City Clerk’s Office came before the board, introduced herself and gave the members an overview of the IACC. She explained that her office oversees the financial disclosure form, a City’s annual requirement for all the members. She also explained that new members will not get the form until next year. As mentioned above, she provided each member with parking passes, ID Cards and members’ discount list.

**SELF-INTRODUCTION**

- All IACC members introduced themselves. Mr. Valdes-Fauli appointed by Mayor Vince Lago; Mr. Gillis, appointed by Commissioner Anderson; Mr. Montes de Oca, appointed by Commissioner Fors; Mr. Hernandez, appointed by Commissioner Menendez.
- Ms. Leticia Perez introduced herself as the new Staff Liaison for the IACC Board and gave some welcome remarks to all the members.
- Mr. Perez also introduced himself and gave a brief description of his 40-year career in the Urban and Regional Planning and Economic Development. He also gave an overview of all the projects and activities he has been involved in while being the Director of the City of Coral Gables Economic Development Department.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES (FEBRUARY 8, 2021)**

- Committee members reviewed the minutes of the IACC meeting of February 8, 2021. Mr. Anding made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Gavarrete seconded the motion which passes unanimously. There was no discussion regarding the minutes.

**ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON**

- Mr. Perez called in the members for the election of the Chairperson of the Board. Mr. Anding nominated Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli to be the Chairperson and the rest of the members voted unanimously for him. Mr. Valdes-Fauli accepted the position with humility and pleasure.

**ELECTION OF COUNCIL-AT-LARGE**

- Chairperson made a motion to elect Mr. Rafael Gavarrete for the position of Council-at-Large Appointee. He spoke very highly of Mr. Gavarrete as a committed working member and about his efforts and past international involvement in Central America. Mr. Gavarrete received an unanimously vote and accepted the nomination.

**ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRPERSON**

- Mr. Anding made a motion to elect a Vice Chairperson for the IACC. Chairperson Valdes-Fauli nominated Mr. Anding for this position and received an unanimously vote from all the members. Mr. Anding accepted the nomination.

## COUNTRY REPORTS:

### ANTIGUA, GUATEMALA

- Mr. Gavarrete reported that there has not been any activity with Antigua since the Municipality has been closed. Mr. Gavarrete submitted to Ms. Perez a copy of a letter he received from Mayor Victor Hugo del Pozo Coronado from Antigua congratulating Mayor Lago on his new position. Mayor Pozo Coronado would like to make plans in the future to visit Coral Gables.

### SANTA TECLA, EL SALVADOR

- Santa Tecla-El Salvador. With regards to Santa Tecla, Mr. Gavarrete reported that there is a new Mayor in Santa Tecla who started his post in February of this year, he has already been in contact with the Mayor through the Consulate of El Salvador in Miami. Mr. Gavarrete announce that the Mayor of Santa Tecla is planning to come and visit Coral Gables in the future. Mr. Gavarrete shared with the board that he has the contact information for both Mayors.

### AIX-EN-PROVENCE, FRANCE

- Vice-Chairperson reported that despite the pandemic he has tried to stay in contact through emails with his counterpart in Aix-en-Provence. He added that his counterpart wrote to him towards the end of April of this year about the virus situation and the belief that one source of the new virus came from a mink breeding establishment in Bretagne/France. This emphasizes the possibility that it was transferred from animals. Vice-Chairperson reported that his counterpart office is currently closed due to the restrictions. He also informed him about the elections in Coral Gables and hopes that the new Mayor will participate and show interest in the International Committee as well as the former Mayor Valdes-Fauli. Vice-Chairperson also discussed that the past IACC Committee have suggested that the Director of Information Technology, Raimundo Rodulfo reports every six months to the Committee about the progress in the cooperation and exchange of Information Technology between Coral Gables and Aix-en-Provence and other Sister Cities. He suggested to have Raimundo Rodulfo give a brief report on the next committee meeting.
- Mr. Perez recommended to the members to save all correspondence or written communication they received in a special file because of its historic value. He recommended that these correspondences be donated to the Coral Gables Museum and be displayed in the Sister City's conference room.
- Ms. Leticia Perez gave a brief report on all the international activity that took place during the 2020 lockdown. She informed the board that despite not being able to do any in-person network or events she kept an on-going communication by phone, via email or virtually with the Consular Corps members, foreign Trade Commissioners and Multinational companies. She also exchanged important information with each of this organization that included the Business Report, The Covid-19 Handbook, Hurricane Guidelines, as well as offered her assistance with any issues related to Covid-19 restrictions or any other City's issues. She reported she plans to contact Nabil Achkar and the Consular Corps Executive Committee to see the possibility of scheduling a Consular Corps Luncheon for the month of September or October of this year.
- Vice Chairperson informed the board that he has been a member of the Consular Corps Executive Committee for many years and was glad to hear that the City of Coral Gables is planning to coordinate a second Consular Corps Luncheon meeting soon. He also said that the Executive

Committee will be meeting on Thursday, June 24<sup>th</sup> and he will inform them about the City's interest in coordinating this event. He also reported that he received information that FIU is back to normal and ready to resume their activities and have confirmed that they will be honoring a Luncheon for the Consular Corps in September 2021.

- Ms. Alejandra Collarte informed everyone that now in her capacity as the Chair for the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce (GMCC) International Committee and Board member for the International Trade Consortium (ITC) she will support the City of Coral Gables with any future Consular Corps activities and will maintain everyone informed with any international activities planned by the GMCC and the ITC. She announced that the GMCC International Committee is planning a mission to Israel for the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of January 2022.
- Mr. Perez announced to the members that he hopes to have the City of Coral Gables Comprehensive Economic Study data collection phase done by the end of the year, including a list of the different industries in the City. This will help create a database that will be shared with the Committee. He also informed the members that a month ago the city had a delegation of Senators and Government Representatives from Colombia to meet with Mayor Lago and the Economic Development Staff. They were very impressed with the way the city was able to manage the pandemic and the reopening of the local economy.
- Mr. Gillis asked Mr. Perez if the Economic Study will include a list of the restaurants in Coral Gables. His main concern is that many of the international restaurants like Ortanique, La Dorada have gone away. He would like to see other international cuisine like for example Ethiopian cuisine being brought to the City.
- Mr. Perez added that unfortunately we lost several restaurants, but the good news is that we gain over 50 new businesses and a significant number of those are restaurants. A list of all the restaurants will be sent to the Committee soon. He recommended to Mr. Gillis to Contact Francesca Valdes, who is the person in charge in the Economic Development Department of all the retail businesses including restaurants.
- Vice-Chairperson suggested that it would be a good idea for the Committee to do a tour of the new Coral Gables Fire and Police Headquarters building and have the meetings held in one of it's conference meeting rooms.
- Chairperson asked the members if they were happy with the time of the meeting. The members voted to change the time to 4:00 pm and limit the meeting to 1 hour and 15 mins. Chairperson called for the motion, and all the member unanimously approved. Also, there was a motion to excuse the absence of board member Carlos Hernandez and the motion was approved.

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