

CORAL GABLES

THE CITY BEAUTIFUL

International Affairs Coordinating Council (IACC)
Sister Cities Committee
Committee Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 18, 2021
Location: City Hall Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, 2nd Floor, Coral Gables, FL 33134

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

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

WELCOME

Mr. Julian H. Perez, Economic Development Director welcomed the members of the IACC and called the meeting to order at 4:08 p.m.

The following provides a brief overview of the Council discussions:

- Mr. Perez introduced himself and asked the Board members to vote to excuse the absence of Alejandra Collarte and Carlos Hernandez. The members unanimously approved for both to be excused.
- Chairperson Valdes-Fauli asked the members to approve the August 16, 2021 minutes.
- Vice Chair Anding asked to go over the August 16th minutes, he said that on page three, open discussion, second bullet point of the minutes says that Mr. Perez will continue with the Consular Seminars that Mayor Valdes-Fauli started before he left office. Vice Chair Anding commented that he did not know about that.
- Mr. Perez explained to Vice Chair Anding that before Mayor Valdes-Fauli left office he had approached the department to start a series of seminars with the Consular Corps and other International agencies in the city which included seminars of Technology like cyber security and seminars about Immigration, etc. Mr. Perez indicated that Leticia will be talking to you about the events that are happening in the city, and one in particular which will be the kickoff event for all these future Consular Corps Seminars.

- Mr. Perez added, I am going to be talking today in general about all the things we are doing in the City of Coral Gables as it refers not only to the City Itself, but also the International Community and so forth.
- Vice Chair Anding commented that he was delighted to hear that, and he is in favor of having those seminars and informed the members that as one of the members of the Consular Executive Committee they are the first to know about any new programs with the Consular Corps.
- Vice Chair Anding added that he thinks that it does not reflect what is reality that we will continue with consular seminars. He mentioned that there has been no such seminar in the past. And said that it's wonderful that we have these plans and he is all in favor of this but reiterated that there have been no such seminars.
- Vice Chair Anding made a request to adjust the wording to say, "continue with the plan". Mr. Perez told Vice Chair, "You're, absolutely right, the word continue is not the right term there". Point well taken, we will correct it.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (August 16, 2021)

- Chairperson Valdes-Fauli said with that amendment, then he will entertain the motion to approve the August 16th, 2021 minutes. Motion was approved by all attending members.
- Ms. Perez shared with all the IACC members the list of events happening in the City of Coral Gables, these events included, the 110 National Day of Taiwan, the exposition of Colombian Artist, the October 28th Consular Corps Luncheon and the Day of the Dead organized by the Consulate of Mexico. She provided a brief description of the events and asked the members if they had any questions to let her know.
- Vice Chair Anding added to the list of events that back on September 21 Dean John Stack from Florida International University invited the Consular Corps to a Luncheon at the University with a fabulous main speaker on the situation in Cuba. He also mentioned that back on October 5th he arranged to have the Consul General of Israel give a presentation to the Coral Gables Chamber Global Business Committee. He added that on October 26 he has been invited to a reception in Coral Gables by Chairman Jose Diaz of the Miami International Trade Consortium. Other events he shared included, a Consular Corps Luncheon taking place on November 19th and the Consular Corps Christmas Luncheon taking place on December 16th at the Biltmore Hotel.

COUNTRY REPORTS

- Chairperson Valdes-Fauli, shared that he would like to continue with the plan to add San Jose, Costa Rica as a Sister City. He thinks San Jose it's a very important city because MIA has 8 to 10 flights a day to San Jose, tourism, exports from and to Costa Rica, cultural activities and a very active Consul General. He added that due to the pandemic the formal agreement couldn't take place, and he would like to propose to the city and have the approval of the IACC members to get this going because he believes is a good sister city relationship. Vice Chair Anding commented that he will second the idea and will be in favor.

AIX-EN-PROVENCE

- Vice Chair Anding reported that in Aix-en-Provence there was an interesting development, his counterpart informed him two weeks ago that the Mayor of the City of Aix-en-Provence, had a stroke a few months ago and lost her ability to read. She resigned on September 24th. He added

that an interesting aspect of this development was that after the Mayor resigned her daughter Sophie was elected the new Mayor for the City of Aix-en-Provence.

- Vice Chair Anding suggested to the Chairperson and former Mayor Valdes-Fauli if he could write two letters to the Aix-en-Provence former Mayor and new Mayor Sophie. Chairperson responded he would gladly write the letters and copy Mayor Vince Lago.

ANTIGUA, GUATEMALA

- Mr. Gavarrete commented that he is still waiting for the response letter from Mayor Lago to the Mayor of La Antigua, Guatemala. He asked Ms. Perez and she informed him that she has not received anything from the office of Mayor Lago and that she was going to follow up on that.

SANTA TECLA, EL SALVADOR

- Regarding Santa Tecla, Mr. Gavarrete reported that he spoke to the Consul General of El Salvador in Doral, Eduardo Maya and he informed him that things in Santa Tecla were very slow and that he was going to arrange a meeting with the Mayor of Santa Tecla.

QUITO, ECUADOR

- Mr. Montes de Oca commented that in order to have a better understanding of the Sister City 's process which he believes it's necessary to be able to assist this Committee and the City as a whole, he scheduled a call with Julian Perez and Leticia Perez to get some more orientation and to discuss the process. He said at this time the only thing pending for him is to review the original agreement between Quito and the City of Coral Gables. He also mentioned that he will be attending the Consular Corps luncheon and he hopes to meet Mr. Gustavo Velasquez who is acting now as the Consul General of Ecuador until the new Consul General arrives.
- Mr. Gillis expressed to the members that he has not been assigned a city. His interest is in eventually expanding the Sister City's program once the pandemic ends. He would like to establish a Sister City relationship with cities in Africa, Asia, Australia, New Zealand and other different areas in the world. He is also interested in learning how to establish and develop a Sister City. He is particularly interested in Stellenbosch, South Africa, they have a great University and their architecture like what we have in the desktop app. Vice Chair Anding asked Mr. Gillis if he has received any indication that Stellenbosch wants a relationship with Coral Gables. Mr. Gillis said that he is only asking to investigate.

OPEN DISCUSSION

- Chairperson expressed to the members that he is very enthusiastic about getting this program going now that they will not run the risk of being put in quarantine for two weeks. He added that Seville is also a city that Coral Gables has a relationship with, and he will make it a point to see that.
- Vice Chair Anding mentioned that there is a quite active cooperation between the City of Coral Gables IT Department and Seville's like what the City has with Aix-en-Provence.
- Chairperson also shared with the members that last year the city was going to celebrate the Festival of Sevilla but then the pandemic came, and everything was canceled. He added that this can be one of the most enthusiastic high visibility committees. We are a multinational City with 100 and some multinational companies and 20 Consulates and Foreign Offices. He said that this could be one of the most important committees in development of the City.

- Vice Chair Anding suggested to have every two to three months a presentation by a Consul General like the ones being done at the Global Business Committee. Mr. Perez responded that we can do that, and this could be also part of the series of presentations & seminars he talked about.
- Mr. Montes de Oca also suggested to organize a luncheon with all the Multinational companies similar to what the Economic Development Department is doing with the Consular Corps.
- Mr. Gillis asked Mr. Perez if the City has a list of all the art in Coral Gables representing any of the Sister Cities. If we have one, he would like to have a copy of that list. Mr. Perez reply that we would have to do a little research on that to find out if we have the information.
- Chairperson ask if there was anything else and thank everyone!

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