

DRAFT

**CITY OF CORAL GABLES
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS COORDINATING COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Meeting of February 28, 2008

MEMBERS:

Stephen McGaughey
Michelle Moskowitz
Ray Airan
John Carpenter
Luba DeWitt
Art DeNunzio
Carolina Rendeiro

M	A	M	J#	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F
A	X	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	X	P	P
P	X	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	X	P	E
P	X	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	X	P	P
-	-	-	P	P	P	P	P	P	X	A	P
P	X	P	P	P	P	E	A	P	X	P	P
-	-	-	P	P	P	E	P	P	X	P	P
E	X	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	X	P	E

COMMISSIONERS:

Comm. Maria Anderson
Comm. Rafael "Ralph" Cabrera, Jr.
Vice-Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.
Mayor Don Slesnick
Comm. Wayne "Chip" Withers
David I. Brown, City Manager
Council-at-Large Appointment

EX-OFFICIO:

Alfonso Cueto, Ambassador-at-Large
Ricardo Taño, Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce / Vice Chair, International Committee

STAFF:

Lourdes M. Cuzán, Secretary, IACC
International Affairs Coordinator, Development Department

GUESTS:

Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark, Development Director, City of Coral Gables
Dunia Miranda-Maury, Guatemalan Trade Commissioner in Miami

Vice-Chair Steve McGaughey called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m. A quorum was present.

Ms. Cuzán reported that she was notified by Carolina Rendeiro and Michelle Moskowitz that they were out of town on business and they asked that their absences be excused by the Board.

Motion was made Ray Airan to excuse Carolina Rendeiro's and Michelle Moskowitz' absences as they were out of town on business. Motion was seconded by John Carpenter. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion was made by Ray Airan to approve the minutes of the meeting of January 31, 2008, as submitted. Motion was seconded by Art DeNunzio. Motion was unanimously passed.

Ms. Cuzán said she had a couple of announcements before proceeding with the meeting. First, she informed the group of the recent passing of Ms. Florence Dawson in the Development Department after being diagnosed with cancer in November 2007. Secondly, she announced her decision to retire from the City of Coral Gables effective March 14th after almost 22 years of service.

Dunia Miranda Maury informed the group of the upcoming summer trip to La Antigua Guatemala with students from Carver Middle School in Coral Gables scheduled for June 7th – 16th, 2008. She explained that the program which is organized by the Spanish International Parents Association (SIPA) was created to promote the Spanish language and culture amongst middle school students. She submitted a detailed itinerary of the 10-day excursion which included visits to the Constitution Plaza, the National Palace, the Metropolitan Cathedral, the Pacaya Volcano, a coffee plantation, and Tikal. Students will also attend one of the local schools, and an official welcoming by the Mayor of La Antigua where he will present each of the students with "Distinguished Guest Certificates". Ms. Miranda Maury stated that the trip is a unique experience which will familiarize the children with Guatemalan history and culture. She reported that the cost of the trip is \$1,500./per person which includes: all hotel accommodations, meals, excursions,

ground transportation, and airfare. She noted that TACA Group offered a very competitive airfare of \$500. which includes Mia/Gua/Tikal/Gua/Mia. Ms. Miranda-Maury thanked the Board for supporting the 2007 program and shared with them a video of the students during their trip to La Antigua last summer. She also thanked the City of Coral Gables Mayor's Office for the ceremonial gifts which the group presented on his behalf to the Sister City Mayor, and the Recreation Department for providing Youth Center t-shirts for the students and parents which they wore to visit the Mayor of La Antigua in City Hall. Ms. Miranda-Maury asked the Board to consider sponsoring one student from Carver Middle School. She also encouraged a representative from the IACC joined the group in La Antigua. Mr. DeNunzio asked if they had determined the qualifications for the student to be sponsored. Ms. Miranda Maury replied that the student selection is based on financial need and superior academic performance. She also informed the group that SIPA contributes a total of about \$5,000. which covers the cost of a student, a teacher and the cost of some of the events in Guatemala. Vice Chair McGaughey asked if the child would travel with a parent. She said they could at the parent's own expense. Mr. McGaughey said that if the Board believed this to be a meritorious activity they could make a motion to support the effort and agree to explore with City Management the feasibility of such expenditure.

Motion was made by Ray Airan to recommend that the Coral Gables City Commission approves a \$1,500. sponsorship from the Sister City Account for one (1) student from Carver Middle School in Coral Gables to travel to La Antigua Guatemala as part of a cultural summer excursion organized by the Spanish International Parents Association (SIPA). Selection of the student will be made by the school and will be based on financial need and superior academic performance. Motion was seconded by Art DeNunzio. Motion passed unanimously.

Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark distributed a brochure of the Coral Gables Cinemateque to the group which contained a detailed overview of the project including: the proposed lease terms; comparable rates; proposed year-round programming; affordable and open space; community support; concluding observations; and supplemental documentation. She explained that the Board would not have to look at it from a lease standpoint but from a conceptual viewpoint and proceeded with a thorough presentation. Ms. Swanson-Rivenbark noted that international cultural organizations such as the Argentine, Italian, Spanish, and Alliance Francaise have expressed their enthusiastic support of the concept. She added that The Miami International Film Festival also expressed an interest for their premier screenings. The Board members asked questions regarding availability of the facility to other cultural groups, to charitable organizations providing their own films, and availability of facility for film related events and receptions. Ms. Swanson-Rivenbark replied that although the lease agreement is between the City of Coral Gables and the Coral Gables Cinemateque interested parties would go directly to the Cinemateque to lease the space for a specific event. She added that the lease stipulates that the rates would be nominal and the space available to outside interests. The group was enthusiastic about the positive impact the Cinemateque would have in the community and expressed their support for the project. They thanked Ms. Swanson-Rivenbark for her presentation.

Motion was made by Dr. John Carpenter to endorse the concept of the Coral Gables Cinemateque Project in the City of Coral Gables. Motion was seconded by Mr. Ray Airan. Motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Swanson-Rivenbark asked if there were any other items the group wished to discuss. Mr. Airan brought up the announcement made by Ms. Cuzán at the start of the meeting regarding her retirement from the City. She replied that it is a well earned retirement and that Lourdes had represented the City amongst the international community with grace and dignity. She said that she will strategize with the Manager and the Mayor about the continued support to the Board through the transition. Dr. Carpenter asked if there would be an occasion to honor Ms. Cuzán and for the Board to express their gratitude. Ms. Swanson-Rivenbark responded that the Development Office was also handling another situation but she will come back and let them know of a farewell for Lourdes probably for the following week of the 14th.

Mr. McGaughey said that he and Ms. Cuzán were working with the City Attorney on the Trust Fund for Sister Cities and International Projects. Ms. Cuzán informed the group that the Coral Gables Foundation presently holds a pass through account for Sister City Projects which was created years ago for the Cezanne Statue Project in Aix-en-Provence. The 501(c)3 account serves to receive tax deductible

donations for the Sister City Projects and the Foundation is responsible for mailing letters to the donors, tax forms, etc. The item will be further discussed at the March meeting after the item is reviewed by the City Attorney.

Mr. Carpenter shared with the group his concerns with regards to education in the United States. He reported that there is a lack of thirty to forty thousand teachers in this country and 50% of the teachers hired this year (particularly in science and math) are without certification. As Dean of Education for the past 30 years, Mr. Carpenter is concerned that the US is faltering and losing competitiveness in the world. He also reported that the state of California had recently signed a contract with the Minister of Education of Mexico and teachers under this international contract will be teaching in California and other states are following. He also noted that Greece has a surplus of university graduates with degrees and training in the fields of physics, chemistry, and biology and it would be important for the IACC as an international organization to explore these initiatives. Mr. Carpenter also reported that the State of Florida has a program called SUCCEED which provides \$7 million dollars of state funds to encourage recruitment of people for teaching. Dr. Carpenter further informed the group of an international program related to education focusing on the need for teachers in the United States in science, mathematics, and special education. The program would consist on a joint effort involving the City, the Peace Corps, and the Miami Dade County School District, and the community i.e., Coral Gables government, and the private sector. The program would assign Peace Corps volunteers with teaching degrees to teaching positions upon the completion of their service to the Peace Corps. As a result, a person who takes a 2 year assignment in Guatemala would be given the appointment by the Peace Corps and, simultaneously, Miami Dade School District would appoint them to a teaching position. He concluded by saying that Miami has the highest number of returning Peace Corps volunteers and he believes this effort to be extremely important initiative for the City. Dr. Carpenter will submit a proposed program at a later date and the group will further explore the benefits of the project to the City.

Ricardo Taño informed the group that the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce has identified the Beacon Council as its new partner for the upcoming Trade Mission to Italy. He stated that trip is tentatively scheduled for mid-May and he will bring back a tentative itinerary to the IACC for the March meeting.

Ms. Cuzán reported that the visit of the Mayor of Granada was being rescheduled as the travel dates were not available to the travel agency sponsoring the 2 airfare tickets because of Holy Week. She said that she will inform them of the new dates when confirmed.

Vice Chair McGaughey asked for a motion to formally thank Ms. Cuzán for her excellent work and assured her that the IACC will always be her friend. The group wished her the best on her new endeavors.

Motion was made by Dr. Carpenter to formally thank Ms. Cuzán for her excellent work. The Board assured her that she will always have friends with the IACC and wished her the best on her new endeavors. Motion was seconded by Mr. DeNunzio.

Ms. Cuzán concluded by saying that her involvement with the Board had been a wonderful experience and thanked them for their hard work and enthusiasm. She said that she had truly enjoyed working closely with them on so many exciting projects and that the City is fortunate to have their support and dedication.

The Vice Chair adjourned the meeting at 10:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lourdes M. Cuzán
Secretary, International Affairs Coordinating Council

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