

CORAL GABLES

THE CITY BEAUTIFUL

International Affairs Coordinating Council (IACC)

Sister Cities Committee

Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, November 15, 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	P	-	Mayor Vince Lago
Volker R. Anding			-	-	-	P	P	P	-	P	P	-	Vice Mayor Michael Mena
Brett Gillis			-	-	-	P	E	E	-	P	E	-	Comm. Rhonda Anderson
Richard Montes de Oca			-	-	-	P	P	P	-	P	P	-	Comm. Jorge L. Fors, Jr.
Carlos Hernandez			-	-	-	E	P	A	-	E	A	-	Comm. Kirk R. Menendez
Alejandra Collarte			-	-	-	P	P	E	-	E	E	-	Peter Iglesias, City Manager
Rafael Gavarrete			-	-	-	P	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 4:03 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 Brett Gillis. The members approved for both to be excused.
- Chairperson Valdes-Fauli asked the members to approve the October 18, 2021 minutes.
- Vice Chair Anding had some comments on the last minutes, he said he sent Mrs. Perez an email with a couple of remarks about the October 18th minutes and that these changes were made right after she received the email. Vice Chair Anding added that in the previous minutes there was mentioning of a city in South Africa, but he did not recall anyone mentioning the City of Stellenbosch. Leticia confirmed today that the city in question was Stellenbosch.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (October 18, 2021)

- Mr. Montes de Oca made a motion to approve the minutes and the rest of the board members voted in favor, with the corrections that Vice Chair Anding had suggested
- Chairperson Valdes-Fauli, called in the next item on the Agenda, Flags on Ponce. Mr. Perez communicated to the Board members that a representative from the Coral Gables Chamber of

Commerce was supposed to come and give a brief description of the program but since she did not come in, he asked the Chairperson to defer the item.

COUNTRY REPORTS

SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA

- Chairperson Valdes-Fauli informed the Board members that he has not heard from City of San Jose, Costa Rica. He reminded Mr. Gavarrete to send him the phone number for the Mayor and the Deputy who is interested. He added that the City Commission had approved a Sister City Relationship with San Jose, Costa Rica but when they were ready to formalize the agreement the pandemic stroke, he got sick with shingles and the airports closed, making it very difficult to travel. He would like to try to revive this relationship.

AIX-EN-PROVENCE

- Vice Chair Anding informed the Board members that he had reported in the last meeting that the Former Mayor of Aix-en-Provence had a stroke and had to step down and that her daughter has been elected as the new Mayor of Aix-en-Provence. Vice Chair Anding asked Chairperson Valdes-Fauli to comment on the letters he sent. Chairperson Valdes-Fauli added that he sent a letter to the Former Mayor wishing her a speedy recovery and to the new elected Mayor wishing her a successful term.

LA ANTIGUA, GUATEMALA

- Mr. Gavarrete commented that he is still waiting for a signed letter from Mayor Lago and Chelsea Granell, the Mayors secretary promise to provide him with a copy. Both, Chair Person Valdes-Fauli and Mr. Perez informed Mr. Gavarrete to let them know if he needs any help in following up with that letter.

- **SANTA TECLA, EL SALVADOR**

Mr. Gavarrete added that Santa Tecla is kind of quiet at the moment, and that he had spoken to the Consul General of El Salvador who would like to arrange a meeting with him and the new Mayor of Santa Tecla in the next week or so.

QUITO, ECUADOR

- Mr. Montes de Oca informed all the members that he had an update about Quito, Ecuador. He added that he had received all the files and correspondence with respect to the City and Quito prior relationship. He thinks this information is valuable and will help him draft a new agreement and start some of the talking points. He also commented that he attended the Consular Corps Luncheon event and even though the Consul General of Ecuador was not present he was able to meet Ms. Pilar Neira, Trade Commissioner for Quito; he gave her his card, hoping they can get in contact soon and start the conversation to re-establish a Sister City with Quito.
- Mr. Perez informed the Chairperson and members that Commissioner Kirk Menendez is also very interested in meeting with all the different Consul Generals and that Leticia Perez have scheduled several meetings for him, one coming this week with the Consul General of Spain, Mr. Jaime Lacadena and Trade Commissioner, Mr. Francisco Garzon.

- Chairperson Valdes-Fauli, added that he has been to several Spanish receptions in the last week, these included, a reception at the Consulate General of Spain, the annual dinner meeting for the Spain-USA Chamber of Commerce and at a reception at the Residence of the Consul General of Spain where he met the people from Sevilla who would like to start to promote the Feria of Sevilla again, sometime in April 2022. Chairperson informed the members that he started working on this Sevilla event last April and due to the Pandemic, it had to be canceled. He announced that he will be taking care of Spain as a Sister City.
- Mr. Perez added that the people from Sevilla met with Mayor Lago recently to talk about and promote this project.
- Vice Chair Anding, added some comments in regard to South Africa (S.A.), he said that someone had mentioned in the last meeting a possible relationship with a city in S.A. He said that 10 days ago he happened to have a meeting with Hugh Simon and his wife Marlinda. Mr. Simon was a former State Department Diplomat and he also used to work for the Department of Interior of the State of Florida, he is very well known in Tallahassee and Coral Gables. Mr. Simon and wife moved and live in South Africa now, where his wife is from and will be very happy to assist the City in whichever way possible.

OPEN DISCUSSION

- Mr. Montes de Oca, added a few comments about the Consular Corps Luncheon organized by the City's Economic Development Department, he said that the event was incredibly well done, with great participation especially considering that we are just coming out of a Pandemic, a great presentation done by Julian Perez. He sent kudos to the City and those who organized this outstanding program. It was a very successful event! In addition, Mr. Montes de Oca, had a remark about the Multinationals. He would like the City of Coral Gables to consider doing a luncheon with Multinationals on the first quarter of next year, similar to the Consular Corps Luncheon program. He added this will be an opportunity for all Multinational leaders and executives to network with one another.
- Mr. Perez shared with the members that this is part of the program plans they have for next year. He added that this program was originally suggested last year by the Chairperson when he was the City's Mayor. And he is now trying to line up a speaker to talk about Cyber Security. Mr. Perez shared that about a week and half ago he was a part of a panel that spoke at an International Cyber Security Conference where 33 countries were represented. Raimundo and the Mayor also participated, and the City was recognized and awarded for its Innovation and for being "**Cyber Trust Pioneers for Local Government.**" He added that they plan to continue and expand this program in 2022 with Multinationals, Consular Corps & other international and local organizations.
- Vice Chair Anding expressed to Mr. Perez that any future plans the city has with the Consular Corps to please involve the leadership of the Consular Corps: The Dean, Secretary Nabil Achkar, the Treasurer, Mario Sacasa, and himself, Volker Anding. He added that it is very important that the City communicates with Nabil Achkar regarding events with the Consular Corps, since he is the lead person and the one who coordinates all their monthly meetings and or events.
- Mr. Perez agreed with Vice Chair Anding and added that this should be a coordinated effort and for this to work it will need the total cooperation from everyone involved, the Consular Corps, the IACC Committee, the City of Coral Gables and the Multinationals. He added that the first

event will be on Cyber Security, the next will be a Consular Cultural event and the second seminar will be on Immigration.

- Mrs. Perez announced to all the IACC members that the next IACC meeting will be on December 20th which falls on the same week of Christmas. She asked if they would like to keep this meeting or cancel it and resume back in January of 2022. All the members were in favor of canceling the December meeting and Mrs. Perez informed them that she will be sending the date for the next meeting in January.
- Chair Person Valdes Fauli and Mr. Perez wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving!

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

DRAFT