

CORAL GABLES

THE CITY BEAUTIFUL

International Affairs Coordinating Council (IACC)

Sister Cities Committee

Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, August 16th, 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	-	-	-	-	Mayor Vince Lago
Volker R. Anding			-	-	-	P	P	P	-	-	-	-	Vice Mayor Michael Mena
Brett Gillis			-	-	-	P	E	E	-	-	-	-	Comm. Rhonda Anderson
Richard Montes de Oca			-	-	-	P	P	P	-	-	-	-	Comm. Jorge L. Fors, Jr.
Carlos Hernandez			-	-	-	E	P	A	-	-	-	-	Comm. Kirk R. Menendez
Alejandra Collarte			-	-	-	P	P	E	-	-	-	-	Peter Iglesias, City Manager
Rafael Gavarrete			-	-	-	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. He asked the Board members to excuse the following members, Alejandra Collarte and Brett Gillis.

The following provides a brief overview of the Council discussions:

- Chairperson Valdes-Fauli, asked Mr. Perez if there were any new businesses and he responded that there were some new restaurants and retail coming and a few other businesses that are moving to the Plaza.
- Chairperson Valdes-Fauli commented that 2 years ago a sister city relationship with San Jose, Costa Rica was approved by the City; which is one of the City's significant trading partners and investors, then the pandemic came, and business was canceled. Chairperson Valdes- Fauli expressed to the members that he would like to explore and pursue the relationship again.
- Vice Chair Anding agreed with Chairperson by saying, this is one of the regions here, so it's even more logical to intensify the connection with this country; where mutual visits of delegations or individual persons and companies is more likely, and this should be one of our priorities.
- Mr. Perez introduced himself and asked the Board members to vote to excuse the absence of Alejandra Collarte and Brett Gillis. The members unanimously approved for both to be excused.

- Chairperson Valdes-Fauli reiterated to have a relationship with San Jose, Costa Rica. He added it would be a good neighbor to have because of the many relations we have with them in terms of commerce, tourism, travel, ecosystem etc. Vice Chair Anding agreed and said that it should be one of the priority items.
- Vice Chair Anding asked to go over the July 19, 2021 minutes, he said that on the first line of the first bullet a date is missing, he suggested to insert date, June 21, 2021.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (July 19, 2021)

- Chairperson Valdes-Fauli said with that amendment, then he will entertain the motion to approve the July 19, 2021 minutes. Motion was approved by all attending members.

COUNTRY REPORTS:

- Chairperson Valdes-Fauli stated that the country report is very slow in the month of August because everybody is closed.

AIX-EN-PROVENCE, FRANCE

- Vice Chair Anding stated that he is in charge of Aix-en-Provence in France and that the City of Coral Gables has had an active cooperation and a long-standing relationship with Aix-en-Provence. He added that about 3 years ago a French delegation came to visit the City of Coral Gables. He also mentioned that during last month's tour of the Public Safety Building Mr. Rodolfo, IT Director, briefly mentioned that there is a very good cooperation with Aix-en-Provence. He did not give any details but said there was something really interesting. Vice Chair Anding expressed his interest in contacting Mr. Rodolfo to ask him for those details so he can share it with his counterpart in Aix-en-Provence and the IACC members as well.

ANTIGUA, GUATEMALA

- Mr. Gavarrete shared with the Board members that two meetings ago he had delivered a letter from the Mayor of Antigua to Mayor Lago. He does not know if Mayor Lago had a chance to answer the letter. But if he did, he would like to have a copy of it, so he can follow up with the Mayor of Antigua.

SANTA TECLA EL SALVADOR

- Mr. Gavarrete informed the Board members that he has been in touch with the new Mayor of Santa Tecla who took office in late February. He added that the Mayor is a nice person but that now there is a big issue in Santa Tecla with a Palace that was painted with the colors of his political party. He said he is expecting a letter from this Mayor soon.

QUITO, ECUADOR

- Mr. Montes de Oca informed the board members that he believes he was assigned Quito, Ecuador, but he feels he was never given any direction. He understands relationship building is very important but would like to find out what the mission of the IACC is. He shared with the Board members that he has a lot of contacts and relationships in Quito and Guayaquil due to his past work and tours with Celebrity Cruise Lines. He also would like someone to explain this process

further. He advised the Board members that it may be a good idea to have some sort of protocol for new incoming Board members.

Mr. Perez recommended Mr. Montes de Oca to have a one on one conference call to discuss the basic IACC responsibilities and informed him that the Department can contact and coordinate a meeting with the Consul General of Ecuador to begin the dialogue.

Vice Chair Anding also shared that two years ago the wife of the Mayor of Quito visited Coral Gables and brought a quasi-official gift for the Mayor of Coral Gables. He advised Mr. Montes de Oca to investigate this further and refer to the minutes of that visit.

- Mr. Perez announced that there are a number of cultural events coming to the City. The first one is “El Día de los Muertos” with the Consulate of Mexico. Second, “El Día de la Hispanidad” with the Consulate of Colombia and third the “National Day” with the Taipei Economic & Cultural Office. He also added that Mayor Lago would like to launch in 2022 five (5) cultural events. We would like to ask all the members of this committee to be part of this effort, we will keep you informed either through this committee or via email.

OPEN DISCUSSION

- Chairperson reiterated that that he would like to activate this committee and thinks that these cultural events is one way to do it and it will also create a lot of good will for us to get involved. He pointed out to Mr. Perez that he will need a lot of help from Economic Development in order to do it.
- Mr. Perez also added that he will continue with the Consular seminars that Mayor Valdes-Fauli started before he left office. The first seminar we are working on is on Cyber Security, we will also bring other partners that are working with the City on the integration of technology and Economic Development. As soon as we have a date and venue, we will let you know.
- Mr. Montes de Oca asked Mr. Perez if they could have a calendar that will include all the different independence days and other consular events so they can plan accordingly. Mr. Perez responded that this was a very good recommendation and that they will be receiving an email in the future with this information.
- Chairperson asked the members if there was anything else to discuss and they answered NO. All the members congratulated the Chairperson and wished him a very happy birthday! Chairperson said thank you to everyone!

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