

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item C-1
September 8, 2020
Virtual Meeting
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Vince Lago
Commissioner Jorge Fors, Jr.
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Michael Mena

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Lourdes Cuzan

Agenda Item C-1 [9:03 a.m.]

Mayor's Comments

A Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Coral Gables, Florida, designating the City of Venice, Italy as a "Sister City" of the City of Coral Gables, Florida.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Mayor's Comments. I sent the Commission the formal agreement with the City of Venice, Italy, something that have been discussed in the past and principal approved, but because of the pandemic in Italy and it started earlier there than here, and because of the floods in Venice, the seasonal floods in Venice, we could not do the formal approval. And I sent to you last week the actual agreement, which I have here with me, and you all should have it, together with a copy of the proposed resolution. And I'd like to call on the Chair of International Affairs Coordinating Committee, Lourdes Cuzan. The Committee discussed this and approved it unanimously after discussion; and Ms. Cuzan, if you would like to address the Commission, please do so.

Ms. Cuzan: Good morning Mayor, good morning Commissioners. First of all, I'd like to thank you all for your support through the years to this Board and to all our initiatives. Here now we have a
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proposal for the Sister City relationship with Venice, Italy, and on behalf of the Board, I'd like to express our support and our enthusiasm as this is a Sister City that will give us the opportunity to work with them and work closer with Italy, our friends in Italy, Venice in particular and focus on programs like culture, art, education, and just becoming closer and developing programs of interest to both communities. This has been done with other cities, such as ____ Provence, and Antigua, Cartagena, and it has always proven to be a very worthwhile effort and bringing our communities together and developing, especially Coral Gables abroad. So, the Board recommends that the City Commission approves our motion and proposal.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Cuzan. And why Venice? – because we face a lot of common problems and our histories are sort of intertwined. Here we have the Venetian Pool, two or three years ago we had the Venetian Posts, art program, our streets, our architectural style, some of our finest restaurateurs are from Venice, and they are very enthusiastic about it. And also, we face what is not an immediate problem, but in the long run, our most serious problem which is ocean level rising. Venice is smack in the middle of that and so are we, and maybe we can work together to devise common ways to deal with the problem. So, I would like to invite comments, and if not, a motion to approve the agreement as presented to you all. Is there a motion?

Vice Mayor Lago: So moved.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you Vice Mayor. Second?

Commissioner Fors: Second.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Who is this? Thank you. If there are no other comments, Mr. City Clerk would you call the roll please.

Commissioner Fors: Yes

Commissioner Keon: Yes

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes

Commissioner Mena: Yes

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very, very much. We have in Europe Seville, we have in Europe ____Provence, which is a jewel in France, and we have Venice in Italy, which I'm not going to say anything about Venice is wonderful and our...and that's what I'm trying to do. I'm trying to get the International Affairs Coordinating Council to do is, not only do we put them in our letterhead, our Sister City list, but let's do things with them, and I'm working very hard on that. In addition, I wish to report that the International Affairs Coordinating Council has a foundation which Mayor Cason started, providing funds for international activities. And this foundation was, shall I say, lost in limbo and we have finally recuperated and have now entrusted the Coral Gables Foundation or Coral Gables Foundation with those funds for them to administer. They have about \$7 - \$8,000. At one point with Mayor Cason's leadership, they were like \$20-\$25-\$30,000 there,

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and we have that now in the Coral Gables Foundation, so the money is there for the use of the committee and the City Commission.