



International Affairs Coordinating Council (IACC)  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, June 17, 2024

Location: Fink Studio  
2506 Ponce de León Blvd., Coral Gables, Florida

| Members:                     | J | F | M | A | M  | J  | J | A | S | O | N | D | Commissioners                |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|---|----|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|------------------------------|
| <b>Olga Ramudo</b>           | P | E | E | E | P  | P  | X |   |   |   |   |   | Mayor Vince Lago             |
| <b>Vicky Rua</b>             | P | P | A | E | P  | P  | X |   |   |   |   |   | Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson   |
| <b>Sadia M. Raja</b>         | P | P | A | P | UA | E  | X |   |   |   |   |   | Comm. Kirk Menendez          |
| <b>Raoul Cantero</b>         | P | P | P | E | P  | E  | X |   |   |   |   |   | Comm. Ariel Fernandez        |
| <b>Richard Montes de Oca</b> | P | E | P | P | E  | P  | X |   |   |   |   |   | Comm. Melissa Castro         |
| <b>Alejandra Collarte</b>    | E | P | E | P | P  | P  | X |   |   |   |   |   | Amos Rojas, Jr., C.M.        |
| <b>Rafael Gavarrete</b>      | E | P | E | P | P  | UA | X |   |   |   |   |   | Council-at-Large Appointment |

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

The International Affairs Coordinating Council (IACC) meeting was called to order at 4:10 p.m. Chair Ramudo welcomed everyone to the committee.

**Approval of the Minutes (May 20th, 2024)**

A motion to approve the minutes of May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024, was made by Vice Chair Richard Montes de Oca and Board member Alejandra Collarte seconded the motion which was passed unanimously.

**COUNTRY REPORT**

**AIX-EN-PROVENCE, FRANCE**

- Chair Ramudo began the meeting asking what was happening with Aix-en-Provence; Mrs. Belkys Perez informed Board members that after meeting with Consul General Trapp regarding French month, a zoom meeting was scheduled in July with Carine Martinez, (International Relations Officer for Aix-en-Provence) to discuss French cultural activities during next year’s Centennial. Board member Rua had some questions about what we would like to do with Aix-en-Provence and what is the objective of the Zoom meeting, etc. Belkys explained that Aix is doing a huge celebration next year and Coral Gables is celebrating its Centennial as well, so we would like to find opportunities to collaborate during these events.

She added that there is an opportunity in 2026 to bring a French Chef to the Biltmore, she has been in conversation already with Biltmore representatives; also, she suggested that someone should contact Aix and find out if there is a travel exhibition in the US from Paul Cezanne that can be displayed at the Museum or another Coral Gables venue for French Month. Chair Ramudo recommended Board Member Rua to communicate with Aix representatives to share ideas and find out what they would like to do for French Month.

Belkys also mentioned that it is important to continue the conversation with Aix and find out how they would like to collaborate next year.

#### SAN ISIDRO, ARGENTINA

- Board member Collarte informed board members that she has been trying to get a contact email for the new Mayor of San Isidro. She spoke to the Consulate of Argentina, and they were able to give her a general email for his office, but it was not his direct email. Chair Ramudo recommended Board member Collarte to call the Secretary of Tourism in San Isidro. Board member Collarte also tried to connect with the new mayor through LinkedIn, apparently, he accepted her invitation but never answered her message. She will try to contact Diego Duhour from the Consulate one more time and ask for this information.

#### SEVILLA, SPAIN

- Chair Ramudo reported that she is working with Sevilla, and they are very interested in collaborating. She talked about the Feria of Sevilla that took place in Key Biscayne and mentioned that during her last conversation with Sevilla representatives, she told them she hopes they can bring the same feria to Coral Gables as well. She mentioned the possibility of using funds of the International Cultural events, doing sponsorships and to also getting the Spain Chamber of Commerce involved, in order to organize this Feria in Coral Gables. She is planning to contact the Sevilla representatives in July to continue the conversation.

#### QUITO, ECUADOR

- Vice Chair Montes de Oca informed the Board members that the only thing pending on his side is a letter to be sent to Mayor Pabel Munoz Lopez, on behalf of Mayor Lago. He added the letter is almost done he is just making some minor changes. He mentioned also that the sister relationship with Quito has been on and off due to the changes and inclination of the government, but it seems like now it's been stabilizing. He also shared the content of the letter with all Board members who thought it was a great letter and later asked for a copy.

#### OPEN DISCUSSION

- Chair Ramudo spoke about the frustration of not having one city really activated. She emphasized to all the importance of working hard on each city and activating them.
- Vice Chair Montes de Oca had a suggestion of working with other cities that do want to have a relationship with the City of Coral Gables and are ready to collaborate instead of working with cities that show no interest in continuing the Sister City relationship.

- Chair Ramudo added that it would be beneficial for the sister cities relationship to involve airlines like Iberia, Air Europe, as well as trade commissioners and Consuls from the countries that are involved.
- Belkys Perez reminded the committee that the Sister City's program is just one part of the International Affairs Coordinating Council Board; that it also includes hosting delegations coming from any part of the world. She added that the city of Coral Gable can offer venues, city tours and meetings with Mayor Lago and other city's authorities/leaders.
- There was a discussion among board members about informing all the different local partners organizations regarding hosting future international delegations in Coral Gables.
- Mrs. Belkys informed board members that there will be a zoom meeting soon with our Sister City of Santa Tecla, which soon will become geographically part of a bigger region in El Salvador. Mrs. Belkys Perez also mentioned that July is a very important month for us and informed everyone about the Taste the Gables with 50 restaurants participating.
- Ms. Leticia Perez gave a brief recap of the Consular Corps luncheon taking place on June 13, 2024. The event was a total success, with our very own special guest speakers Mayor Lago and IT Director, Raimundo Rodulfo; more than 80 consular officials were in attendance. Everyone was very impressed with the presentations.
- Board members had an open discussion about having the summer off with no meetings in July and August. They voted unanimously to cancel the meeting of July 15, 2024. The next IACC meeting will take place on August 19, 2024.

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