

CORAL GABLES

THE CITY BEAUTIFUL

International Affairs Coordinating Council (IACC)
Sister Cities Committee
Committee Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 17, 2022

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	P	X	P	P	E	X	X	X	A			Mayor Vince Lago
Volker R. Anding	P	P	X	P	P	P	X	X	X	P			Vice Mayor Michael Mena
Brett Gillis	P	P	X	P	P	P	X	X	X	P			Comm. Rhonda Anderson
Richard Montes de Oca	P	E	X	A	P	P	X	X	X	P			Comm. Jorge L. Fors, Jr.
	-	-	-	-	-	-							Comm. Kirk Menendez
Alejandra Collarte	P	A	X	P	P	P	X	X	X	P			Peter Iglesias, City Manager
Rafael Gavarrete	P	P	X	P	E	P	X	X	X	P			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 4:01 p.m.
- Vice Chair Anding welcomed everyone to the International Affairs Coordinating Council (IACC). He announced that the first item on the agenda was the approval of the June 27th, 2022, meeting minutes.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES (June 27th, 2022)

- Ms. Alejandra Collarte made a motion to approve the minutes, Mr. Gillis second the motion and the rest of the board members voted in favor.
- Vice Chair Anding called the next item on the agenda, presentation of the MDC-Sister City Program by Ms. Maria Dreyfus-Ulvert, Executive Director, International Trade Consortium (ITC).
- Ms. Dreyfus-Ulvert provided a brief history and description on the MDC Sister City Program and how she would like the city to get involved. She started her presentation informing the board members that she had been recently appointed as the Executive Director for ITC and she has been working for the County for about 15 years. She is also a Coral Gables resident. She explained that ITC is the International Relations Office of the County by resolution/ordinance, and it also manages the MDC Sister City Program. She thanked Alejandra Collarte, Board members and the city staff for the invitation to come today to the IACC meeting.
- The Miami-Dade County Sister City Program (MDC SCP) is in its forty-first-year. MDC has 32 Sister Cities in South America, Central America, the Caribbean, Europe, Africa, and Asia. Mrs. Dreyfus-Ulvert explained to the Board members that they have a very clear objective, and they try to

revamp this progress by establishing a sister city relationship wherever they go. She added that the MDC SCP has 16 steps that they follow, from receiving an initial intention letter from either a commissioner or someone external that wants to establish a Sister City Relationship, followed by a resolution from the Commission Board of Miami-Dade County, and last, executing the agreement followed by the beginning of the relationship.

- Mrs. Dreyfus-Ulvert added that MDC has a very dynamic Sister Cities Committee of which Alejandra Collarte is part of and it's composed of ITC Board members and, like any other County board, is open to the public. Some of the Cities that MDC engages with are Cape Town, Africa; Pereira, Colombia; Viareggio, Italy; Curitiba, Brazil; San Pedro de Macoris, Dominican Republic; Gran Ciudad del Sur, Guatemala, and many others.
- Mrs. Dreyfus-Ulvert also reported on a conference that is called Interamerican Conference of Mayors that was held the 29th and 30th of September. This conference was organized by FIU but really originated from a resolution in the county by Senator Soto, whose term will end soon and wanted this conference to continue. More than 52 mayors and local authorities from Latin America and the Caribbean came to MDC to share best practices on different topics including, waste management, emergency situations, technology, cybersecurity, etc. She also mentioned that this event was a great opportunity for her to reactivate the relationship with some of the Sister Cities and they ended up having representations from four MDC Sister Cities.
- She concluded her presentation adding that she would like to partner with all the MDC municipalities, including Coral Gables, to join forces and collaborate with each other in establishing new and future Sister Cities relationship. She asked if we would like to increase the number of Sister Cities, she would be happy to refer new cities to Coral Gables' IACC. She gave thanks to Mrs. Collarte and the rest of the Board members for allowing her to present the MDC Sister Cities Program.
- Vice Chair Anding thanked Mrs. Dreyfus-Ulvert for her presentation and looked forward to an intensive cooperation between MDC and Coral Gables Sister Cities programs. He then added, as Mrs. Collarte pointed out, there are several interconnections between MDC and Coral Gables Sister Cities Programs and Committees, and agreed that it would be a good idea if any major events, or if someone comes from a city or country where we have a sister city relationship, he would appreciate to be notified to be able to attend or vice versa.
- Mrs. Collarte informed the Board members and ITC representatives that she always reports any ITC or GMCC new events or foreign delegations coming to MDC, and she always makes sure to invite the City of Coral Gables. Ms. Sudeshna from ITC mentioned that during the same time of the Interamerican Conference of Mayors they had scheduled a big reception and planned to invite the City of Coral Gables but due to hurricane Ian, this reception had to be canceled.
- Mr. Montes de Oca made a comment that perhaps a representative from the IACC Committee could support and get involved in planning next year's Interamerican Conference of Mayors. The board member would be a liaison from the IACC Board to help serve and champion the conference. Mrs. Dreyfus-Ulvert informed Mr. Montes de Oca and the rest of the Board members, that Mrs. Collarte is the Vice Chair for that ITC committee, and she is also a member of the IACC.
- Vice Chair Anding thanked Maria Dreyfus-Ulvert and Sudeshna Chatterjee for coming to the meeting. He added that the next point on the agenda was the country report, City of Stellenbosch and gave the floor to Mr. Gillis.

COUNTRY REPORT

CITY OF STELLENBOSCH, SOUTH AFRICA

- Mr. Gillis reported that Leticia Perez transmitted a letter received from Ms. Van Deventer, Mayor of Stellenbosch to all the board members. He said that the original letter came from the Municipal Manager, but as required by the Sister City International, the communication must come from the Mayor of Stellenbosch to the Mayor of Coral Gables.
- Mr. Gillis discussed his proposal to recommend Stellenbosch, South Africa as a Coral Gables Sister City. He also provided a summary of the City of Coral Gables and its relationships with international cities which started back in 1957 and his proposed relationship with the City of Stellenbosch. He added that the city wishes to advance intercultural communications and cultural diversity. Mr. Gillis also spoke about the similarities between the cities: home to a university, tree-lined streets, rich cultural appeal and natural environments. He asked the board to support the recommendation with a motion to approve the proposed resolution which was submitted by email.
- Vice Chair Anding pointed out that the proposed resolution was first approved by the City's legal department, and second, it will need to be approved by all the IACC board members then it will need to be submitted to the commission for approval. Once this is done, we can go ahead and formally establish a Sister City relationship with the City of Stellenbosch. Alejandra Collarte made a motion to approve Stellenbosch as a Coral Gables Sister City. Mr. Gavarrete seconded the motion. He asked if anyone opposed and the motion was approved unanimously.
- Vice Chair Anding asked who would represent the committee at the upcoming commission meeting to talk about the City of Stellenbosch. Mr. Gillis informed the board that he will be happy to represent the board on that day.

QUITO, ECUADOR

- Mr. Montes de Oca reported that he does not have any updates from Quito, Ecuador since the last meeting he had with the Consul General of Ecuador, and with Consul Adjunct, Leticia Baquerizo. During that meeting, Ms. Baquerizo expressed that she would like to explore some of the Coral Gables venues, and she asked if Coral Gables can provide venues available to host specific events like the Ecuadorian Independence Day.
- Ms. Leticia Perez informed Mr. Montes de Oca and the Board members that she reached out to Ms. Baquerizo by mail to find out if she would like a tour of some of the venues in Coral Gables, but apparently Ms. Baquerizo went ahead and found a venue for her event in the City of Miami. Ms. Perez emphasized to Ms. Baquerizo that she would be happy to show her the venues we have in Coral Gables.
- Mr. Montes de Oca said he would like to reactivate the sister cities relationship with Quito and suggested that the next step should be to send a formal letter to the mayor.
- Vice Chair Anding recommended formalizing the Sister City relationship with the City of Quito before any event takes place in Coral Gables with Quito. Ms. Perez offered to reach out to the Consulate of Ecuador to get the contact information from the Mayor of Quito to send to Mr. Monte de Oca.

SAN ISIDRO, ARGENTINA.

- No updates regarding Argentina.

SANTA TECLA, EL SALVADOR

- Mr. Gavarrete reported that he has not received any communication from Santa Tecla.

LA ANTIGUA, GUATEMALA

- Mr. Gavarrete informed Board members that he recently met with the Mayor of La Antigua during a visit to the Consulate of Guatemala. They discussed some collaboration with the IT department in La Antigua. Mr. Gavarrete said the Mayor from La Antigua requested assistance from Miami-Dade County as well.
- Mr. Gillis said he received an email saying the Consulate of Guatemala moved to Coral Gables. Ms. Perez announced the receipt of an email from Mrs. Rosa Merida Mora, Consul General of Guatemala, where she confirmed the move of her office to Coral Gables and would delay a ribbon cutting until the Chancellor is able to attend. Ms. Perez added that as soon as she has any information, she will let the Board know.

AIX-EN-PROVENCE, FRANCE

- Vice Chair Anding reported that on July 17, 2022, he received an email from his counterpart in Aix-en-Provence with information on a very important and successful American football club in France called the Argonauts. The club was established in 1985 and were eight-time elite champions between 1990 and 2002. He suggested that this American football club cooperate with a football club in Coral Gables for the possible creation of an academy to train future high-level players and bring students wishing to combine their studies with the practice of their favorite sport. He proposed as a first step to exchange, knowledge, technical, tactical, physical, or mental, through clinics and or coaching, and some exchange in person and eventually some real games. He hopes something will materialize in the very near future.

OPEN DISCUSSION

- Vice Chair Anding called the next item on the agenda, the *Sister City Room at the Coral Gables Museum*. He asked if anyone wanted to say anything about this. Mrs. Belkys Perez who is the Interim Director for the Economic Development Department asked for the Board to elaborate on the item. Mr. Gillis commented that he asked for the item to be placed on the agenda because multiple people had told him that some items which had been on display in the Sister City's room had been removed. He did not know if they were just cleaning them, and they put them back or what the status of that was. Mrs. Perez informed Mr. Gillis that there were no items missing and asked specifically which items were missing so she could know what to look for. Mr. Gillis added that he had planned to go visit the SCR but the hurricane came, and he was not able to go; he then said he will follow up with Leticia and set up another time to visit the SCR.
- Vice Chair Anding added that it's good to hear that it still exists, and that these items may have been temporarily removed. He went on saying that it's really a great room and a wonderful testimony to our Sister City Relationship.

- Ms. Leticia Perez also made a comment regarding an empty glass case for Sevilla, Spain that is located at the SCR. She explained the reason it is empty is that, after the Sister City agreement between Sevilla and Coral Gables was approved, Miami and the rest of the world went into a lock down due to the Covid virus, so no items were ever placed in that case.
- Mrs. Alejandra Collarte reported on a Zoom call with the Panamanian American Chamber of Commerce. She informed the board that they are requesting her assistance with a business delegation coming from Panama covering sectors like IT, logistics and government. They are going to have a reception at the Intercontinental at Doral on November 17th; she informed the board that the GMCC and the Panamanian Chamber are working on the invitation together and as soon as it is finalized, she will forward it to Ms. Perez so she can extend it to other members.
- Ms. Leticia Perez answered a question that Mr. Gillis had regarding the International Cultural Events Program (ICEP). She informed Board members that this initiative was created initially by Mayor Lago last year and it consisted of 5 International Cultural events organized by 5 different Consulates located in Miami Dade County. The main goal for these countries is to coordinate an event in the city of Coral Gables where they can showcase their culture and folklore to its residents and business owners. Some of these events include the Day of the Dead, by the Consulate of Mexico, that took place on October 29; Carnival of Peru by the Consulate of Peru, that will be held on February of 2023 and Carnival of Barranquilla by the Consulate of Colombia that might take place on April of 2023. Once the city receives the invites for these events, she would share them with the board.
- Mr. Montes de Oca made a request to have a copy of the list of the Coral Gables Sister Cities, and Ms. Perez told him she will email him the list sometime this week.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

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