

# MIAMI BEACH SISTER CITIES

## COMMITTEE MEETING April 7, 2025 – 12:00 Noon Minutes

### 1. Call to Order

- a. Chairwoman Moni Cohen called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm.
- b. Liaison Heather Shaw indicated the members present Moni Cohen (Chair), Fred Bean, Mattie Bower, Allison Buttacavoli, Marcella Novela, John Ospitia, Janinha Piazzetta. Blanca Villarello,

### 2. Approve Minutes –

- i. The Committee unanimously approved the minutes for March 3

### 3. Vice Chair Nomination

- i. The committee opened nominations for the Vice Chair position.

**Motion** – *Member Bower moved to discuss Vice Chair nominations to the next meeting pending notification from the City Clerk’s office regarding Member Levey’s status. Seconded by Member Villarello.  
Motion Unanimously approved.*

### 4. Old Business

- a. Events
  - i. Cascais, Portugal Visit 2025 – Member Piazzetta described her experience while attending the event, meeting City Officials, and being so well accommodated by supporting staff. T-shirt costs were reimbursed. Member Piazzetta has created a PowerPoint show documenting the trip to show the committee.
- b. Review, discussion, disposition of MB Sister Cities Bylaws
  - i. Members discussed the Miami Beach Sister Cities Bylaws draft. Members suggested edits for the draft:
    1. Member Villarello expressed she wanted more language in the Bylaws to detail how the committee decides which member can go

to an event that has limited available tickets. Staff to incorporate edits and provide to members for next meeting's discussion.

**Motion** – *The Committee moved to approve the Bylaws with suggested changes. Member Bower/ Member Buttacavoli.*

*Motion unanimously approved.*

- c. Committee Focus for March – September 2025
  - i. Education Programming – 2026 Miami Beach Youth Music Festival – March 2026

Member Buttacavoli is exploring, with the City, a virtual Fujisawa partnership/participation in the 2026 Miami Beach Youth Music Festival.

- d. Discuss Potential Art Week Sister Cities Activation – December 2025
  - i. Chair Moni discussed creating a single event for one night in December (prior to Art Basel Opening night) for Sister Cities to bring artists and dignitaries to Miami Beach with a potential collaboration between the Chamber of Commerce or Lincoln Road. The Committee mentioned possible locations such as Rum Room or Time Out Marketplace. Emphasis was made about the proximity of an event so immediately after the Thanksgiving Holiday and prior to the Art Basel Opening. The Committee continues to consider possible non-conflicting dates. Sister Cities Friend Neary mentioned inviting the Committee Chair to the Art Basel Luncheon to strengthen unity between the Swiss Delegation and the Committee.
  - ii. Lincoln Road Marti Gras Festival (February 2026) – Commissioner Dominguez mentioned that she was approached by the Lincoln Road Business Improvement District about creating a Lincoln Road Marti Gras Festival, similar to the Lincoln Road Halloween Celebration. She asked the Sister Cities Committee to consider working with Lincoln Road BID because Marti Gras is akin to Carnival in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (MB Sister City). Commissioner Dominguez mentioned to have the event around a time when members from Brazil have availability to travel. Discussions were had to call the event “Carnival” verses “Mardi Gras” for a more international appeal. Timing was discussed, as February is saturated with the Boat Show, and the Wine and Food Festival. March was a tentative date; being mindful of the City’s Spring Break Closures. Ocean Drive was a possible location also. Commissioner Dominguez explained the item should be moved to the next meeting so she can discuss possible dates with Lincoln Rd BID, the City Administration, and determine possible

participating cities. Member Ospitia and Member Piazzetta were identified as Mardi Gras leads on the Committee, and were tasked with contacting their respective city liaison to solidify dates to discuss for the next meeting.

## 5. New Business

- a. The committee discussed upcoming sister Cities International dues of \$800 to be used from the annual budget.

**Motion-** *The Committee motioned to pay the \$800 SCI Dues from the annual budget. Member Cohen/ Member Ospitia.  
Motion unanimously approved.*

- b. The Committee received display case options to choose from and will return with their choices. Discussions included how to get approval to place the case in City Hall, and determining who will be responsible for the maintenance and rotation of gifts received. Chair Cohen and Member Buttacavoli agreed to physically walk locations around the Convention Center and City Hall to find appropriate areas for the display case. Digital documentation of case choices will be sent to the committee for their review and approval during the next meeting.
- c. Chair Cohen expressed the possibility of each Sister city having corresponding signage on Lincoln Road including cultural clothing or food representing the city.
- d. Member Villarello mentioned being contacted by the General Counsel of Mexico for a possible event in Cozumel and will return with updates.

## 6. Good and Welfare

- a. Chair Cohen discussed how the Nahariya, Israel ambulance program will be sending a quarterly activity for review.
- b. Sister Cities Friend Neary suggested having Sister Cities featured in the Miami Beach Magazine highlighting Cultural relevancy as part of Miami Beach's international appeal.
- c. Chair Cohen mentioned the possibility of each corresponding Sister City to have a sign on Lincoln Road showcasing cultural attire, music, and regional foods as a means to foster increased visibility of neighboring Sister Cities to Miami Beach residents and visitors alike.

d. The Committee discussed the street naming ceremony for Member Bower and the importance of being part of a community.

7. **Adjournment** – Meeting Prematurely Adjourned at 1:08pm due to fire alarm Notification.  
Next meeting is Monday May 5, 2025 Continental Hotel at noon.