

# MIAMI BEACH SISTER CITIES

## COMMITTEE MEETING

December 2, 2024 – 12:00 Noon  
Minutes

### 1. Call to order

Chairwoman Moni called the meeting to order at 12:04 pm

Liaison Heather Shaw indicated the Members present: Moni Cohen (Chair), Laura Levey (Vice Chair), Allison Buttacavoli, John Ospitia, Janinha Piazzetta, and Blanca Villarello.

### 2. Old Business

#### a. Events:

##### i. Art Week – Switzerland Chamber of Commerce

Member Blanca, event lead, shared the details of the Tuesday, December 3, 2024 Sister Cities Reception honoring Sister City Basel, Switzerland and the Consulate of Switzerland in the Rum Room. Member Blanca shared:

- Invitations have been sent and accepted by Switzerland Honorary Consul Riedi and the Swiss American Chamber of Commerce
- Invitation have been sent to Sister Cities members, Mayor's Office, Chambers
- Expected guests attending is 50
- Draft Run of Show
- Decorations – Laura (flowers) / Heather (Signage)
- Food & Beverage – Blanca; Luis (payment)
- Registration/Check-in – Allison
- Gifts – Moni (Candles)
- Photographer (Blanca)
- Press Release is complete

Blanca asked they everyone arrive by 3pm and no later than 3:30pm to receive guests. and it is anticipated that the financing process will be smoother than previous attempts due to the current stage of the project and its capitalization.

##### ii. Fujisawa Marathon

The members were told that Aron Soriano will not be participating in the run. Member Allison volunteered but asked for a day or two to discuss with her family and that she would confirm. Members suggested Luis Wong. Blanca also suggested Kevin Krueger, a member of the Miami Beach Chamber and runner. The members suggested that Luis Wong was better because he is working with the Sister Cities Committee. Member Laura express her interest in joining the delegation in Fujisawa and that she would confirm within a few days.

Chair Moni requested that Heather Shaw attend to represent Miami Beach and to serve as the point person for the delegation. Members agreed to Allison Buttacavoli and Luis Wong running, Heather Shaw attending as Miami Beach representative. Heather asked that those interested in attending to please contact her by Wednesday, December 4, 2024 and that the Fujisawa government only offered to host three (3) attendees (including the two runners). Heather said she will ask Fujisawa if another Miami Beach Sister Cities representative could attend.

Heather Shared that the two (2) medals for the male and female winners of the marathon were received from the Mayor's Office and would be shipped to Fujisawa before the end of the month. Heather also asked for gift suggestions for the Fujisawa delegation to gift to the host.

**iii. Portugal Dance Now Launch and Cascais Visit**

Members discussed hosting the Dance Now Launch event celebrating the Dance Now dance performance collaboration with Cascais, Portugal in February 2025.

The members shared that a previous launch was held at the Jewish Museum with a short performance, by Dance Now, to kick off the traveling team. Invitees include the Mayor, Commission, community leaders, and the City Manager.

Vice Chair Laura and Member Janinha volunteered to lead the project/event preparation with Dance Now director, Hannah Baumgarten.

The suggested dates for the event are Monday, February 17, 2025 in the Rum Room or Venue or Sunday, February 23, 2025 in the Jewish Museum, from 2:00 to 3:00 pm. Members will contact the Mayor's Office/aides to confirm the Mayor's attendance.

In March, 2025, Dance Now will travel to Cascais, Portugal to perform on March 12, 2025. Vice Chair Laura and Member Janinha expressed interest in joining Dance Now as representative of Miami Beach Sister Cities.

**3. New Business**

Chair Moni shared that in the January 2025 meeting, she would like the members to focus on the goals and objectives of the Sister Cities Committee, including short-term and long-term projects. She shared that during events at the last minute is not effective nor practical and that all projects, programs, and event should be planned no less than three (3) months in advance.

The Chair shared, for the January 2025 meeting, she would like the members to select a Sister City that they would like to be the point person. Two members can be on each city to determine and present activations because to be strategic, the members must identify 3-4 activations for 2025 (including the Fujisawa Marathon and the Dance Now Launch/Cascais visit). The Chair said that the committee must work on identifying which cities are active, can be more active, should be label a "friend city", or considered dormant.

Member John mentioned that he has contacted all of the Sister Cities and will provide a briefing.

Member Blanca asked about the files and Heather shared that there aren't very many files and that staff is trying to rebuild the files, including a binder with what has been done with Miami Beach Sister Cities in the past.

Chair Moni also mentioned that she would like the members to work on sub-committees, with Sister Cities "Friends". Subcommittees could include, but not limited to,

- a. Business Development & Trade;
- b. Technology & Innovation
- c. Education
- d. Youth
- e. Sports & Wellness
- f. Sustainability & Environment
- g. Art & Culture
- h. Transportation & Mobility
- i. Housing

The Chair also mentioned that she would like Sister Cities Friend George Neary (former Chair of the Sister Cities Committee) to assist with the rebuilding of the history and to address the Committee in January about the history. She would also like to invite Grisette Roque Marcos (Executive Director of the Miami Beach Visitor Convention Authority) to address international protocol for Miami Beach delegations.

**4. Good and Welfare**

**5. Adjournment** - Next meeting is January 6, 2025