

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA’S ACTIONS TO NORMALIZE CULTURAL, HUMANITARIAN, ECONOMIC AND DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH CUBA, AND URGING THAT WHEN RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO NATIONS ARE APPROPRIATELY NORMALIZED, THE CITY OF TAMPA SERVE AS THE LOCATION FOR FORMALIZING THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC TIES, WHICH MAY THEN BE REFERRED TO AS ‘THE TAMPA ACCORD’ BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND CUBA; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, in the late 19th century, Cuban patriot José Martí rallied cigar workers in Ybor City to lend their support in the Cuban War for Independence from Spain. During his visits to Tampa, he stayed in a boarding house in Ybor City, on land where José Martí Park is located and where his statue stands today; and

WHEREAS, in 1902, Cuban immigrants founded El Circulo Cubano, which means Circle of Cubans. It was a mutual aid society to “bind all Cuban residents to Tampa into a fraternal group, to offer assistance and help to the sick.” The club provided a gathering place for members and served as a unifying force in the Cuban community. The present 4-story Cuban Club sits on the original site and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Constructed in 1917, the building contained a 2-story theater, pharmacy, library, ballroom and cantina. Imported tile, stained glass windows and elaborately carved sgraffito spandrels decorated the structure, and the ballroom ceiling displayed elaborate murals. It once housed a gymnasium, complete with lockers, a swimming pool, and two bowling lanes. The patio, located west of the building, has hosted boxing matches, famous Cuban entertainers such as Benny Moré and Celia Cruz as well as the big band sounds of Glenn Miller and Tommy Dorsey. In 2007, it hosted presidential candidate Barack Obama. Since the founding of the Cuban Club, every President of Cuba with the one exception of its current president has walked through the doors of El Circulo Cubano de Tampa; and

WHEREAS, until 1961, there was a Cuban consulate in Ybor City; and

WHEREAS, on December 17, 2014, President Barack Obama took action to expand travel to Cuba under general licenses in the twelve categories of travel to Cuba authorized by law, to facilitate financial transactions between the United States and Cuba, authorized additional goods from Cuba to be imported by American citizens, and authorized expanded commercial sales and exports to Cuba; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of State has had several rounds of negotiations with the Cuban government to further lessen restrictions and to accelerate the potential for cultural, humanitarian, economic and diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba; and

WHEREAS, on April 11, 2015, President Barack Obama met with Cuban President Raúl Castro at the Summit of the Americas in Panama City, furthering the process of re-establishing diplomatic ties and signifying a historic shift in the relations between the two countries; and

WHEREAS, on April 14, 2015, the White House announced that President Obama intends to remove Cuba from the State Department’s list of nations that sponsor terrorism, an action that will hasten the restoration of diplomatic relations; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the cultural and historic ties, the close geographic proximity between the City of Tampa and Cuba makes Tampa a natural partner for bilateral trade and economic development with Cuba when relations between our two countries are normalized. Port Tampa Bay is the closest deep

water port to Havana, and more than 175,000 people have flown from Tampa International Airport to Cuba since resumption of flights began in 2011; and

WHEREAS, the Tampa City Council believes that if the City of Tampa can regain its historic role as the center of U.S. trade with Cuba, such trade would have an enormously positive impact on the City and the local economy. The Tampa Bay region could leverage that role into serving as the premier gateway to Latin American markets; and

WHEREAS, the Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce, which has been promoting the potential economic and social benefits to the Tampa area from trade with Cuba, advocates that the final agreement re-establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries be signed in the City of Tampa, and has suggested that the agreement be referred to as 'The Tampa Accord'; and

WHEREAS, when relations between the United States and Cuba are appropriately normalized, the economic and social exchange between our two nations will take on considerable importance. As that day approaches, the City of Tampa should again fulfill its long-standing role in facilitating that exchange by serving as the location for the historic event of formalizing the re-establishment of diplomatic ties between the United States and Cuba.

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL  
OF THE CITY OF TAMPA, FLORIDA:

Section 1. That the City Council of the City of Tampa supports President Barack Obama's actions to normalize cultural, humanitarian, economic and diplomatic relations with Cuba, and hereby urges that when relations between our two nations are appropriately normalized, the City of Tampa serve as the location for formalizing the re-establishment of diplomatic ties, which may then be referred to as 'The Tampa Accord' between the United States and Cuba.

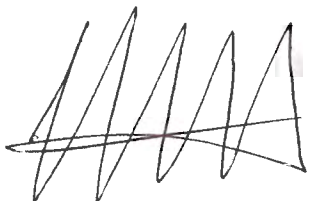
Section 2. That the proper officers of the City of Tampa are hereby authorized to do all things necessary and proper in order to carry out and make effective the provisions of this resolution.

Section 3. That this resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.


PASSED AND ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TAMPA, FLORIDA,  
ON APRIL 16, 2015.

ATTEST:

  
SHIRLEY FOX-KNOWLES  
CITY CLERK

  
FRANK REDDICK  
CHAIRMAN, TAMPA CITY COUNCIL

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

  
MARTIN SHELBY  
CITY COUNCIL ATTORNEY