



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Virtual meeting of Gibraltar and Sister City Raleigh to discuss transport, tourism and innovation**

After celebrating the start of their Sister City relationship in September 2020, Raleigh and Gibraltar elected officials connected via Zoom on Tuesday, November 17, 2020, discussing pandemic-related legislative challenges, transportation needs, and a mutual lifelong desire to serve the communities they represent.

The Minister for Business, Tourism, Transport and the Port in Gibraltar, the Hon Vijay Daryanani expressed that he was optimistic that 2021 will see Gibraltar return to a bustling city center, full of pedestrians and cyclists, along with cruise ship visitors making their stop at the Port. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic the cruise ship traffic in the Port of Gibraltar averaged 230+ visits annually and the Minister is positive that when the pandemic ends, Gibraltar will be able to adapt very quickly to a different situation.

Raleigh City Councilmember, Jonathan Melton also shared his hopes for 2021. Melton's plans are to expand public transit frequency and service through a Bus Rapid Transit system, along with developing plans for regional light rail and commuter rail systems. An \$80 million affordable housing bond was presented by Councilmember Melton and team and recently approved by Raleigh voters.

Both officials were questioned regarding their positions and their paths to office. Minister Daryanani explained he found himself always wanting to serve the community, joining the Liberal Party at 25 years-old and recently being elected to his current position in 2019. Councilmember Melton also expressed their desire to serve politically from a young age, relaying a "If not me, then who?" mentality pushing him to run for Raleigh City Council in 2019 and being elected as an At-Large Member to represent every city district.

The invitation was made for a Gibraltar delegation to visit the capital of North Carolina, along with continuing the stakeholder conversations and shared innovations for tourism, transportation, and innovation. Through their growing Sister Cities relationship, both Gibraltar and Raleigh are continuing to develop connections for the purposes of promoting peace, through respect, cooperation, and understanding.

Minister for Tourism and Transport, the Hon Vijay Daryanani MP said: "I was delighted to be able to participate in a virtual meeting, organised by AmCham Gibraltar through its affiliate Sister Cities

Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport

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Gibraltar, with Council Member Jonathan Melton from Raleigh City Council. We exchanged views on tourism, transport and related matters and I look forward to future collaborations with the city of Raleigh, post Covid.”

**ENDS**