TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Councilmember Linda Maio

SUBJECT: Enable Eric Leenson to be Berkeley’s Emissary at the upcoming gathering CANAL

RECOMMENDATION
Request Eric Leenson to be Berkeley’s emissary at the upcoming gathering of CANAL (Caribbean North American Laboratory for Social and Solidarity Economies) in Barcelona, Spain, May 22-24, which will include a report back to Berkeley on innovative approaches and policies on how Berkeley might foster socially-responsible entities.

BACKGROUND
Eric Leenson, founder of the La Peña Cultural Center, currently works to advance socially responsible enterprises in the US and the rest of the Americas. Eric is president of SOL2 Economics, whose mission is to strengthen cooperation between socially responsible enterprises and help create new ones where possible. SOL2 Economics is founded upon the principle that socially responsible companies provide good, sustainable business solutions while reducing marginalization for those with limited opportunities. Massive income inequality, high unemployment, and devastating environmental degradation demonstrate today, more than ever, that old economic approaches no longer work, if they ever did. Traditional capitalism is broken, and the consequences are borne by the young, minorities, women and the undereducated. As advisor to CANAL, Eric brings together representatives of cities, universities and other groups to exchange innovative ideas and best practices for local sustainable development.

The next gathering of CANAL will take place May 22-24, 2018, hosted by the government of Barcelona. Participants include Havana, Cuba; Madison, Wisconsin; Montreal, Canada; Puebla, Mexico; San Jose, Costa Rica. Invitations are outstanding for San Juan, Puerto Rico and Santo Domingo Oeste, Dominican Republic. Eric Leenson will represent Berkeley and report back, sharing innovative ideas and policy recommendations. His attendance is on a pro bono basis.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY
No environmental sustainability impact.
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS
None

CONTACT
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