

Small Business Council & Membership Committee Meeting Minutes
November 10, 2016

Committee members present: Todd Setzer, John Sawyer, Chuck Gibbons, Eric Hunt, Kimberly Causey-Gomez, Robert Blair, Stephanie Bohardt, O'Neil McCoy, Bernita Platt, Jamie Saunders.

Staff present: Diana Greene, Cindy Gettig, Kori Hippe, Amanda Blomquist.

Others present: Becky Large.

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m.

I. Welcome & Introductions

II. Champion Autism Network

Becky Large said she moved to the area from New Jersey five years ago and said there seemingly weren't a lot of services for families on the autism spectrum. She said children on the spectrum often get overwhelmed from sights and sounds and have meltdowns or tantrums. She found some support in Charleston, but wanted something at home. About three years ago she said she started sensory friendly movies where the sounds are reduced and the lights are up and children have freedom to move around. She said families clamored for more.

Through a grant she started educating restaurants on the needs of these families.

All of this, she explained, started the initiative to be an autism friendly place for tourism.

Surfside Beach issued a resolution in Jan. 2016 to be an autism friendly town. In Feb. 2016, Champion Autism Network became an official nonprofit.

She said she's partnering with the chamber to spread the message.

Todd Setzer said kudos, and asked if she had any idea on the stats of how many kids are affected. Large said in 2010 it was 1 in 110, in 2015 it was 1 in 68, she said now it's likely closer to 1 in 45 and is more prevalent in boys than girls.

Setzer asked if any other towns have initiatives like this.

Large said no. She said it's attracted a lot of attention. She said other areas have reached out to her so they don't have to recreate the wheel in their towns.

Chuck Gibbons asked if there are any partnerships with high school students and suggested she reach out to Horry County Schools.

Robert Blair encouraged her to speak with Matt Hogue at Coastal Carolina University.

III. Renewals Updates

Cindy Gettig gave the council a renewal update. Our goal was 712,000 we came out around 720,000. We achieved our 90% retention rate. She said some renewals are still trickling in.

IV. Upcoming MBACC Events

Gettig reminded the council of upcoming events. Christmas Town Dec. 11, the 2017 Member-to-Member Business Expo Jan. 19 (the theme is cartoons) and the Legislative Reception Jan. 24, 2017.

V. Affinity Program

Kori Hippe told the council about two new affinity programs that are non-dues revenue

programs. One is Call a Doctor and the other is an employee wellness program. Hippe said both would be offered to our members at a discounted cost and the chamber would receive some money from it.

Eric Hunt asked if Call A Doctor would replace iSelect. Hippe said yes.

Diana Greene asked if either program is working with other area chambers. Hippe said she didn't think so.

a. Call A Doctor

b. Total Ownership Employee Wellness Program

Blair moved to send the new programs to the Board of Directors for approval. Gomez second. All approved.

VI. Small Business Saturday

Hippe encouraged the council to take Small Business Saturday goodies home. She said we have a list of businesses participating with special deals that we promote online at ShopOurMembers.com, on social media, and with a printed list at our front desk. We encourage the public to bring receipts totaling \$150 for entry into a drawing for five \$250 gift cards. Last year we had 1,300 receipts come in.

VII. City of Myrtle Beach Shopping Days

Greene said the city is asking for suggestions for two weekends to hold Myrtle Beach Shopping Days – which are 72-hour periods where the city allows businesses to have sidewalk displays without permits. The two weekends have typically been the weekend after Thanksgiving and Easter weekend.

Council suggested Can-Am days kick off, the first weekend in December, the weekend before Easter, first weekend in May, or tying it into a weekend where there's a festival going on.

Todd Setzer thanked the council and committee members on behalf of himself and Carla Schuessler for their participation throughout the year.

The meeting adjourned at 4:06 p.m.