

# Diversity Council Meeting Minutes

## April 21, 2016

**Council members present:** Travis Overton, Yvette Jefferson, Erika Hill, Lisa Coombs, Carla Schuessler, Tim McCray, Coleman Randall, Gina Trimarco, Tiffany Andrews, Miriam Berrouet.

**Council members not present:** Natalie Daise, April Garner, Kenny Generette, Brad Jordan

**Staff present:** Diana Greene, Amanda Blomquist, Susan Phillips.

The meeting was called to order at 9:07 a.m.

### I. Welcome & Introductions

### II. Recent Media Coverage of the Council

Diana Greene told the council that an article about the creation of the council in the Grand Strander prompted coverage by two local TV stations. The stories were played for the council.

### III. Chamber Update

#### a. Marketing

Susan Phillips gave the council an update on what her team is doing from a marketing/PR perspective. She said there's a focus on national PR, particularly diversity publications. Of those diverse publications from PR trips that will be coming into market are Latino Magazine, Houseful of Nicholes, Leslie Royal, Ebony Magazine, Black Enterprise Magazine, Black Bride & Groom Magazine, Siempre Mujer, African American Golfer's Digest, Vernon Chung (MoVernie TV in Canada), Ashlee Tuck (Will Drink for Travel – NYC blogger), The Sophisticated Life (ATL), GGN (Canada).

Gina Trimarco said it's pretty exciting to have media that's never been here before coming to market.

Yvette Jefferson said she'd love to have a premier minority or African American business that we can take African American tourists to.

Phillips said she agreed and said she's previously had success with Gullah Geechee expert. She said she needed help from people like the council because she needs a hook to get the media interested. She said she'd like more restaurants that are able to treat the media members with kid gloves so they have the perfect visit.

Carla Schuessler mentioned that True BBQ was recently taken to Charlotte for a press trip that went well.

Tim McCray said the city needs to do a better job at welcoming bikers.

Trimarco asked if anything is being done from an economic development perspective to attract diversity businesses to come to Myrtle Beach. She

said someone found a story about her moving to Myrtle Beach and starting a business and called to see if she could pick her brain. Trimarco said this woman is now a client of hers as well as a chamber member.

**b. Group Sales**

Diana Greene said Kim DaRoja wanted to pass on information about MAMFAM – the Monday after the Masters Familiarization trip. It brings in 15 people and it's heavily vetted. It's an honor to be included. She said this year we had Eduardo Arabu, manager for administration and special events at the National Hispanic Corporate Council in town. It's the first time someone from that demographic has been involved in MAMFAM.

**c. Membership**

Greene said on the membership side we contacted members to find out which members do we currently have in the organization. We had 125 responses, some fit into multiple demographics. From the responses, we have 115 woman owned, 9 veteran owned, 2 African-American owned, 2 Asian Pacific American owned, 1 disabled owned and 1 Native American owned.

Five of our members are certified DBEs.

Tim McCray said it's a small number throughout the county and that should be a goal for us to get them certified.

Amanda Blomquist said it looked like it was expensive to register with the SBA.

Trimarco said it was laborious.

McCray said there might be an application fee, but there shouldn't be any other fees for DBEs.

Blomquist said one of our members said we forgot the LGBTQA demographic. At the time we hadn't included them in our discussions and she wasn't sure if they qualified for DBEs or what the Small Business Administration has for them. She asked if that a demographic sector that we should include in our list?

McCray said he doesn't see the state having that as a category.

Andrews said it should be part of the information we are collecting.

Coleman Randall and Trimarco agreed. Council consented to add the LGBTQA demographic.

**IV. South Carolina Bathroom Bill**

Greene shared an article about the proposed South Carolina Bathroom Bill that would require people to use public bathrooms that match their biological sex. The council agreed this is not a bill that they would support and said it would be damaging to business and likely the tourism industry.

V. **Goals Moving Forward Year 1**

Greene handed out ideas for the mission statement of the council and the goals.

The council agreed to move forward with the following mission statement: "The Business Diversity Council's primary mission is to promote growth and enhance community awareness of women, minorities and veterans in business.

The overall goals are to encourage entrepreneurship, support current minority, woman and veteran-owned businesses, connect with programs and services to uplift, support the diverse business community and help the community recognize the importance of the minority consumer.

Other goals discussed included a minority business expo, a networking event tied to a Business After Hours, educational opportunities and an online resource center. The council plans to give a minority related award at the 2017 Annual Meeting.

*The meeting adjourned at 10:32 a.m.*