

Diversity Council Meeting Minutes

July 21, 2016

Council members present: Terrance Herriott, Travis Overton, Carla Schuessler, Tim McCray, Coleman Randall, Gina Trimarco, Tiffany Andrews, Miriam Berrouet, April Garner, Kenny Generette.

Staff present: Diana Greene, Amanda Blomquist, Kema Faulk, Kori Hippe, Cindy Gettig, Keith Pierce.

Others Present: Garry James

The meeting was called to order at 9:03 a.m.

I. **Welcome & Introductions**

After all present introduced themselves, Terrance Herriott introduced Kathy Richardson to the council. Richardson asked the council to help support the construction of I-73 by signing a letter to be submitted to the Army Corp of Engineers during a public comment period.

II. **Office of Small & Minority Business Affairs**

Garry James, director of the Office of Small and Minority Business Contracting & Certification, spoke to the council about his office which he said promotes the interests of small and minority businesses. His office, which is a state department, does not have grants but instead helps businesses get certified and provides networking opportunities.

Certification does not guarantee grants will be awarded. To be certified, businesses must be in business for a minimum of one year, 51 percent ownership must have management responsibilities, personal total net worth cannot exceed \$750,000, must have an office in South Carolina. If denied for any reason, the employer can reapply one year later. If approved, certification is valid for 5 years.

State Procurement Contracts are required to spend 10 percent of their annual budget to MBE or WBE businesses. Firms that subcontract a portion of work to certified minority firms are eligible for an income tax credit.

The SMBCC has a memorandum of understanding with the SCDOT disadvantaged business entity program. If you have the DBE certification, you don't need the SMBCC certification.

Benefits of the certification include networking, solicitations, an annual trade fair, a quarterly newsletter and regional workshops/seminars. For more information and the application, council was directed to the website, www.smbcc.sc.gov/smbcc.

Tim McCray said Horry County isn't following this law that requires state procurement contracts to spend 10% of their annual budget with MBE/WBE businesses. He asked how long this has been in existence because he's never heard of it and has been working on this for 7 years.

James suggested talking with the procurement offices. He said this is a state law that's been in effect since 1981.

To be certified, qualified businesses can fill out an application online (www.smbcc.sc.gov). James said businesses already certified as DBEs do not need to do their certification as there is reciprocity with SCDOT.

Schuessler asked what the best way to find the certified businesses is.

James said there is a directory listing all certified businesses on the website in alphabetical order.

III. Chamber Update

a. Marketing

Keith Pierce introduced himself to the council as the new PR strategist. He comes from 25+ years of PR and marketing experience in government, nonprofit and corporate. His career started in the military. He said he's still learning and looks forward to working with everyone. His focus is local, regional and national media.

b. Group Sales

A group sales representative could not attend the meeting. Diana Greene shared a list of groups the department coming into the area that represent diversity markets.

c. Membership

i. Diversity Award Addition

Cindy Gettig researched diversity awards offered by other chambers. She provided a list including the parameters and requirements for the award. The council was asked to look more at the list and submit suggestions for an award to give out at the 2017 Annual Meeting by Friday, July 29. The suggestions will be discussed and voted on during the next meeting.

Greene reminded the council that we don't want to duplicate awards already presented in our area. If similar such awards exist we'd prefer to encourage our members to apply for those.

ii. Diversity Council Socials/Networking Options

Kema Faulk reached out to member restaurants about hosting a diversity council mixer. She said Travinia responded with possible dates. The council agreed to hold the mixer Sept. 8.

Tiffany Andrews said she really wants to foster mixing and mingling. She suggested doing something like a key party where you get a key

and lock upon entrance to the party.

Gina Trimarco said the council should also split up and try to help foster that networking.

Gettig also encouraged the council members to invite a friend.

Trimarco asked if the mixer would be open to nonmembers. Greene said yes, because of the nature of the diversity council.

iii. **Diversity resource page on web**

Kori Hippe told the council she is working on a page to add to our website. She'll have a preview for the council soon and welcomes suggestions.

iv. **Diversity Seminars**

Hippe said she is looking to schedule more diversity-related classes for Chamber Academy. If you visit ChamberAcademy.com you'll find a list of current scheduled classes. Hippe said she is seeking class ideas and potential presenters. Council was asked to provide seminar topics or potential presenters by Friday, Aug. 12.

IV. **Input from council**

Herriott asked the council if they had any topics that needed to be discussed or any concerns.

McCray said he had a concern about an email blast from a magazine that advertised something about diversity. He said the Diversity Council should've been made aware of the email before it was sent out. The email was purchased by a member.

Garner said she thinks the email timing was bad. It came out about the same time the council was starting and seemed to indicate a partnership between the chamber and the business.

Trimarco said Carolina Improv might be working with the state on a campaign she's looking for high school age kids to attend a free showcase July 27 at 1 p.m. It's an improve comedy show with an anti-tobacco element. If awarded the contract, a special comedy troupe will be created specifically for this show. She asked for help getting people in that age range (13-17) to the test show.

Schuessler said she will soon have openings on her board at Habitat for Humanity. She asked anyone who might be interested to contact her. The term will start in January.

The meeting adjourned at 10:23 a.m.