

**Small Business Council
Meeting Minutes
September 24, 2015**

Committee Members Present: Ted Cligrow, Mary Henry, John Sawyer, John Rickard, Lee Zulanch, Bernita Platt, Todd Setzer..

Committee Members Not Present: Lynn Bastian, Peter Gasca, Yvette Jefferson, Susie McCaskill, O'Neil McCoy.

Staff Present: Diana Greene, Cindy Gettig, Rachel Ammon, Amanda Blomquist.

I. Welcome & Introductions

Todd Setzer called the meeting to order at 3:33 p.m.

II. Minutes Approval

The minutes were approved.

III. Renewals Update

Cindy Gettig told the council we are at 97% of our goal. We have 149 businesses that have not renewed and we will continue working to get those for at least the next month. We have renewed 2,101 members.

Lee Zulanch asked if this was the first year for the raffles. Cindy said we always did advertising packages, but this is the first year we added the staycation packages and said we saw record renewals in May and June that I attribute to the program.

IV. Culinary Tourism

Rachel Ammon gave the council an overview of the culinary tourism program and showed them the section of the website on VisitMyrtleBeach.com. She said the site is intended to include comprehensive information about the culinary style of the area, information about the chefs and various awards the restaurants have earned. We've interviewed local chefs. They've also added links to local restaurants in the news. The Culinary Tourism program also will be included in a media guide to help get our restaurants in the news and blogs.

Lee Zulanch suggested connecting with the American Culinary Federation as well as Souper Supper. He also suggested showcasing Certified SC members.

V. Grand Strand Restaurants

Amanda Blomquist showed the council GrandStrandRestaurants.com. She explained that all our member restaurants are listed on the site. The featured restaurant list is our advertisers and is what prompted us to make some changes to the site. Sam Snead's thought they weren't part of the site because they aren't listed on the "featured restaurant" list. Amanda Blomquist said we're keeping the restaurant search, but everything else will be changing and you'll see more video and photo content. We wanted to bring this to you to see what kind of content you want to see so we can make this a user friendly, all-encompassing site to promote our member restaurants and our food events.

Bernita Platt asked if it's just restaurant information or if there were reviews.

Mary Henry suggested a map link.

Lee Zulanch asked if there's links to the restaurants websites? The answer is yes. He said this could be huge and said restaurants could basically write off the cost of membership with the kind of support you're hoping this site generates.

VI. Diversity Council

Diana Greene told the council a diversity council is being created for next year. She said it's intended to marriage small business and diversity to help promote existing programs and events for minorities, women and veterans. This will be a member and community style council. The goals of the committee are to address the needs of minority business community, encourage entrepreneurship, support current minority-owned businesses, connections to programs and services to uplift, support minority business people, bring more inclusion to veteran's and women's issues.

Bernita Platt said the SBA does a really good job tracking women owned businesses because there's lots of different certifications geared toward them and minorities.

VII. Small Business Saturday

Cindy Gettig told the council we will be promoting Small Business Saturday again. We'll be running our Shop Our Members holiday campaign Nov. 1 to Dec. 18. We will feature member discounts on the Shop our Members Website along with handing out the discounts at all welcome centers. We ask shoppers to bring receipts to be entered into a gift card drawing.

VIII. Senior discounts, sidewalk sale promotions and City of North Myrtle Beach Projects

Diana Greene said she wanted to pick the council's brains on things we've done with the City of Myrtle Beach and other municipalities. One of the things is senior discounts and the sidewalk sales with Myrtle Beach, we send it out, we promote it, but we don't get a good response.

Mary Henry suggested connecting with the Grand Strand Senior Center which is rebranding and connecting with AARP which lists discounts for seniors.

The meeting adjourned at 4:39 p.m.