

**Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**  
**Chamber Boardroom**  
January 26, 2022 - 9:00 am

**Attendees:** Rachel Beckerman, Woody Brownson, Kristen Call, Pablo Chavez, Kenny Generette, Alex Husner, Theresa Koren, Ross Martin, Billy McGonigal, Patrick Norton, John Rutenberg, Alberto Semidei, Carla Schuessler, Todd Setzer, Chris Shroff, Eileen Soisson, Amy Stevens, Alicia Thompson, Heidi Vukov

**Absent:** Tracy Conner, Jessica Greene, Seth McCoy, Samantha Slapnik, Ryan Swaim

**Guests:** Brian Parker, Scott Jones, with AECOM

**Staff:** Karen Riordan, Diana Green, Cindy Gettig, Jimmy Gray, Randy McKeel, Bob Harris, Stuart Butler, Diane Charno, Rebecca Edgar, Jonathan Paris

**CALL TO ORDER / APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Alex Husner, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. The December 16, 2021, meeting minutes were reviewed. Upon a motion made by Alberto Semidei and seconded by Carla Schuessler, the December 16, 2021, minutes were approved as presented upon a unanimous vote.

**PRESENTATIONS**

Brian Parker and Scott Jones, with AECOM, presented the final report for the Myrtle Beach E-Sports Market Assessment. A community meeting is scheduled later in the day to begin the formation of an Esports coalition and encourage involvement in the initiative. An Esports FAM tour is planned for late March with the expected participation of 8-10 Esports promoters.

**DIVISIONS REPORTS**

*Legislative Advocacy*

Jimmy Gray reported that the first meeting of the Advocacy Council took place on January 14. The Council heard reports from Secretary of Commerce Harry Lightsey on activities taking place within the Department and Al Simpson, with Mercury, on federal advocacy topics. Jimmy Gray provided an update on the recent local advocacy campaign which will include direct mail, social

media, digital ads, email and radio. The 2022 Grand Strand Legislative Reception is scheduled for Tuesday, February 15<sup>th</sup> at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center.

### *Community Engagement*

Alicia Thompson, Chair, reported that the Community Engagement Committee will refine objectives and invite further members for 2022. The goal is to merge efforts of the three subcommittees and attend larger group presentations. Board members were encouraged to make recommendations for potential committee members.

### *Diversity, Equity & Inclusion*

Eileen Soisson, Chair, reported that the 2022 DEI Council meeting schedule has been finalized with the first meeting taking place on February 3<sup>rd</sup>. TD Bank will again sponsor the upcoming Evolve series. Membership of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council is open to the public and chamber membership is not a requirement.

### *Investor Relations*

Alberto Semidei presented a list of 22 new member-investors for approval. Alicia Thompson made a motion to approve the new members as presented. Seconded by Ross Martin, all new members were approved upon a unanimous vote by the Board.

All Business Development council chairs and vice chairs have met and established their respective meetings for 2022. Annual Awards nominations are open and votes can be cast via the chamber website.

### *Finance*

John Rutenberg, Finance Review Committee, Chair, reviewed the Statement of Activities and Balance Sheet for the period ending December 31, 2021. The Finance team is working on closing the books for 2021 and the audit is scheduled to begin on January 31<sup>st</sup>.

### *Marketing Council*

Woody Brownson, Chair, reviewed the upcoming 2022 marketing highlights, including “You Belong at the Beach” brand messaging and an international effort testing new markets in UK and Germany. The VisitMyrtleBeach.com Website RFP has been issued with vendor selection scheduled for late March. The 2022 Visitor Guides and Meeting & Groups Planners were finalized and printed this month.

### *Sales*

Bob Harris reported that the sales team will be rolling out new a new site experience program which will improve tour bookings and maximize the overall touring experience. The sales team recently returned from a bus trade show with 7 new leads for group tours. Jonathon Paris

informed the group of upcoming sports tourism shows and initiatives. Myrtle Beach was awarded the 2023 Sunbelt men's and women's outdoor track event location.

### **CEO REPORT**

Karen Riordan gave an A-Tax presentation to the Surfside beach Town Council earlier in the week. The Town of Surfside Beach has expressed interest in working closer with Myrtle Beach on tourism marketing and sales. Karen met with the new president of the SC Restaurant and Lodging Association and will explore the MBACC partnership model as the search continues for a new MBAHA President & CEO. Ms. Riordan and Jimmy Gray have been asked to serve as ex officio to the SCRLA Board.

The advocacy team will focus on I-73 in 2022 and will travel to Columbia frequently to meet with legislators promoting the interstate in favor of improving the evacuation process and workforce opportunities. Continued efforts include school start date and advocating for RIDE 4 infrastructure improvements.

The Partnership Grand Strand Foundation has been formed and the capital campaign is underway to reach the goal of \$3M over the next 5 years for the purpose of addressing key issues affecting Grand Strand growth and prosperity. The PGS Foundation will host a public kick-off event on February 24<sup>th</sup>.

### **ADJOURN**

Upon a duly made motion and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 10:38 am.