

Business Diversity Council Meeting Minutes February 23, 2018

Council members present: Kenny Generette, Sarah Miles, Tiffany Andrews (on the phone), Amber Campbell, April Garner, Wynn Godbold, Radha Herring, Terrance Herriott, Dr. Adriel Hilton, Yvette Jefferson, Barbara McGhee, Jay Rowe, Jackie Snyder, Gina Trimarco.

Staff present: Cindy Gettig, Diane Charno, Sandy Haines, Amanda Blomquist.
Others Present: Carla Schuessler.

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

I. Welcome & Introductions

II. Council Mission

Carla Schuessler went over the council's mission - The Business Diversity Council's primary mission is to promote growth and enhance community awareness of minorities in business by encouraging entrepreneurship, supporting minority-owned businesses, connecting with programs and services to uplift and support the diverse business community and helping the community recognize the importance of the minority consumer.

Minority is defined based on federal guidelines for disadvantaged business enterprises (DBEs) to include: African American, Hispanics, Disabled American, LGBTQA, Native American, Asian Pacific American, Subcontinent Asian American, Veteran, Women.

III. Chamber updates

a. Marketing

Diane Charno told the council the department is always working to promote the destination. Some recent things the department was working on is new content on the website including local African American sites that were listed in the Green Book of South Carolina. She said from a PR standpoint they are hosting media. She said marketing is preparing for military appreciation days and autism awareness month. Yvette Jefferson asked about marketing efforts related to the upcoming bike weeks. Charno said we are always working on getting positive messages out. Those events are promoted in some event messaging and said we work closely with the other involved organizations regarding traffic information that may need to be shared.

b. Group Sales

Sandy Haines said group sales has no new updates, but said they are continuing to promote the destination and reach out to groups of all kinds.

Cindy Gettig asked Haines to explain the different segments of the group sales division. Haines said there's sports, then SMERF (social, military, educational, religious and fraternal), motor coach, association, corporate, Canadian market, Chicago/Midwest. She said the Shriner's are probably the biggest that come in and there's about 10,000 of them.

Wynn Godbold asked if that's about the max that we can handle.

Haines said the Shriner's don't take up much meeting space. Meeting space is where we are limited as far as size.

Tiffany Andrews confirmed that meeting space is the challenge and said the convention center is operating at about 75 percent occupancy – the downtime is used for tear down/set up and any cosmetic renovations that need to be done. She said people are frequently looking for weekends and said those are almost fully booked for the year.

c. Business Development

i. 2016&2017 Review

The council was provided with a list of accomplishments by the council that took place in 2016 and 2017.

Kenny Generette asked if the council could do another spring social. Gettig said she would ask Kema Parsley to start find a venue and date.

Sarah Miles asked how the social is promoted. Amanda Blomquist said it's emailed to our mailing list, is promoted online, on social media and in the Horry County Business Journal, and the council members are encouraged to promote and share it through their networks, too.

Radha Herring suggested adding the definition of diversity to the event promotions.

Herring asked about minority certification classes. The council agreed to move forward with workshops that help businesses become certified.

ii. 2018 diversity awards update

The council was updated on award submissions for the two diversity awards. There were three total nominations.

Terrance Herriott suggested scaling the award back and only giving out one award that could be given to a business or an individual, instead of one award for a business and one award for an individual. The council agreed to have one award in 2019.

iii. BMW event

Gettig told the council about the upcoming BMW supplier conference. Coastal Carolina University donated a bus to allow us, in conjunction with other area chambers, to send a group to the conference which helps connect diversity-owned businesses with BWM as potential suppliers of goods or services. The council was encouraged to share the information with anyone that may want to attend.

iv. Minority business online listings

Blomquist explained that a member asked us about the ability to be listed as a minority-owned business in our directory. She said we keep track of it internally, but it's not public.

The council suggested allowing investors to have an additional category in the directory for diversity owned businesses. Staff will do research to see whether certification is required for those business contracts before determining whether only certified investor businesses will receive the additional category.

On a separate page on our website we will link to the SC Division of Small and Minority Business Contracting and Certification website which contains a PDF and Excel directory of certified businesses.

The meeting adjourned at 10:19 a.m.