

Diversity Equity & Inclusion Council Meeting - Meeting Minutes – Feb 02, 2022

Members Present: Eileen Soisson, Amanda Masterpaul, Cecilia Evans, Craig McGee, Danielle Lewis, Darlene Borges, Diane Green, Dr. Atiya Stokes-Brown, Kelvin Waites, Mark Smaizys, Sean Bailey, Sophie Calhoun, Susie Sulmers-Fryer, Tamesha Keel.

Staff Present: Cindy Gettig, Amanda Bailey, Bob Harris, Nancy Maloney.

Meeting called to order at 9:02 a.m. by Eileen Soisson

Welcome – Introductions: Eileen Soisson

Eileen asked everyone to introduce themselves and their roles.

DEI Council Packet: Cindy Gettig

Discussed the top main points of business development, the chamber, and the DEI council. Described the purpose of the chamber. Discussed various programs and networking opportunities. Explained what ambassadors are for the chamber and how they assist our team. Explained the org chart and displayed the DEI council list and asked council to inform us if any changes are needed.

DEI 2022 Initiatives: Eileen Soisson & Cindy Gettig

EVOLVE Series:

TD is sponsoring the EVOLVE series. Speakers and topics are needed. Cindy requested assistance from council to promote the class. People can be involved in these courses without being a member. EVOLVE stands for “*Educated Voices On Leading and Valuing Equity*”. This is the third year these courses have been taught. Four classes are held a year on a variety of topics. Some possible months that classes could occur is April-maybe March instead of April, June, September, November. Cindy explained what Becky’s role is with the Autism Network and the role she has in the community to create awareness about Autism. Her goal is to have the entire Grand Strand businesses autism friendly through their courses and certification. Becky has been asked to speak at one of the EVOLVE classes. Eileen asked if Tamesha would be interested in serving on this sub-committee. Sean mentioned that the Sky wheel can light up different colors for different awareness months and topics. Tamesha asked for one of the topics to surround mental health awareness. May is mental health awareness month. Eileen said if there’s specific awareness months, we can schedule classes around those awareness months. Eileen requested that council members provide information on EVOLVE series topics for the next meeting. Cindy suggested since the next meeting isn’t until May, we could have a follow up meeting or follow up email to discuss details for the EVOLVE series classes. Becky can do the first EVOLVE class. Need speakers and topics for the remaining dates. Eileen mentioned she will gather names that are interested in serving on this sub-committee to continue the conversation for the courses and for each of these projects so that communication can occur. You will receive a certificate if you attend all 4 classes. Amanda asked if speakers receive compensation and Cindy responded TD Bank does compensate through their sponsorship.

Minority Business Survey: Cindy Gettig

The chamber's goal is to reach out to minority owned businesses in our community. It's always been a struggle, but we would like to hire an outside firm to identify our minority owned businesses and their needs and how the chamber can assist. Cecilia mentioned Bank of America supports diverse minority businesses. Cecilia said, "from going to Greenville and seeing the chamber minority business incubator, what can we do to bring that local? Is there a way to have a portion for diverse suppliers to be included in the Business Expo or something on a smaller scale?" Eileen wrote down a list of council members that want to serve in this area.

Minority Business Certification Classes: Cindy Gettig

Interested in starting these certification classes again but want to understand the process and how it can benefit your business. Teachers are needed for these classes. Tourism Diversity did a survey that took six months to complete. One thing that resulted from the survey was a certification class was needed for the chamber and minority businesses. Council members were asked to serve on this sub-committee. The subcommittee will plan the meetings, reach out to entities that would facilitate the classes and promote the classes. These classes would start mid-year, May or June. It would depend on scheduling. Minority businesses are interested in getting certified. Since these courses solely provide the information to the businesses and do not have a walk-through course on how to complete the certification, a follow up is necessary to make sure questions are answered. Sub-committee could schedule a Q&A class for assistance with doing the certification.

DEI Book Club: Eileen Soisson

Eileen would like for the council to choose two books for the year to read. This would be an informal book club that would meet at a coffee shop and discuss what was read and information gathered from the books. Eileen asked the council for book suggestions. Atiya provided a list of books: "*How to be an anti-racist*", "*The Leader's Guide to Unconscious Bias: How To Reframe Bias, Cultivate Connection, and Create High-Performing Teams*", "*The End of Bias: A Beginning: The Science and Practice of Overcoming Unconscious Bias*". As well as additional books. Tamesha mentioned "*So You Want to Talk About Race*" as a good book to read.

BMW Supplier Diversity Conference: Cindy Gettig

The conference will be September 1st this year. Cindy described what the event is and where it's held. The event is held in Greenville, SC at the convention center. Over the past few years, CCU provided a bus to the chamber for us to take a group to Greenville. The group would have to leave at 5am, drive to Greenville, attend the conference, and drive back home. Cindy said since this is such a long day, instead of doing what we've previously done the group will go up the night before and stay the night. The chamber will provide lodging for the group interested in attending the conference. This conference is for women & veteran owned businesses. Susie commented and said she felt the conference was worthwhile and provided useful information.

Council Member Engagement: Cindy Gettig, Bob Harris

Cindy said TD Bank will sponsor four minority owned business memberships during Small Business week. The chamber will promote this throughout the entire month. Bob said some events Group Sales is hosting is Connect Diversity and Connect Sports Diversity.

The meeting adjourned at 10:06 a.m. by Eileen Soisson