

## Meeting Minutes

Diversity Equity & Inclusion Council Meeting – July 24, 2020

Council Members Present: Atiya Stokes-Brown, Amber Campbell, Diane Green, Eileen Soisson.

Staff Present: Cindy Gettig, Karen Riordan, Amanda Blomquist.

Meeting called to order at 2:00 p.m. by Atiya Stokes-Brown

### 1. Name of Educational Series

Stokes-Brown gave a recap of the plans for the educational series. The council decided to provide a series of educational opportunities about topics on diversity. Five dates were set starting July 29. Topics selected were Diversity 101, Generations in the Workplace, Unconscious/Implicit Bias, Microaggressions, and DEI Strategies in the workplace.

A new name suggested by Atiya was Educated Voices On Leading and Valuing Equity.

Karen Riordan said she loved that suggestion. She felt strongly that educated or educating need to be in the name. She said it is on the money in terms of what we want to convey and makes sense and makes EVOLVE stronger.

Amanda Blomquist asked to clarify if equality or equity was suggested because equity was written but equality was spoken.

Stokes-Brown said equity is what she meant and said she had questioned whether diversity and inclusion should have been fit in the name, but said equity doesn't exist without diversity and inclusion.

The council agreed to move forward with the Educated Voices On Leading and Valuing Equity as the series name.

### 2. Potential for LGS Scholarship

Riordan explained the chamber is a 501c6 but also has a 501c3 foundation. Traditionally, the foundation has awarded one high school senior from each high school in Horry county a college scholarship – a total of \$14,000 annual. She said foundation money is nearly self-sustaining, meaning the interest on the balance is enough to cover the \$14,000. The chamber's Finance Review Council has discussed other things the foundation can do – including a scholarship to be used for Leadership Grand Strand tuition that would be specifically related to the Diversity Equity and Inclusion Council.

Eileen Soisson said she loves that idea as a way to increase diversity of the leadership classes and market the council, too.

Stokes-Brown said she liked the idea about giving the scholarship a name and suggested establishing criteria for determining who qualifies for the award. (NB – LGS classes are selected in June/July of each year. The program runs August to May each year.

Gettig said she is doing research on similar scholarships to put together that process and requested council members do the same.

Stokes-Brown suggested looking at historical records for the chamber when looking to name the scholarship, perhaps finding the first African-American business member to join the chamber. She said Bennie Swans came to mind.

Riordan said he came to her mind, too, because he does so much and cares so much for the community.

Council members were asked to brainstorm and look for other people who have paved the foundation for DEI work in the community.

### 3. Focus Groups

Riordan explained the idea of using focus groups to gather information came from several conversations trying to connect with and engage minorities in the business community and to answer questions such as how to meet the unmet needs of the minority business community.

The council members present agreed focus groups would be helpful and suggested thinking about the right incentives to get people to participate.

Stokes-Brown said from a planning standpoint, she also likes this as possibly the focus of the council in 2021. She said COVID doesn't seem to be going away, so we may be looking at pushing the bigger conference plans we had further down the road and working on this instead.

### 4. Other Business

Riordan said she recently had a meeting with Destinations International and learned it has plans to start a DEI task force. Resources and tools from the task force would be available to the council/MBACC because the chamber is a member of the organization. Additionally, she said Destinations International was open to having a representative from the chamber or the area serve on the task force.

Soisson asked how the work of the council is communicated to the board and our members. Gettig explained the chair of each council reports to the board about any updates monthly. She said she was thinking something should be added to our e-newsletter. Blomquist said the newsletter is weird right now because it's so COVID focused on getting that news and resources to our members. Blomquist said she and Kori Hippe have discussed other things in the overall content plan about sharing this information on the blog and social. Riordan asked if Blomquist had connected with Sarah Stephens (the chamber communications manager) to get a press release out about the EVOLVE series. Blomquist said we were waiting on the name, which we locked in today, so Sarah will be able to run with that info now.

The meeting adjourned at 3:05 p.m.