



**Small Business Taskforce  
November 19, 2018  
City of Miami Beach  
1755 Meridian Avenue, Miami Beach**

**MINUTES**

Committee Members in Attendance:

- Diego Caiola
- George Heisel
- Jean-Robert Latortue
- Jason Loeb
- JP Morgan
- Tim Wilcox

Committee Members Absent:

- Sheila Duffy-Lehrman

City Staff Present:

- Kathie Brooks, Assistant City Manager, City of Miami Beach
- Heather Shaw, Acting Director, Tourism, Culture and Economic Development
- Erick Chiroles, Commission Aide to Commissioner Ricky Arriola
- Thomas Curitore, Code Compliance Assistant Director, City of Miami Beach
- Amy Knowles, Deputy Resilience Officer, City of Miami Beach
- Gedel Merzius, Economic Development Specialist, City of Miami Beach

Jason Loeb opened the meeting at 9:02 a.m. and welcomed all in attendance.

JP Morgan made a motion to move the October minutes, George Heisel seconded the motion and the motion passed.

**Update on the Business Surveys:** Amy Knowles, Deputy Resilience Officer for the City of Miami Beach gave a brief overview and explanation of the City of Miami Beach Business Surveys. Amy emphasized the importance of getting feedback from these surveys for both small businesses and residential homes within the City of Miami Beach. The Business survey is done every couple of years within the City of Miami Beach, going out to 600 small businesses within Miami Beach. Giving the City of Miami Beach a 95% confidence level of the data. The results will be placed on an online dashboard on the City of Miami Beach website. Many of the departments within the City of Miami Beach used the survey as performance metrics in various capacities.

Amy stated that the surveys were sent to businesses within the City of Miami Beach who had Business Tax receipts within the City. Not specifically selecting Small Businesses, but most respondents were in fact small businesses. The surveys were sent via letter, along with a letter from the Mayor with the survey questions. Business owners within the City of Miami Beach can respond by Mail, Online or they can call in responding to the survey in Creole, English or Spanish.

The first category of questions within the survey dealt with was overall satisfaction pertaining to the City of Miami Beach. Emphasizing on what category is most important to them. The survey encompassed Eight questions from the Planning Department, ten questions from the Building Department, eight questions on the Fire Department, questions targeting Culture Tourism satisfaction, Transportation and Police and communication efforts specific questions. The surveys were sent via letter, along with a letter from the Mayor with the survey questions. Business owners within the City of Miami Beach can respond by Mail, Online or they can call in responding to the survey in Creole, English or Spanish.

The turnaround time for the results of the surveys takes about two weeks. After the survey results have been disseminated the President of the company which administers the survey results will provide a regression analysis, focus groups along with other analysis into with different City of Miami Beach Departments.

Heather Shaw, Interim Director of the Tourism, Culture, Economic Department briefed the Small Business Taskforce Committee on the Miami Beach Small Business and Industry Survey. Heather stated that Thirty-Eight (38) respondents submitted their surveys. The survey was submitted via Business Tax Receipts list within the City of Miami Beach, and also throughout the Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce. Heather also highlighted the Economic Development Department upcoming project with WeWorks. WeWorks is a platform for Small businesses with the specific intentions of helping businesses place themselves in the best possible position to succeed.

**Agency Presentation on Code Compliance:** Tom Curitore, Code Compliance Assistant Director, City of Miami Beach

Stated that Code Compliance is much more invested in the community than passing tickets. Code Compliance deals with voluntary compliance along with community outreach when new ordinances are issued.

Tom Curitore stated that the Code Compliance goes out to local business owners encouraging constructive criticism in relation to Code Compliance. Curitore also stated that they are a full transparency department having a twenty-four (24) hour hotline and hours ranging from 6:00 AM to 1:00 AM from Monday thru Wednesday, Thursday from 6:00 AM to 3:00 AM and Friday and Saturday 24 hours throughout the day. Curitore also Informed the Committee of a Business Tax Receipt Process Improvement implementation and how they can improve on the protocol of receiving a Business Tax Receipts more attainable.

Jean-Robert Latortue asked Tom what type of advertisements and marketing campaigns were placed to inform the community of what exactly is going within the City of Miami Beach in terms of Code Compliance and also in terms of business in the city.

Tom Curitore also stated that the Code Compliance office was in preparation with the Communication department for a new public service announcement highlighting the Code Compliance department new uniforms.

Jason Loeb stated that times have changed, years ago there was no competition in terms of small business. The City of Miami Beach wasn't as progressive with adapting to the change in neighboring cities. Loeb posed the question to the Committee of what do we do differently to bring back businesses and compete with areas such as Wynwood?

Jean-Robert Latortue stated that there are add campaigns in Miami Beach bringing or promotion to certain subjects that there needs to be some type of advertisement or marketing campaign that is placed within the City to lure aspiring business owners to come to the City of Miami Beach because it is open for business.

George Haisel suggested that the City of Miami Beach begin to assist upcoming small businesses on the specific outlined steps that are needed to establish a proper code compliance they become an actual business.

JP Morgan suggested that we need to re-establish the city as a "Renaissance City" moving towards gearing ourselves to help start-up businesses build their brand in Miami Beach. Morgan mentioned that we not focus on neighboring cities but actually focus on the Confidence of Business owners in terms of development. Morgan used the example of North Beach and how that whole sector should be culturally enriching to the Latino that live there, help those people establish businesses to from a Little Havana of Miami Beach.

Jason Loeb suggested that we start a ongoing education workshop about Economic Development on a monthly basis highlighting how to start a business in the City of Miami Beach. Could Compliance should also speak within those monthly meetings to discuss about code violations and other citations that may hamper a business.

Jason also suggested that we place a advertisement flyer that advertises the City of Miami Beach as a whole. "Open a business in Miami Beach", along with specific bullet points of directions of the departments within the City that need to be identified as pathways for a startup business.

Jason suggested that we should create a district or zone in the City of Miami Beach where start-up businesses that are catered to small business and encourage other businesses within the area, creating some type of community legacy. In agreement with Jason, Diego Caiola stated if the committee was to create specific districts for a business startup they would need to do so before the heavy onslaught of incoming developers in the City of Miami Beach.

**MB Commission and Committee Agendas:** Heather spoke on the Letter to the Commission regarding the encouragement of the City of Miami Beach to approve the use of the Design and Architecture Senior High ("DASH") school storefront designs and allow Miami Beach property owners to choose from the DASH designs for their storefront covers, pay for the production and installation of the covers. Finance City Wide Projects Committee and Neighborhoods/ Community Affairs Committee have both joined in efforts regarding the storefront overview covers throughout the city. The City Commission has given those committees direction to work with the Communication Department from the City of Miami Beach and local Design Architectural Senior High (DASH) students. The first implementation of those storefront covers will be on 41<sup>st</sup> and North Beach as well.

J.P. Morgan stressed the importance of staying informed to what issues or correspondence is going to Commission so that they may be able stay informed and up to date on what the issues are when issues pertaining to the Committee arise.

**Public Forum:** Heather updated the Committee on the Washington Avenue bid going into its last stages of the RFP process, and that will include small business production. Heather also spoke of Production Industry Council (PIC) coming to the City of Miami Beach and doing an Letter to Commission on bringing the film industry back to the City of Miami Beach. Heather spoke of bringing in a City of Miami Beach Commission member to sit in on the Small Business Taskforce Committee meetings and will continuously do so. Heather spoke on the upcoming Small Business Saturday celebration and encouraged members of the committee to list any Businesses that would want to be highlighted for the Small Business Saturday holiday.

Jason encouraged the Communication department to be present with ideas on how to create flyers to promote with idea in mind on “why should a business come to Miami Beach”. Kathie Brooks agreed that the communications department should be informed of the project and a representative be present at the next Small Business Taskforce Committee Meeting.

Jason asked that we invite various Chamber of Commerce groups such as the Latin Chamber of Commerce and the LGBT Chamber of Commerce to relay information and further discuss initiatives about building districts in certain areas to promote small business.

Heather announced that our next meeting will be in three weeks on Monday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at 9:00 AM.

## **ADJOURN**

Jason made the motion to adjourn the meeting, Diego seconded, and the meeting closed at 10:28 AM.

### **Minutes Approved by the Small Business Taskforce**

on: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Jason Loeb, Chair**