



Small Business Taskforce
October 23, 2018
City of Miami Beach
1755 Meridian Avenue, Miami Beach

MINUTES

Committee Members in Attendance:

- Diego Caiola
- Sheila Duffy-Lehrman
- George Heisel
- Jason Loeb
- JP Morgan
- Tim Wilcox

Committee Members Absent:

- Jean-Robert Latortue

City Staff Present:

- Heather Shaw, Acting Director, Tourism, Culture and Economic Development
- Elias Gonzalez, Commission Aide
- Saul Frances, Parking Director

Jason Loeb opened the meeting at 9:03 a.m. and welcomed all in attendance. Saul Frances, Parking Department Director gave a brief introduction.

JP Morgan made a motion to move the minutes, Diego Caiola seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Small Business Congress: Sheila explained that the National Small Business Association partnered with the City and multiple Chambers to put together a Regional Small Business Congress listening session which was held on September 27 at the Eden Roc Hotel. The NSBA has been going to various cities soliciting information from small business owners on the issues that are common in order to advocate on behalf of small businesses based on real information for their Congress session in Washington being held in the middle of November. At the same time, NSBA will be educating on bigger issues that affect everyone such as taxation, healthcare, access to capital, GDPR, data management, etc.

Sheila revealed that the September event started about 40 minutes late so they had to go through the information a little faster. However, everyone loved the live polling as they could see the results to the questions asked on the screen instantly. Heather agreed and stated that she also liked that several people asked questions. Jason suggested that we have someone from the NSBA at a Committee meeting as it will be more beneficial. Heather specified that we should also have access to their resources.

Small Business Survey: Heather mentioned the Small Business survey was launched the day of the event so it hasn't exactly been a month but the results are not as good as they could be. She revealed that WeWork has wanted to partner with the City so she spoke to them about the survey and they would be happy to cascade it to all of their members.

Heather asked the Committee if they can extend the survey results date in order for WeWork to send out the survey and gain more results. WeWork also suggested that once the survey is done, the Committee can spend December deciphering the data and WeWork would then love to announce the results in January through their social media platform along with giving membership discounts to small businesses in Miami Beach.

Sheila believes there is no problem extending the due date a few more weeks but she doesn't want to move forward with WeWork's idea of announcing the results in January because it will delay releasing the results. She appreciates WeWork wanting to partner but their partnership is better placed with the Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce as they will release the results sooner. Heather suggested it would be great to have the Chamber announce the results and possibly have WeWork in January announce any actions being taken for those results. Jason concluded that the Committee should move forward with having WeWork send out the survey to their database.

MB Commission and Committee Agendas: Heather mentioned that Commissioner Higgins was invited to the following Committee meetings. Unfortunately, her Commission meeting is the same date in December so she will not be able to attend but would still like to be invited for any future events and meetings.

Heather stated that one of the items at the Commission meeting pertained to Storefront Vacancies in major corridors such as Washington Ave, 41st St, and Collins Ave. In the meantime, the Commission, in support of Commissioner Samuelian provided brown paper coverings to the storefront owners. However, the Commission wants the Committee to come back with one (1) design that embodies the whole city or several designs for South Beach, Mid Beach, and North Beach to use as storefront coverings. They also identified some money for the City to do some of the covers initially. The Committee will be working with the Finance Committee to revise the ordinance on storefront coverings.

Heather also manages the 41st St Committee who engaged Design and Architecture Senior High (DASH) students to create the storefront covering designs. As nothing precludes the Committee from encouraging the use of the students' artwork, Heather will present it to the Finance Committee on Friday. She believes it would take more time to do a Call to Artist to create something rather than using what the students created. The students submitted their first draft and received feedback so they can incorporate a space to put the leasing information.

JP Morgan made a Motion to encourage the City of Miami Beach City Commission 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, and pay for the production and installation of the covers. He requests this be presented to the Finance Committee on Friday and also issued as an LTC. Heather mentioned that the Commission stated there needs to be instructions given to the property owners on how to install the storefront coverings and a certain time frame for it to be done. Tim Wilcox seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Heather mentioned that the 41st St Committee is also working on activating the corridor, constructing a parklet to have a creative place for people to sit and talk while also encouraging people to shop at the stores and bring more traffic to the street. The Finance Committee also approved to do some sort of artistic element on 41st St similar to the Umbrella project from Coral Gables. They will be doing a call to artist in order to select the proposed project. The City will also be engaging in cultural activations in some of the neighborhoods such as an artisanal market in Lummus Park and Rue Vendome when more funding is allocated.

Heather pointed out that they had recently done a Youth Job Fair Expo held at Scott Rakow Youth Center. The event was small and didn't have many students in attendance possibly because it wasn't on school grounds but they will make changes for the next job fair being held in early 2019. Sheila suggested we have to work on getting more students involved, prepared to be interviewed and ready to enter the workforce.

Production Industry Council has decided they want to engage in a new promotion for small business by bringing to the attention the great work they do throughout the City. Heather showed the Red Bull/ Formula 1 short video. Sheila stated she's curious with the interaction of the PIC Board as their mission is to bring production here. Heather indicated that they have small special event producers that want to have commercials here. They also want to have post production businesses here as opposed to packing everything up after filming to edit the films elsewhere. Heather mentioned they are also having an issue with freight loading zone fees.

Agency Presentation on Parking: Saul Frances informed that there has been a decline in parking due to the use of ride share exploding over the last 3 years, the Convention Center being closed for a while, a hurricane last year, and competition with Wynwood, Midtown, and Brickell. Nonetheless, there is still a need for parking so the City has been thinking about building a garage on Collins Park. This proposed garage will be built with an agreement stating that when the parking demand declines the garage can then be transitioned to another use such as office space, residential, etc. JP informed that if the City builds a parking garage using the G.O. bond money, if the need for parking diminishes, they may not be able to adapt the garage into a housing facility or other use because the G.O. bond strictly says it is to be used for parking.

Saul mentioned that from the small business perspective, there is an employee parking permit program at several municipal lots where the employee pays a significantly lower price than the actual meter rate. The employee could purchase it individually or the business owner can purchase in bulk for their employees. For customers, there is also a validation program that doesn't get used often; businesses can offer a voucher to provide a reduced fee at garages or as a way to incentivize the customer to come again, some businesses provide a code for ParkMobile to be used on their next visit. Sheila asked if any retailers had used this incentive in order to know if it resulted in more business to them. Saul revealed that since ParkMobile launched, the Parking Dept. has spoken to several businesses but none were interested in offering a type of discount.

Sheila asked if the City had looked at other municipalities such as Wynwood or Brickell to see if parking has decreased in their area as well. Saul mentioned they hadn't made that comparison yet. He did speak to someone in Miami's parking department who stated that initially when Uber started they didn't see the impact Miami Beach saw but towards the last year Miami had seen a decrease but there is no specific data to provide.

Public Forum: Jason stated that the next meeting is scheduled for November 19th from 9am to 10:30am. Hernan Cardeno, Code Compliance Director and Daniel Davidson, Chair of the Production Industry Council will be reached out to attend the next meeting. Heather stated she will present the results of the Small Business Survey by the next meeting. JP Morgan mentioned he liked that Elias and Heather informed the Committee of Commission items because it allows the Committee to make recommendations to the Commission on any issues.

JP recommends inviting Tom Mooney to the next meeting as he regulates impact parking fees. Impact parking fees are a farce as the money does not go to build parking garages or add more parking spaces; it goes to the general budget. Renewed businesses should have some leverage in dealing with the parking fee. He suggests the City could be lenient to a new opening business by giving them 3-6 months before they have to start paying in order to help get their business off the ground. Elias proposed inviting our CFO, County Commissioner, and Commissioner Sally Heyman as they know about the uses of money. It was also suggested to invite associations such as GMBHA, MB Chamber, 41st St as they can execute on the ideas that we have on small businesses.

Jason asked the Committee what steps could be done to make a difference in small businesses. JP mentioned he wants all of the heads of each department that have anything to do with the opening of a business and maintaining it to speak at our future meetings. There are several businesses that are closed and a reason is because it can take a business up to a year to open.

ADJOURN

Jason made the motion to adjourn the meeting, Diego seconded, and the meeting closed at 10:36am.

Minutes Approved by the Small Business Taskforce

on: _____

Jason Loeb, Chair