

MIAMI BEACH

Mayor's Ad Hoc Small Business Taskforce
Monday, January 14, 2019
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
- Gedel Merzius, Economic Development Specialist
- Elias Gonzalez, Commission Aide to Commissioner Mark Samuelian
- Melissa Berthier, Assistant Director Marketing and Communications
- Pierre Joseph, Visual Communications Manager
- Claudia Rodriguez, Communications Coordinator
- Manny Marquez, Business Tax Receipts Division

Welcome and call to order: Jason Loeb opened the meeting at 9:03 a.m. and welcomed all in attendance.

Approval of the December 10, 2018 Minutes: JP Morgan made a motion to move the December minutes, Tim Wilcox seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Discussion on various ways to promote and marketing Miami Beach as a welcoming business community:

Heather informed that at the last meeting Melissa Berthier, Assistant Director of Marketing and Communications had discussed the need for material to promote Small Businesses throughout the City of Miami Beach. She suggested a small public service announcement ("PSA") video messages showcasing that City of Miami Beach as open for business and highlight business corridors. Pierre Joseph, Visual Communications Manager presented a video as an example of how the city can potentially showcase one of the business corridors. When asked where these videos would play, Pierre stated they could play in the City's trolleys, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter. Committee members stated they would like to have this video played in other municipalities as well, to get other people to come to Miami Beach not just the residents. Pierre added that they tend to get greater outreach through Facebook. Jason suggested that if every business shares this video campaign, it then gets could reach thousands due to the followers

each person/business has. It was also stated that these videos should have titles of the locations or have captions because if they are displayed in taxis, the driver may put it on mute because he doesn't want to hear it all day. JP added that taxi drivers have a set sound given by Miami-Dade County.

Jason Loeb entertained a motion. Sheila made a motion. JP Morgan seconded and the motion passed 6-0 to approve the item.

MOTION: To direct the office of communication to create small business, business centric videos to help promote small businesses in Miami Beach.

The Committee agreed that Jason Loeb will meet with Mayor Dan Gelber and invite him to attend the next meeting. Jason feels that not many people know or understand what the Mayor's Ad Hoc Small Business Task Force does and how invested the committee members are. JP mentioned that he would like to get the attention of the Mayor by issuing a Letter to Commission ("LTC"), so they can see that the Small Business Task Force is an active committee.

Heather explained that hopefully a LTC gets picked by a Commissioner and they will then bring it to the Commission to hopefully attain funding for the item. Claudia explained that the money would be used to create said videos to target different areas of Miami Beach. She also mentioned that City uses Atlantic Broadband so they would be able to air the commercials through their channels. Heather added that if we have a strategy for the promotional video, it can include PSA's. The PSA cannot focus in on any business specifically, it must be general otherwise it will act as an advertisement. Pierre informed that the City only has media costs as they own a drone and can do the production themselves.

The direction is to speak with Tonya Daniels about preparing additional neighborhood PSAs including North Beach, Mid-Beach and South Beach. If there is a cost at all, the Committee will make that request. The Committee wants to make sure to not only attract the businesses to open in Miami Beach, but once here, we have to make sure they have someone to do business with. Pierre suggests the Committee focus on doing a video for one neighborhood first. It will be seen by Commission, but the Committee first has to notify all businesses on the neighborhood to notify them of what will be done.

Jason and JP entertained that if they help bring a type of festival to North Beach it will provide longevity to the area of North Beach. Sheila disagrees as this will promote tourism but she wants to see what will bring businesses and enterprises to the area. Sheila also believes short term rentals / Airbnb are an existential threat to businesses and boutique hotels in the area. Sheila suggested that Jason Venger from CGI group should talk at a future meeting to inform them of what it is that they do and the activations that they have in order to make the South Beach Seafood Festival. She stated that the Committee should invest their promotional capital to bringing businesses to the beach not more events.

Heather informed that staff continues to work with WeWork on Lenox to launch discounts and City capacity building workshops as well as bilingual capacity building in North Beach, via Prospera – which is before the Finance committee this month. The capacity building workshop on grants will be about navigating through the red tape of the government. Sheila will also help with a workshop on marketing and branding. Heather suggested the Committee to have a meeting at the WeWork location.

Jason Loeb entertained a motion. Sheila made a motion. JP Morgan seconded and the motion passed 6-0 to approve the item.

MOTION: To focus efforts on issue-oriented concerns versus geographical concerns.

Jason stated that for the next meeting everyone should email Heather of an issue to be placed on the agenda and further discussed for a possible solution. JP recommends the meeting should be open-ended to be able to have solutions for all items without a time frame. Sheila asked to include the issue of broken windows on properties and healthcare for employees. Healthcare prices have gotten extremely high and the City should have it so that the municipality is its own healthcare pool. Therefore, if you have an address on Miami Beach you would have the option to have health insurance for a set price a month.

Business Tax Receipt (BTR): Manny Marquez, Assistant Finance Director informed that his office handles BTR's and resort tax. He went over a presentation on what a business needs to do to get a BTR. A BTR is a tax for conducting business in the municipality. Before a business can be issued a business license it has to be issued a State license. A business here needs a license from the County and the City of Miami Beach. Manny stated that there are about 8,000 registered businesses in the City of Miami Beach. About a year ago, condominiums and other properties were given BTR's in order to rent their units on Airbnb and the like and they make up the largest increase in BTR's. For a company working out of WeWork, they only need a BTR but not an Occupational license as WeWork has it for the property.

Why does it take so long to process a BTR - regulatory review? As soon as the Finance Department obtains an application, they route it in their system. Every application goes through Building, Planning, Fire and Code Compliance for review. Some applications go to other departments, for instance a valet company will go to risk management. What makes the process long are the reviews from other departments and if inspections are needed. He informed the average application in 2018 took 16 business days for it to get approved.

Manny brought it to the Committees attention that that they are working on a better process in order to reduce the number of days it is currently taking. Jason stated the Committee will write a letter of support before it goes to the Commission saying that from the Small Business owner standpoint it should be 2 weeks.

Manny mentioned Art Basel is the biggest weekend in sales but not for small businesses, Miami Beach hotels don't entirely sell out for this city-wide event. Heather informed that the hotel occupancy has never really been at capacity given the numerous events we have, the highest is around 84%.

Pierre suggests the Committee should do a monthly welcome ceremony for all new business. For anyone with a new business license, they will be invited to the ceremony to meet other businesses who are also just opening up as well. Manny Marquez stated he can provide the Committee a list of new businesses that opened in categories by North, Middle and South.

Public Forum: JP announced that our next meeting will be on Monday, February 4, 2019 at 9am. Jason asked to have that meeting open ended in order to discuss all topics. Sheila asked to have an excused absence.

The following meeting will be Monday, February 4, 2019.

ADJOURN

Jason made the motion to adjourn the meeting, JP seconded, and the meeting closed at 10:38 AM.

Minutes Approved by the Mayor's Ad Hoc Small Business Task Force

on: _____

Jason Loeb, Chair