Marketing Council Meeting Minutes
January 27, 2025
Meeting In MBACC Boardroom

Marketing Council Members in Attendance: Sean Bailey, Charlie Belissary, Mayur Jeram, Matt Klugman, Mark Lazarus, Declan McGonigal, Jay Smith, Tom Tse, Jordan Watkins

Staff in Attendance: Stuart Butler, Jen Brunson, Bob Harris, Tracy Conner, Diane Charno

Call to Order: 9:04 AM

Groups Update: The January 2025 Group Sales update provided a comprehensive overview of Myrtle Beach's group sales activities and results. Through December, the team achieved 827 group leads, translating to 483,055 group lead room nights and 326,681 definite room nights. Significant progress was reported from participation in events like the Ontario Motorcoach Association and the National Tour Association, which have already resulted in commitments for future group visits to Myrtle Beach.

Additionally, a FAM tour was successfully hosted for motorcoach operators, leading to positive feedback and confirmed future visits from several companies. Upcoming events include the American Bus Association Marketplace, where Myrtle Beach will be prominently represented.

In the meetings and conventions sector, participation in the RCMA show has yielded multiple RFPs, and the team is actively working on five proposals from this event. Research highlighted in the presentation shows an overall increase in North American meeting spend, with specific challenges related to location availability and rising costs.

Lastly, updates on lodging emphasized significant renovations and new constructions, ensuring that Myrtle Beach's facilities will continue to meet the demands of its growing visitor base. These efforts collectively underscore Myrtle Beach’s dynamic approach to enhancing its group sales strategy and infrastructure to support its status as a leading destination.

Marketing Updates: The January 2025 Marketing update highlighted several accomplishments and strategic plans. Myrtle Beach was recognized with the 2024 Travel Vanguard Award by AFAR for its autism-friendly travel initiatives, showcasing its dedication to inclusivity and accessibility. Chef Darren Smith from Rivertown Bistro & Bonfire was named a 2025 Discover SC Chef Ambassador, emphasizing the region's culinary excellence. Myrtle Beach International Airport reported a record-breaking year in 2024, with over 3.8 million passengers, reflecting a nearly 14% increase from the previous year, underscoring the area's growing popularity. Insights from the American Travel Sentiment Study revealed that despite economic challenges like inflation, 90% of American travelers have planned trips in the next six months. The 2025 strategic forecast anticipates varied STR occupancy rates, with a projected decrease in the first quarter and an increase in the second quarter compared to 2024. Upcoming promotional activities include a series of events and collaborations aimed at promoting Myrtle Beach's

diverse attractions and hospitality offerings, such as iHeart/Gibson Cares events, Matador Creator House, a new Atlas Obscura Charlie's Place Podcast and partnerships with shows like *RV There Yet* and *Travels with Darley*. These initiatives reflect Myrtle Beach's proactive approach to marketing and promoting itself as a premier year-round travel destination.

Open Discussion: The council discussed the idea of learning more about the annual visitors' guide as well as having interesting in hearing from each of our agencies. It was decided that MMGY would be invited to present at the March meeting and discuss the content lead media campaigns.

Meeting Adjourned: 10:31 AM, Mark Lazarus -Motion, Matt Klugman - 2nd – Approved – All