

From: David Hucks
Sent: 9/27/2015 5:04:59 PM
To: Mark Kruea; opinions@thesunnews.com
Cc: Ruth Sherlock (Ben Carson Campaign); Mande Wilkes; Robert Palmer; Sea Dip; Mark McBride; Rick Sarver; Rick Sarver; Katie Haas; John Krajc; Philip Render; mchestnut@cityofmyrtlebeach.com; Billy Huggins; Tom Ellenburg; Senator Gerald Malloy; Haley, Nikki; Senator Gilda Cobb-Hunter; Senator Vincent Shaheen; Congressman Jim Clyburn; smiles@wmbfnews.com; Myrtle Beach NAACP; John Rhodes; John Pedersen
Subject: In Defense of Mande Wilkes (Free Public Discourse)

This letter is a reply to Mark Kruea (City Spokesperson's) in response to his letter to the editor to Sun News columnist's Mande Wilkes remarks concerning the current Myrtle Beach Business Climate, Chinese Investors, Chinese Tourism, and the overall treatment of local business owners by the city.

Dear Mark,

I have just read your reply on behalf of the city to columnist Mande Wilkes' article of the Sun News. It would appear from your remarks that the multiple trips taken by Brad Dean (Myrtle Beach Area Chamber President) and Mayor John Rhodes were, in fact, largely to attract a new audience of Myrtle Beach tourists to our area.

The facts tell another story entirely, however. While the Mayor and Brad Dean were able to encourage several Chinese Nationals to purchase a bevy of failing Myrtle Beach golf courses previously owned by the Myrtle Beach National Company and Burroughs and Chapin, the citizens of Myrtle Beach have yet to see any large influx of new Chinese tourists and it is doubtful we ever will.

What we did see were some behind the scenes financial transactions promoted by the Mayor and Mr. Dean. These activities lacked any true form of transparency. The Mayor, working with the most powerful non elected official in our city, (Brad Dean), was able to help his largest campaign contributors, {as well as city council's largest campaign contributors}, unload multiple failing golf courses to non citizen Chinese investors. While these non U.S. citizens are in fact Chinese Nationals, our own **non elected** official, Brad Dean, was publicly quoted in the news last May that {when it comes to local government, local laws, boards, chamber boards} **these investors will certainly have a "place at the table."** I ask you, "Is that what Myrtle Beach needs?" Chinese Nationals - Non U.S. citizens writing our local laws and serving on our local boards?

Mark, as we now have an election coming up in just over 4 weeks, with no public debates scheduled, it is imperative that we openly discuss the way you have personally treated local businesses. We can start with mine. On [March 8, 2011 <http://www.myrtle-beach.com/2013/06/18/nbc-slants-myrtle-beach-story/>](http://www.myrtle-beach.com/2013/06/18/nbc-slants-myrtle-beach-story/),

you publicly went on WMBFnews, stating on video that my local business was sent a "cease and desist" letter by the city requesting our local company to stop impersonating the city. Within hours we contacted both you, WMBF, Heather Biance (the news anchor), Ted Fortenberry (Chamber Board President and WMBF News Manager) and city attorney Tom Ellenburgh asking each of you to produce such a letter. We heard crickets from each of you. No such letter has ever been produced.

Last June 10th, Mark you boldly went on the air at Myrtle Beach Area Chamber Board member's WPDE- ABC station ([Managed by Billy Huggins <http://www.myrtle-beach.com/2015/08/04/media-character-assassination/>](http://www.myrtle-beach.com/2015/08/04/media-character-assassination/)) stating that last year [Myrtle Beach witnessed a remarkable 17.2 million tourists <http://wpde.com/news/videos/myrtle-beach-tourism-hits-all-time-high?id=1215634>](http://wpde.com/news/videos/myrtle-beach-tourism-hits-all-time-high?id=1215634). While the [Sun News had accurately reported a mixed season the previous August <http://skift.com/.../vacation-rentals-outpaced-hotels-in.../>](http://skift.com/.../vacation-rentals-outpaced-hotels-in.../), once again, within hours, we confronted both you, the Chamber of Commerce, it's reporting agency, and the city with your own county numbers asking you to substantiate these new numbers. We rightly showed, using the Chamber's own \$255 per tourist spent number that 2 million new members would equal \$510 million in new revenues that should have been taxed. We showed you graphically the Horry County records showing no such additional revenues were recorded and we asked you, the city, the Chamber of Commerce's reporting agency and Brad Dean to respond. Once again, we heard crickets.

I am prepared to provide statement after statement from local merchants who own businesses in Myrtle Beach, but who live outside the city limits, on just how those businesses have been treated. Myrtle Beach is now rated #2 in the state from Crime and #12 in the nation by websites like Neighborhood Scout. Neighborhood scout is a highly respected tool, highly used by people looking to relocate. This is certainly having an affect on our #2 industry, real estate, and affecting home values for our locals. In social media, we are more and more frequently being referred to as "Murder Beach". All as not as well as you report, Mr. Kruea, and your ongoing treatment of locals who own businesses in town is legendary. Please ask and I will gladly provide references.

I would like to now also address Councilman Phil Render and Councilman Mike Chestnut, {Employer of Mark Kruea} both of whom are running for re-election in a few short weeks with, oddly, no debates scheduled. Please note, your city spokesperson has deliberately and intentionally lied again and again to protect a handful of corporations that are joined at the hips, and privately running the city of Myrtle Beach. What do you each intend to do about this? While I believe you each to be persons of character, this system clearly lacks integrity. If you choose not to speak now, I call you also out as a part of the problem rather than the solution.

Mark, I have now publicly called you a serial liar on behalf of a few corporate concerns that prop up our city. I consider this a very egregious charge indeed.