



ADVOCACY

Winter/Spring 2018

# ADVOCACY

Become Active in your Chamber  
YGK Advocacy Today

# The Chamber plays an active role in commerce and advocacy by:

- 1 Influencing policy development at all levels of government (Municipal, Provincial, Federal)



Business Community

- 2 Advocating on issues that affect the business community (Red tape, bylaws, Municipal planning...etc)
- 3 Developing policy recommendations/ resolutions for consideration by the Ontario and Canadian Chambers of Commerce

## The Chamber's Advocacy Process

Issue is Identified

Background Information is collected

Potential business and community impacts are assessed

The issue is reviewed by the Advocacy Committee to determine if it is one the Chamber should address. Advocacy matrix is used to score the issue.

Chamber staff takes issue and strikes a plan and implements strategy to review the issue before developing a position for the Advocacy Committee to review.

The Committee  
Considers the Chamber's  
Arguments and position  
and if approved, forwards  
the recommendation to the  
Board of Directors.

The Board  
reviews the  
position and  
either approves  
the issue as a  
policy position,  
or rejects it

If approved, the  
policy position  
becomes the  
official position  
of the Chamber.

## Advocacy in Action

# ADVOCACY

"Never be afraid to  
raise your voice for  
honesty and truth  
and compassion..."  
-William Faulkner

The level and amount of advocacy work required depends upon the urgency, gravity and potential impact of each issue addressed. Some issues may require a letter of support, communication with representatives of agencies or governments, or the development of a policy resolution for the provincial or national Chambers. While major issues may require the development of an advocacy campaign using an assortment of tactic.

# Regional Economical Update

January 2017, the Greater Kingston Chamber, in partnership with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, released a co-branded Regional Economic Report for our region. Kingston's service-based metropolitan-area economy with a concentration in education, health, government, and tourism industries is seen continuing to outperform the rest of the region. Employment, investment, and population growth in Kingston will outpace other areas. The labour market will build on recent gains with employment growth around two per cent annually during 2017 and 2018 with a declining unemployment rate. The housing sector is expected to post gains in sales, prices, and new construction.

**The top long term priorities that were identified include:**

- Local development and planning
- The image of the community
- Infrastructure deficiencies
- Enhancing existing operations
- Training infrastructure

Your Chamber communicated these regional priorities through local media, consultation with the necessary agencies as well as engaging industry leaders, associations and government officials (local/provincial/federal). Primarily, we take the feedback and enquiries of our members as top priority when challenging decisions/policies while also proposing positions, arguments and recommendations. In May, 2017, representatives from the Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce will again be in attendance at the Ontario Chamber Annual General Meeting in Sarnia to ensure local voices are heard regarding provincial matters that impact our region.

## **Federal Agenda for Ontario**

In concert with the OCC, your Chamber continues to lobby the Federal Agenda for Ontario. This action continues making the case that federal policies are a barrier to Ontario's economic growth and calls on the federal government to play a more productive role in improving Ontario's economic competitiveness.

# Active Issues

## **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT**

Your Chamber continues to lead delegations to city council on issues regarding future development.

Regarding the recent debates around any enhancements to city neighbourhoods, the Chamber voiced a need to plan correctly in moving forward with any new roadways, parks and trails. Any future development that proposes to transform the region around former industrial sites and brownfields, including the beautification of Doug Fluhrer Park, the relocation and restoration of the CN rail station from Montreal Street, can and will assist a number of ongoing projects, including plans that have already been endorsed by past councils. If one or more options are taken away, progress and future dialogue might disappear. This is more about quality of life and can affect future projects in other neighbourhoods.

## **ONTARIO CAP AND TRADE IMPACTS ON SMALL BUSINESS**

Kingston, London, Kitchener, and Windsor Chambers began a grass roots campaign which resulted in a provincially signed letter from the Ontario Chamber regarding their decision to have cap and trade costs included in the delivery charge of utilities. The OCC has publicly indicated support for the Province's efforts in dealing with climate change through the Climate Change Action Plan and specifically the decision to move forward with a cap and trade program which is designed to significantly reduce GHG emissions and deliver a lower carbon future for all Ontarians. However, given the Premier's commitment to transparency around energy pricing, the OCC believes that the OEB should reverse their decision and align with other Canadian jurisdictions on this issue.

## **FEDERAL TAX CHANGES – BUDGET 2018**

### **We Represent Business on Local Community Task Forces/Committees**

The Coalition for Small Business Tax Fairness, a unified voice of over 74 organizations representing hundreds of thousands of business owners across the country, remains concerned that the new rules will cause business owners to have to cut through burdensome interpretative red tape in their efforts to prove that they or family members belong in one of the categories that would exempt them from the new sprinkling rules. The coalition continues to urge government to create a blanket exemption for spouses.

**Kingston Immigration Partnership, Kingston Advocacy Day at Queen's Park Committee, City of Kingston North Kingstown Visioning Committee, The Youth Employment Strategy Advisory Committee, Youth employment City Task Force.**

# Being Active On Issues

## **YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS MISMATCH**

The Chamber understands that many businesses are having trouble accessing the skilled labour they need. We actively participate in the local, provincial and federal discussion, working on initiatives to help better promote the need for properly-trained professionals into our workplaces. We also communicate with local post-secondary institutions about which skills are needed by employers.

## **MUNICIPAL ELECTION 2018**

In 2014 the Chamber commissioned the City Council Accountability Report prior to the public vote. The Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce called on local candidates in the municipal election to take actions in order to improve our region's business climate and foster economic growth. Your Chamber is working on our member's behalf to see that candidates for office have a clear vision for a city that is competitive and open for business.

**SMART INTENSIFICATION:** The Chamber has joined with Downtown Kingston! BIA to support Future Kingston. Future Kingston's mandate is simple but strong: Discussing what Kingston will look like over the next 2 decades. As outlined in their visioning statement: There needs to be positive plan "that identifies appropriate opportunities and takes action to ensure our city is a great place to work and live. A City that attracts people to visit and to move here to grow our work force, develops their careers, and starts their businesses".

**THIRD CROSSING:** The Chamber has taken the position to support the building of the Third Crossing. To ensure appropriate business development does not become stagnant, transportation flow and traffic in all areas of the City must not be compromised. We the Chamber believe in smart development which will support business growth in Kingston now and into the future for our members. The Chamber led a delegation in support of this project in June 2017.

## **MEETINGS WITH POLITICIANS**

Chamber representatives meet with elected officials to discuss the priorities for the year ahead. Meetings have taken place with the MPs and MPPs of Kingston and the Islands as well as with the Mayor and CAO. We have also met with numerous opposition MPs and MPPs as well as those running for provincial and federal office. The Chamber continues to meet with city councillors on a one-on-one basis.



## Engaging Influential Leaders

The Chamber continues to provide a venue for members to engage influential decision makers. This year we have engaged the following:

- Ontario Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault made a stop at our Chamber as part of a swing through Ontario to defend the provincial government's recent energy policy moves.
- Ontario Chamber VP of Policy & Government Relations Karl Baldauf spoke at a standing room only lunch regarding the impacts of the proposed Labour Relations Reforms contained within the provincial government's Bill 148 including an imminent hike in the minimum wage.
- Katherine Thompson, MNP Cyber Advisory and Cyber Council Chair spoke at our spring AGM looking at the vulnerability firms face with regard to hacking and online security issues.



Kingston Advocacy Specialist Bill Stewart speaks to the provincial delegates during a day of policy discussion at the Ontario Chamber of Commerce Annual General Meeting in Sarnia, May 2017



### How Can The Chamber Help You?

As the Chair of the Advocacy Committee I am committed to receiving input from our members on issues they want us to champion. If you are experiencing an impediment to business or are interested in participating on any of the current task forces please contact John Henderson at:::

