

GREATER VICTORIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
Board Meeting and Mid-Year Retreat
07:00 hours – 28 June 2011

Present: David Marshall (Chair), John Espley (Vice Chair), Rose Arsenault, Captain Craig Baines, Dan Dagg, George Fuller, Al Hasham, Darlene Hollstein, Kimberley Hughes, Ray Kolla, John Wilson, Bea Bate, Mike Black, Gerry Brimacombe, Janell Karst
Bruce Carter (CEO), Sasha Angus (staff), Ellen Henry (staff)

Regrets: Pauline Rafferty, Rob Bennett, Regan McGrath

1) Motion to approve the meeting agenda

Moved by Ray Kolla

Seconded by Mike Black

Carried

2) Motion to approve consent agenda, including minutes of May 24, 2011 Board of Directors meeting.

Moved by Ray Kolla

Seconded by Dan Dagg

Carried

3) Chair's Remarks

- The Chair commented on the recent meetings with Mayor Fortin, Minister Falcon as well as regional MLAs. The Chamber priorities were reviewed with elected officials and issues including HST, the airport runway extension and the importance of moving forward on regional sewage treatment were discussed.
- The Chair highlighted the rapid transit issue and the ongoing concerns about the ridership models and sensitivity analysis surrounding the ridership projections
- In light of the recent federal election outcomes, the Chair also highlighted the Chamber's leadership role in ensuring that regional priorities are advanced at the federal level

4) 150th Anniversary Report

The committee reported on the many activities to date surrounding the Chamber's 150th Anniversary preparations and the potential activities that have been developed for consideration. These include a commemorative coffee table book, community events, and other promotional activities. The Committee will be bringing forward a budgeted plan for the board's consideration in the coming months.

5) Policy and Public Affairs

a) Prime Minister's Council on Municipal Infrastructure

Staff presented the policy on the Prime Minister's Council on Municipal Infrastructure (PCMI) for adoption by the Chamber board. Discussion centered on the successful adoption of its provincial version at the BC Chamber AGM and the need for a similar policy directed at the federal level as identified by the Greater Victoria Chamber as well as the BC Chamber of Commerce.

Motion to adopt the PMCI policy as presented

Moved by Ray Kolla

Seconded by Gerry Brimacombe

Carried

b) Municipal Election Plan

Staff outlined the timeline for the proposed municipal election campaign in November. Discussion centered on the benefits of a campaign plan and theme to the Chamber's efforts surrounding the municipal elections. Staff will work on the campaign pillars and key messages for the fall timeframe.

c) Light Rail Transit

Staff presented a briefing note outlining the Chamber's concerns and recommended course of action. Discussion centered on the importance reviewing the current governance model and ensuring a thorough understanding regarding the project's ridership models and the required sensitivity analysis for their projections. Further discussion centered on the need for a third party review of the business case and the need for a regional referendum on the project, given its long-term nature and the size of the financial commitment.

Motion to adopt the recommendations for LRT

Moved by Dan Dagg

Seconded by Mike Black

Carried

d) Harmonized Sales Tax

Discussion centered on the many efforts and activities that the Chamber is undertaking to promote the retention of the harmonized sales tax (HST). Key concerns were the continued uncertainty that would be created by the reintroduction of a PST/GST system and the competitive disadvantage the province would face in competing with other jurisdictions that have value added taxes, including Ontario and other global competitors.

6) Lease Renewal – Film Commission

The Chamber has received a letter from the board of the film commission outlining their gratitude for the lease agreement between the Commission and the Chamber, and requesting an extension of the agreement. Discussion centered on the arrangement and the sponsorship value that the Chamber enjoys as part of the agreement.

Motion to extend the agreement for 18 months

Moved by Ray Kolla

Seconded by John Wilson

Carried

7) Staff Report

The staff report discussed changes to the Chamber group insurance plan administration and the selection of a new agent of record for a number of the Chamber's members. The Chamber is working with the group insurance plan representatives to ensure a smooth transition for those accounts that are affected. Based on the increased focus on member communications and outreach, it was reported that position of Manager of Member Communications has been extended to the end of year. The board thanked Ellen Henry and Sasha Angus for their continued good work and efforts on behalf of the Chamber.

Motion to Adjourn by Mike Black

Next Meeting July 26th at 7:30 AM at the Chamber offices.

Secretary

Chair

Date

Mid-Year Retreat Discussion

Branding Taskforce Presentation

The Chair of the Branding Taskforce presented an overview of the committee's initial findings and research. Discussion centred on the feedback received from the focus groups that were convened and common themes that were shared through the process. Items included a review of the Chamber's member communications, reviewing Chamber mixer formats, the potential establishment of sector working groups and extending opportunities for member participation in Chamber committees. Further discussion centered on the draft brand blueprint and the transition from the taskforce to Chamber staff for further implementation.

Regional Infrastructure Projects

Regional infrastructure priorities were discussed, including sewage treatment, LRT and other top priorities such as the airport runway extension. Concerns were raised about potential delays in the implementation of sewage treatment and the effect that it would have on successfully securing funding for other priorities. Discussion centered on affordability and the cumulative impact of each of the current and proposed infrastructure projects. Further discussion centered on the need to ensure that projects were financed and delivered by the most efficient and effective method possible, including public-private partnerships.

Environmental Scan

Discussion centered on the continued softness in the region's economy and the continuing need to ensure that we maintain the most attractive business and investment climate possible. Future opportunities, including the National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy (NSPS) were discussed as well as the mitigation measures that may be required should the HST referendum not pass.