

Chamber's continuity guides them through 2017

By Mark Pavilons



Continuity and riding the wave of momentum will be key to the King Chamber of Commerce's success in 2017.

That message was delivered by Tom Allen, president-elect, at the Chamber's AGM held at the Cardinal last week. Sustainability, and continuity with a solid core of board members will give the Chamber a solid footing to build on past successes, and create new partnerships.

Joining the board this year are Lucy Belperio David Cross, Zach Shoub and Stefani Konidis. They are joined by veteran members Tom Allen, Robin Priestly, Rose Dodaro, Kelly Foley, Margarida Ramos D'Alfonsi, Jay Rider and Andy Nemes.

Mayor Steve Pellegrini handled the official swearing-in ceremony, welcoming the board members. He said the Chamber's commitment is an investment in business leaders of the community.

"We all know, and are proud and pleased, at the effort the Chamber puts in," he said.

Lucy Belperio, former Chamber president, returns to the board. David Cross, long-time resident and business owner, takes a seat. Zach Shoub, general manager of the King Weekly Sentinel, hopes to help strengthen business relationships, and boost Chamber members.

Allen noted that 2016 saw the ongoing creation of networking opportunities and building on the "wonderful relationship" with King councillors. The business awards gala and Christmas lunch are the premier Chamber events.

The Chamber continues to advocate on behalf of local businesses, and this coming July 1 will see a retail change. King Township decided to allow holiday exemptions to local businesses on the statutory holidays. Allen noted there was a groundswell of local support to open on holidays. It doesn't mean everyone will open their doors, but it gives businesses a choice and the "freedom to work the market as they see fit."

Three unique business forums were held in 2016, in Nobleton, Schomberg and King City. This saw some great exchanges of ideas and Chamber members heard some local success stories.

The Chamber fully supports King's idea of being "business ready" as it works through reviews of important planning documents, such as the Official Plan. It's important, he said, that businesses be vocal when it comes to bringing their concerns to the Township. Allen said he simply loves attending new business openings across King, something that kept the Chamber quite busy in 2016. Welcoming newcomers, and congratulating long-serving businesses, is a testament to King's business climate.

Allen pointed out the Chamber is currently conducting a survey on King's new sign bylaw. A version is also available online. They want to get a grasp on just where businesses want changes, and understand the common points. Hopes are the results can be gathered by the end of the month.

Allen also mentioned the Township's CIP program, which provides grants to facilitate business facade improvements. This beautification program deserves to be supported and sustained and he urged business owners to make use of it.

Treasurer Priestly provided an overview of the Chamber's financial statement.

With revenues of roughly \$62,000 and expenses hitting \$69,000, the Chamber found itself in a \$6,983.63 deficit. However, the Chamber still has a healthy bank balance of more than \$37,000.

While Priestly is struggling a bit with the loss, board members pointed out for a non-profit organization that provides such a high

level of events and programs, it's fine to have a small shortfall.