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King Chamber bustling with member enthusiasm

By Mark PavilonsEditor

The King Chamber of Commerce exemplifies ?Gratitude and Growth.??With that in mind, it's full steam ahead for the Chamber and the business community.King's business association is propelled by member passion, as witnessed last week during its AGM, held at the impressive Connon Nurseries.President Michelle Frauley recapped highlights of 2023.She noted it has been an incredibly rewarding experience in her first year as president.She's also thrilled to unveil the Chamber's new website, a platform designed to be more engaging and user-friendly for Chamber members. This website will serve as a hub for the latest updates and news within the Chamber, ensuring that everyone is always informed and connected.?I am filled with immense pride as I recall the numerous celebrations and accomplishments we shared together. From John Ciarallo's retirement party to our new Farm to Table event, each gathering was a testament to the vibrancy and resilience of our Chamber.?Moreover, through events like our Holiday Lunch and Toy Drive, we reaffirmed our commitment to giving back to the community, raising approximately $1,200 in funds for the King Township Food Bank and spreading joy to those in need.?Our Chamber, alongside the Township of King, had the privilege of attending and celebrating 10 ribbon-cutting ceremonies for new businesses. These ceremonies serve as a warm welcome to the community, highlighting the Chamber's commitment to supporting and fostering the growth of local businesses. We believe in extending a warm embrace to newcomers, and these ceremonies are a testament to our dedication to welcoming and supporting new ventures in our community.?In 2023, the Chamber welcomed a total of 221 new members. This growth is evident when comparing previous numbers: 124 in July 2021, 159 in November 2021, and 127 in February 2022.?This significant increase shows the value our Chamber brings to our community. We're excited to welcome these new members and look forward to our continued growth and success,? she said.Frauley acknowledged the invaluable support of sponsors, both new and longstanding.?To our new 2023 sponsors, Sibwest Inc., Hard at Work Limited, VCycene, JTF Homes, Unlimited HRM Solutions, and Blue Point Jewellery & Findings, I extend a heartfelt welcome and gratitude for your partnership.?I also want to express my deepest appreciation to our dedicated executive team and board members. Your dedication and hard work have been instrumental in our success this past year.?Treasurer Theresa Sherwood provided the financial report for 2023, noting the Chamber is on solid ground, boosted by event and sponsorship revenue. They are looking at obtaining grants in 2024, should come away with a decent $15,000 profit by year's end.?We put on pretty sweet events,??she noted.Secretary, and chair of the Governance & By-Law Committee Savita Despot pointed out she's seen significant growth over the last two years she's been involved in the Chamber. She lauded the ?unwavering commitment??and contributions of past board members.She presented members with information on newly updated policies and strengthened bylaws to increase member engagement, refine their governance structure and increase transparency and accountability. It's very beneficial for the Chamber to now have a dedicated policy document.Six members vied for five positions on the board, revealing the high interest in the Chamber and its local efforts. This election was the first since the board's inception and is evidence of the Chamber's evolution.Offering to join the board were David Magahey (FourCourt Advisors), Stephanie Sinclair (Laceby Real Estate), Mario Meyer (Reyem Technologies), Sonja Golchin (ArtSpot), Angelo Santorelli (Trisan Construction, former Chamber presidents) and Carmelinda Galota (Unlimited HR?Solutions).All but Meyer were elected, however, Frauley wants to work with him in some capacity at the Chamber, given his enthusiasm and talents.The full 2024 board includes:Michelle Frauley, president; Gus Kokkoros, VP; Theresa Sherwood, Treasurer; Savita Despot - Secretary and Governance & By-Law Committee Chair; Directors Darryn Wilbur, Ryan Raymond, Jay Willmot, Joe Rosati, Angelo Santorelli, Carmelinda Galota, David Magahey, Stephanie Sinclair and Sonja Golchin.Frauley pointed to an exciting time ahead for the Chamber this year.In recent strategic planning session, the Chamber board outlined key priorities to drive growth and success.?We're committed to ensuring financial stability, enhancing member engagement, and adding value to our community. From optimizing our website to exploring new revenue streams, we're focused on efficiency and innovation. Together, we'll build a stronger, more vibrant community for all.?In 2024, the Chamber is dedicated to enhancing member support and engagement. They're revamping their social media strategy to spotlight members, keeping them informed about valuable funding opportunities, and encouraging involvement in committees covering advocacy, membership, events, and by-laws & governance.?Our commitment remains steadfast as we strive to provide enhanced resources, guidance, and assistance to ensure the success of every member. Together, we'll build a Chamber where every member feels valued and supported.?New for 2024, the Chamber is introducing a Sponsorship Package, providing exclusive

opportunities for businesses to align with marketing budgets and reserve spots at signature events. Additionally, they have 12 participating businesses in this year's new Chamber Ambassador Program, offering a unique chance to elevate brand presence and connect with industry leaders.A new event, Gran Fondo King, is a cycling event designed to showcase King Township's beauty and promote local businesses for economic vitality.The King Chamber of Commerce, in collaboration with the Township of King and the King Weekly Sentinel is launching a new coupon booklet for our community. This booklet will feature exclusive discounts and promotions from our local businesses, circulated both in print and digitally. For our Chamber members, this is a fantastic opportunity to showcase your businesses and connect with potential customers. You'll enjoy exclusive rates to feature your offers in the booklet, providing valuable exposure.King Mayor Steve Pellegrini extended his heartfelt congratulations to the Chamber for its significant growth and evolution?Over the past year, we have witnessed a remarkable increase in membership and the diversification of businesses within the Township of King. This growth not only strengthens our local economy but also enhances community cohesion, fostering a sense of belonging and pride among our residents,? he said.?I commend the Chamber for its proactive approach in introducing new bylaws and policies. These changes are designed to create a more robust governance structure, ensuring that the Chamber remains responsive and relevant to its members' needs. By modernizing its policies, the Chamber is setting a strong foundation for future growth and success.?The long-term benefits of the Chamber's strategic restructuring and policy updates are clear. Improved support for local businesses, enhanced networking opportunities and stronger advocacy efforts with government are just a few examples of how these changes are fostering a conducive environment for business success and innovation in our community.?As we move forward, I am confident the Chamber will continue to play a pivotal role in our community's growth and prosperity. Together, we can build a stronger, more vibrant local economy that benefits us all.?Thank you for your dedication and hard work. I look forward to continuing our partnership and making King Township an even better place to live, work and play.?The mayor also administered the oath of office to the new members joining the board.