

Hamilton Chamber of Commerce

Committee & Division Renewal Task Force Terms of Reference

(Updated 01/13/2016)

Background

The Hamilton Chamber of Commerce operates four member-based committees (Ambassadors, Business Development, Human Resources and Innovation and Technology), four member-based divisions (Ancaster, Dundas, Glanbrook and Young Entrepreneurs and Professionals). Members generally join these committees and divisions for three reasons:

1. To learn/engage in professional development through informed speaker presentations and policy discussions;
2. To network with peers and build professional connections; and
3. To have influence by contributing to the development of Chamber policy positions and advocacy efforts.

Committees and divisions were designed to provide valuable input into the development of Chamber policy positions and critical issues impacting the Hamilton business community, be they municipal, provincial or federal in nature.

Divisions differ from committees in that: 1) they were created to represent members and take on issues in certain geographical/demographical areas, and 2) division Chairs are *ex officio* (voting) members of the Chamber Board of Directors.

The committees and divisions of the Chamber have been a major source of member engagement for many decades, but have remained static over at least the last five to ten years, even while the Chamber underwent a significant governance reformation in 2011 and a subsequent reinvigoration of its organizational brand, mandate and value proposition.

The Chamber's new by-laws make clear that the committees and divisions are instruments of the Board of Directors, however they have been independent for years, with very little effort on the part of the Board to exercise oversight or ensure alignment.

The Chamber also created a Research & Policy Analyst position in 2013 that exponentially increased the organization's in-house policy capacity and allowed the organization to be less reliant on member-driven policy development.

It is important that as the Chamber and the issues that impact the local business community evolve, the nature of its committee, advocacy and policy-related work also evolves.

Despite it consuming significant Chamber staff time and resources, current beliefs are that the existing committee/division model is not producing as much benefit as it could for the Chamber and its volunteers. Specifically, the status quo potentially does not fully engage and utilize the intrinsic motivation of committee/division members to contribute, nor does it effectively connect with new or potential members. In the context of scarce Chamber resources, the model also does not offer a

mechanism to evaluate the performance of committees/divisions in furthering the Chamber strategic direction.

It is imperative, therefore, to ensure that the focus areas and activities of Chamber committees and divisions:

1. Are aligned with the Board and the Chamber's membership;
2. Enable the right model for policy and advocacy formulation and ensure the Chamber remains relevant and informed on current and emerging issues;
3. Optimally engage the members and utilize their intrinsic abilities and knowledge, depending on the issue;
4. Reflect the current and future needs of members and potential members;
5. Represent the highest and best use of Chamber resources; and,
6. Extend the influence and impact of the Chamber, locally and beyond.

The Committee & Division Renewal Strategy

It is unknown as to when the Chamber's committee model was last subject to a comprehensive review, but it would have been well before the adoption of the current by-laws and the expansion of in-house policy-making capacity.

Thus, the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce is forming a task force to implement a Committee & Division Renewal Strategy as one of the key initiatives to be undertaken by its Board of Directors, in keeping with the goals of: 1) achieving complete organizational alignment and operational proficiency, 2) demonstrating relevance in the 21st century, and 3) enhancing the Chamber's influence and impact in the community and beyond.

This initiative is particularly important if the Chamber seeks to keep current and leading-edge in its policy focused work, and if it wishes to maintain a high degree of member-supported policy work as a principal draw for engaging the current membership as well as in attracting new members.

The strategy will be led by the Chamber's Board of Directors, with considerable support from the Chamber's CEO, Vice President, Policy & Research Analyst and key policy-inclined members.

Project Objectives

Based on organizational directions, member survey results, independent research and emerging trends in member-based organizations, the Committee Renewal Strategy will focus on the following objectives:

1. Re-define the purpose and intent of Chamber committees and divisions, recognizing that committees and divisions serve different purposes and constituents;¹
2. Create Terms of Reference for all organs within the Chamber policy apparatus;
3. Establish Board control over the committees and divisions, and ensure that the organization is completely aligned from top to bottom;
4. Define the role of the committees, divisions and task forces in the Chamber's policy development, advocacy and government relations models;

¹ To that end, the task force recognizes that it may need to deal with committees and divisions at separate times.

5. Develop objective evaluation criteria, performance metrics, a committee review process and identify conditions for creating/disbanding committees, divisions and task forces;
6. Clarify roles, responsibilities, and expectations of committee/division/task force members, staff and the Board to effectively utilize the talents and expertise of all parties and work effectively within the resource capacity of the Chamber;
7. Define what constitutes “Chamber policy” and outline the decision making and approval process for Chamber positions developed through the committee/task force process (e.g. resolutions, positions, submissions, reports etc.);
8. Develop a robust communications and engagement framework that facilitates strong connections between and among the Chamber board, the staff, the members, other committees, divisions and task forces, and with the Chamber corporately; and
9. Identify strategies to attract, engage and retain committee, division and task force members, and strengthen connections between the Chamber and the broader community.

Methodology

The Committee & Division Renewal Strategy will rely on the advice of the knowledgeable task force members and be informed by the following methodology:

Benchmarking: Undertake research of other Chambers of Commerce across Canada and the United States, as well as other leading organizations (e.g. non-profits, professional organizations etc.) to review and identify best practices in engagement and interface.

Member Input(s): This is a major reorganization of the Chamber. As such, it is important for the task force to create opportunities for current and future committee and division members to give direct input into this renewal process. Member engagement may take on many different forms, including at committee/division meetings, in one-on-one interviews or surveys.

Outputs

It is anticipated that the Committee & Division Renewal Strategy will result in the following outputs:

1. To ensure complete organizational alignment by reporting and acting as a resource to the Board of Directors, the creation of a Hamilton Chamber of Commerce Policy Council, governed by Terms of Reference and comprised of select board members, Chamber staff and key policy-minded members, to oversee the Chamber’s policy-related committee, division and task force activity;
2. An updated framework delineating the purpose, role and intent of Chamber committees, divisions and task forces;
3. A standardized terms of reference template for committees, divisions and task forces;
4. An objective framework for evaluating committees/divisions/task forces, and criteria for when they should be created or disbanded;
5. Performance metrics, a process for reviewing and evaluating committee/division/task force performance;
6. Recommendations pertaining to the roles and responsibilities of the Board, committee chairs, committee members and staff;

7. Recommendations pertaining to the decision making and approval process for Chamber positions developed through the committee/task force process;
8. Recommendations for the Chamber regarding member and broad community communication, outreach and engagement, including interface infrastructure (e.g. social media, Panorama, Pipeline, website, etc.);
9. Recommendations and strategies regarding ongoing communications and connections between the Board and committees/divisions/task forces, between staff and committees/divisions/task forces and between the Board and staff;
10. Recommendations of annual cycle and programming of committee/division/task force activities (e.g. committee timing, resolution/ policy development process, issue identification, government relations/advocacy programming, presentation to Board etc.);
11. Optimization of the Chamber's membership and involvement in the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and Canadian Chamber Commerce, including in informing Chamber members of policy work being undertaken by the OCC and CCC;
12. Recommendations regarding the rationalization of committees, divisions and task forces; and,
13. The creation of a plan of action to advocate for the policies positions of the Chamber and to extend the influence and impact of the Chamber.

Timelines

December 2015 – February 2016: Task force formation and research

February 26, 2016: Presentation to the Board at the Chamber's annual Board Retreat

March 2016 – June 2016: Conduct best practice research, creation of framework, member engagement.

June 2016: Summary outputs for board discussion and/or approval by board

Advisory Task Force

The Committee & Division Renewal Strategy will be guided by an advisory task force that will work with Chamber staff to develop recommendations to the Board.

The task force will comprise:

- Task Force Chair: Vice-Chair, John Pryke
- Chair of the Board of Directors: Vasudha Seth
- Board Member: Mary Williams
- Ancaster Division Chair: Wendy Thompkins
- Young Entrepreneurs & Professionals Chair: Tyler Ferguson
- President & CEO: Keanin Loomis
- Vice President: Scott McCammon
- Research & Policy Analyst: Huzaifa Saeed
- Member: Richard Koroscil