

Exploring the Future of an

ALEXANDRIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

NORTH GLENGARRY NORD

Ontario's Celtic Heartland
Le centre celtique de l'Ontario

Exploring the Future of an

ALEXANDRIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Today's Objectives:

- Understand the role and purpose of a Chamber of Commerce
- Consider the options for geographic representation
- Compare models (Chamber vs. BIA vs. Business Association)
- Discuss the benefits and trade-offs each model can provide to local businesses
- Review what is known about the previous Alexandria Chamber
- Explore options for revitalization
- Determine whether there is community interest in moving forward

Before moving forward...

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Purpose: What specific challenges or needs would the organization address?

Representation: Whose interests would it serve, and who can participate?

Governance: How would leaders be selected and held accountable?

Funding: How would activities be sustained over time?

Capacity: Are enough business owners willing to volunteer and participate?

Collaboration: How would it work alongside existing organizations?

WHAT IS A CHAMBER OF COMMERCE?

A membership-based organization that represents the interests of local businesses and works to strengthen the local economy.





TYPICAL CHAMBER ACTIVITIES

- BUSINESS NETWORKING EVENTS
- EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS AND SEMINARS
- BUSINESS PROMOTION
- ADVOCACY TO GOVERNMENT
- COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS
- TOURISM PROMOTION
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

What are the

BENEFITS

- Stronger collective voice
- Greater visibility
- Networking opportunities
- Access to resources and training
- Collaboration on shared challenges
- Increased economic activity
- Community leadership opportunities

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE VS. BIA VS. BUSINESS ASSOCIATION



Chamber of Commerce

Typically represents the broader business community within a defined area

Flexible geographic scope

Focuses on networking, advocacy and economic growth

Membership is voluntary

Funded through membership dues, sponsorships, events, programs

If Incorporated, must comply with applicable corporate filing and governance requirements.



Business Improvement Area (BIA)

Represents businesses within a defined geographic area

Mandatory participation for commercial properties in defined boundary

Focuses largely on beautification, marketing and revitalization of a specific commercial district

Requires municipal by-law

Funded through a special levy



Business Association

Typically a specialized group representing a particular segment of the business community.

Flexible geographic scope

Connects businesses around common interests

Funded by membership fees, sponsorships, fundraising

May choose to have incorporated board structure or be informal

WHAT GEOGRAPHIC AREA SHOULD BE SERVED?

Alexandria	Concentrated focus primarily on businesses located in and around Alexandria, to promote and revitalize. In parallel with the Maxville Chamber of Commerce.
North Glengarry	Serving Alexandria and surrounding communities, with the option to collaborate or amalgamate with the Maxville Chamber to establish a North Glengarry-wide Chamber.
Regional	A broader organization connecting businesses across both North and South Glengarry, through a regional Business Association.

ALEXANDRIA & AREA

Benefits

- Strong focus on Alexandria and surrounding businesses.
- Greater attention to local priorities, events and economic development.
- Potential to revive an established community organization.
- Opportunity for direct, locally focused advocacy.

Trade-Offs

- Smaller potential membership and funding base.
- Requires dedicated volunteers and leadership.
- May duplicate activities offered by neighbouring organizations.
- Limited geographic reach for broader networking and advocacy.

NORTH GLENGARRY

Benefits

- Unified business voice across North Glengarry.
- Larger potential membership and resource base.
- Opportunities for shared programming, promotion and advocacy.
- May reduce duplication between local Chambers.
- Maintains a municipal-level focus.

Trade-Offs

- Requires cooperation and agreement among participating organizations.
- Must ensure balanced representation of Alexandria, Maxville and rural businesses.
- Different community priorities may compete for attention.
- Amalgamation could involve legal, financial and governance considerations

REGIONAL

Benefits

- Broadest geographic reach and networking opportunities.
- Potential for cross-municipal collaboration, marketing and partnerships.
- Larger potential membership and sponsorship base.
- Flexibility to establish activities based on shared business interests.

Trade-Offs

- Wider geographic scope may make it harder to address community-specific priorities.
- Requires fair representation across both municipalities.
- Potential overlap with existing Chambers and business organizations.
- Competition for membership fees, volunteers and sponsorships.
- Greater coordination and communication demands.

EXAMPLES

Chamber of Commerce

- Maxville & District Chamber of Commerce
- Moose Creek Chamber of Commerce
- South Grenville Chamber of Commerce
- The Cornwall & Area Chamber of Commerce

Business Improvement Area

- Quartier Downtown District
- Le Village

Business Association/ Organizations

- Business Sisters
- Consoeurs en affaires



WHAT HAPPENED TO THE PREVIOUS CHAMBER?

- **What We Know**
  - Alexandria previously operated a Chamber of Commerce.
  - The organization gradually became inactive.
  - Questions remain regarding its legal status, membership records, financial records, and corporate filings.
- **Next Steps That May Be Required**
  - Confirm legal status
  - Review governing documents
  - Confirm financial position/outstanding liabilities
  - Determine whether revitalization or a new organization is more practical

ALTERNATIVE OPTION:

Start Fresh

Creating a New Chamber

Advantages:

- Clean start
- New leadership
- New development of bylaws
- Clear direction
- No uncertainty over historical obligations

Considerations

- Must incorporate or establish a new organization
- Requires committed volunteers
- Requires membership recruitment



WHAT MAKES A CHAMBER *Successful?*





TOWNSHIP

Support

- Facilitating & Supporting the Initial start-up phase
- Providing Meeting Space
- Join membership as a non-voting, supporting member
- Seeking out grants for funded Chamber positions

POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS

1. Form a Steering Committee
2. Review Legal Status of Existing Chamber
3. Develop Terms of Reference





QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

Thank You

CONTACT:

Margaret Babinok

Economic Development Officer

Township of North Glengarry

ecdev@northglengarry.ca

613-525-1110 x 300

SUBMIT AN EXPRESSION OF INTEREST: