

## Cuts make sense

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Rather than compete, it was felt that the Chamber could better organize and run the Tourism office than we could. To this end the town contributed over \$40,000 and the township \$10,000. In addition, the town provided a building and assumed a large portion of the operating costs. Combined the two municipalities are paying the Chamber over \$75,000 to do tourism.

The request by the municipality was to have a seat/say on how these tourism monies were being spent. Why would we want to have a say in tourism? Go to the Chamber's Web site and you will see all kinds of information on the benefits of being a member of the Chamber. The following words appear on the right side of the page titled "Go to Tourism."

Clicking on this site opens information about the area. Click on "How to get here?" then click on "Finding us." Four maps

will appear — a street map of Gananoque, plus three regional maps. There is no map of Leeds and the Thousand Island Township showing how to travel to the businesses in the township.

We want a say on how, where and when the monies on tourism are spent. The governance model of the Chamber prevents us from doing this. If the Chamber is not prepared to allow us to comment on where our money goes then why contribute?

Secondly, we could also ensure ourselves that our taxpayer's monies are not being spent to advocate for the business community. There are monies from the dues of the members to address these concerns.

How many people do you know that will give over \$75,000 annually to a third party and say, "Take our money and spend it how you wish?" We do not believe that this is a prudent use of taxpayer's money.

TLTI Mayor  
Frank Kinsella

## Support chamber

To the editor:

It is surprising to read that TLTI is considering drastically reducing its funding to the Chamber of Commerce in 2007 and even eliminating it in 2008.

It seems incredible that council is recommending that once its support of the Chamber of Commerce has ceased, "TLTI would be using that money to pursue its own tourist and economic development initiatives."

This move back to the "bad old days" of piecemeal, small-scale, local thinking would be a serious setback for economic development in both the township and the town.

For years, petty rivalry between the two municipalities hampered both. Then, in the early 1990s, the Gananoque Chamber expanded to promote the whole region, realizing that what entices potential tourists, businesses and homebuyers is the range of opportunities both inside and outside the gates. It became clear that the town and the Township could do more together than they could each do alone.

There are many heartening recent examples of what else can be accomplished when the two municipalities look at the big picture together. The current initiative to assess the area as a Premier-Ranked Tourist Destination involves both town and township. The Biosphere Network's Sustainable Tourism Development Project is now under way and reaches even farther than our two municipalities. Groups such as Communities ALIVE, with its public meetings to gauge support for a community centre and pool, are showing how we all mutually benefit when we think of town and township as one big community. These and many other successful initiatives simply couldn't work if each municipality was to work in isolation.

There is so much to gain if TLTI would continue to join Gananoque in supporting the Chamber of Commerce in a spirit of partnership rather than competition.

Blu Mackintosh  
Chair  
Communities ALIVE

## Chamber essential

To the editor:

The Township Council needs to think again about its proposal to decimate and then eliminate its financial assistance to the 1000 Islands Gananoque Chamber of Commerce.

Last year Gananoque provided the Chamber with \$43,000 as well as office space. To share the burden fairly, the township should have done a significantly more than it did, only \$10,000.

What has to be taken into account is that approximately one-third of the Chamber's members are in the township.

The township should have paid and be paying a minimum of \$18,000 to \$19,000 yearly.

This is meant to be a new era of co-operation between Gananoque and the township with the fire departments, health care, recreation and so on.

It makes no sense to expect Gananoque to continue subsidizing the township's share for the Chamber.

And if Gananoque quits doing so and as a result the Chamber has to be split up, the recriminations and bitterness will be quite out of proportion with the paltry savings of money for one of the richest townships in Eastern Ontario.

The township cannot perform as the Chamber does. The Chamber produces 120,000 travel

guides in both languages, there is attendance at trade shows in the large catchment area which generates a huge response of over 60,000 inquiries each year from Ottawa, USA, Montreal and Toronto.

This is a benefit that goes far beyond helping just the Chamber members, a fact Gananoque has recognized but a fact on which the township has reneged. This is embarrassing.

My small company has been is a member of the Chamber of Commerce since its inception in the early 1990s. We have enjoyed many benefits which do not follow municipal boundaries.

There are important opportunities for talking to other business leaders at Chamber meetings often with presentations, there are awards and special events giving needed encouragements and fostering a healthy commercial atmosphere for the benefit of everyone.

Moreover the Chamber is staffed year round and is run by a competent Board of ten.

No informed taxpayer is going to criticize the Township for doing its part. We need jobs and we need to hang on to what we already have. That is where an efficient Chamber of Commerce is essential.

Douglas Mackintosh

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