

COLLABORATIVE ADVOCACY FOR PROVINCIAL ACTION

GREATER
VICTORIA

As a non-partisan advocate for the Greater Victoria business

community, we understand the importance of public policy and the power of an informed electorate. Our strong relationships with elected officials and with community decision-makers ensures receptive ears and thoughtful reflection when we speak on behalf of the business community. They enable us to be at the table – figuratively and at times literally – when decisions are made that affect our operating environment.

For example, every month the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce's Chair **Al Hasham**, and I meet with the leadership teams for the **City of Victoria**, **Downtown Victoria Business Association (DVBA)**, **Greater Victoria Harbour Authority (GVHA)**, and **Tourism Victoria**. At these meetings, we discuss the Greater Victoria issues and opportunities.

Flowing from this partnership, we identified the shared areas of concern that require provincial attention and action: Increase Affordable Housing, Improve Mental Health and Addiction Services, Complete Sewage Treatment, Create a Regional Transportation Commission, Complete Belleville Terminal

By joining together and coordinating our advocacy, we were able to send our next government a strong, consistent message

Improvements, and Develop Ogden Point and Home Port Victoria.

To ensure these areas were addressed in the provincial election campaign, we decided to present them to candidates and interested individuals. Thanks to joint efforts, we hosted a "Candidate Listening Session, a free public event on March 2 at the Victoria Conference Centre.

Victoria Mayor **Lisa Helps**, DVBA's **Kerri Milton**, GVHA's **Ian Robertson**, Tourism Victoria's **Paul Nursey** and I formed a panel, moderated by **Gregor Craigie**, host of *CBC's On The Island*. We presented the shared areas of concerns - with our requests of the next provincial government - after which we answered questions from candidates and audience

members.

Over 100 business and community leaders, provincial candidates and interested citizens attended the listening session, and actively engaged the panel on the topics. We left the Conference Centre that night with the sense that South Island provincial candidates better understood the issues at hand, as did the rest of the audience.

In the end, the unique event demonstrated the power of collaborative advocacy.

By joining together and coordinating our advocacy, we were able to send our next

government a strong, consistent message. I look forward to how the South Island provincial candidates respond to what we presented at the listening session. I encourage voters to pay close attention to what the candidate say and do, and to engage with them on the issues that matter to you and your business.

See you at the polls May 9!

Catherine Holt is the CEO of the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce. 250-383-7191, CEO@victoriachamber.ca, www.victoriachamber.ca

APRIL CHAMBER EVENTS

■ Tuesday, April 4
Social Media Series: Create a Content Plan for Social Media
2 to 4 pm
Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce (852 Fort St.)

■ Tuesday, April 11
Success Planning for your Business
2 to 4 pm
Greater Victoria Chamber

of Commerce

■ Thursday, April 14
April Mixer & Mingle
5 to 7 pm
Mayfair Optometric Clinic
(3196 Douglas St.)

■ Thursday, April 20
2017 Greater Victoria Business Awards Gala
Fairmont Empress (721 Government St.)

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