



Public Policy Criteria

Mission

The mission of The Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce (The Chamber) is one that everyone is in agreement with - and that is to make Naples THE best place in America to live and work.

Voice of the Community

As the voice of the community, The Chamber is the centralized entity through which the business community can join with other organizations to promote projects that benefit people, families, businesses and the community as a whole. It multiplies every Member's effectiveness in the community by providing the structure, volunteer leadership, professional staff, and full-time office to meet the needs of the business community.

There is power in the partnership with the Members of the Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber helps accomplish in sum what no one business or professional could do alone. The Chamber is also a spokesperson to local, state, and national representatives, and provides resources for business data and economic profiles of the community.

Overview

Each public policy position, statement, initiative or advocacy campaign undertaken by The Chamber, should, first and foremost, be consistent with its Mission Statement and view as Voice of the Community.

Public Policy supported or advocated by The Chamber should also be developed within the guidelines of Chamber Public Policy Protocol detailed in another section of this document.

Public Policy supported or advocated by The Chamber should also be developed with the understanding, within its Mission Statement, that what is best for the entire community will, ultimately, be best for business and will, in turn, increase community support for and involvement in The Chamber.

The community has a right to expect some of the very best schools in the nation, the most honest and efficient local government, the most ethical businesses, the very best and most farsighted planning, the most civil, respectful and non-partisan politics and governance.

It is the vision of The Chamber that its public policy will play a large role in Naples and Collier County becoming a progressive, thoughtful, far-sighted, culturally and economically diverse community which celebrates the gifts, talents, views and hard-work of the entire population. In short, The Chamber's public policy initiatives should ensure a stable future by building community with an eye toward improving the lives of the often forgotten and invisible and building a productive and contributing economic middle class.

Specifically, public policy initiatives should be able to affirmatively answer all or most of the following questions:

- Is the effort within The Chambers' mission statement and vision?
- Will resolution or completion of the effort ultimately improve the community?
- Will the effort draw upon the expertise, experience and knowledge of The Chamber, as an organization through its volunteers and staff?
- Will The Chamber have adequate resources to pursue the effort?
- Will The Chamber be able to identify and involve partner individuals or organizations in the effort?
- Can the outcome of the effort be realized?
- Will The Chamber's effort have a significant effect on the eventual outcome?
- Is there reasonable consensus among the various internal entities helping to develop the effort (Board, Board Officers, Legacy Leaders, Public Policy Committee, and Staff)?
- Will The Chambers' efforts duplicate the efforts of other organizations already established in a leadership position? Will the effort supplement the efforts of other organizations?
- Is it necessary for The Chamber to undertake the effort?

Broad areas of concern, given The Chamber Mission Statement and Vision, should include but not be limited to:

- Institutional Relevance of government, politics, commerce & industry...emphasize efficiency, productivity, diversity, and comprehensive service.
- Culture & Society...acknowledge the cultural, racial & economic disparity of Collier County and celebrate its diversity with an emphasis on quality education, economic opportunity and safe, comfortable housing.
- The Environment & Climate Change...recognize the importance of potential climate change to Collier County and emphasize efficient and sustainable practices in business, government and home.
- Economics & Poverty...recognize the systemic and growing poverty in the Southwest Florida region and seek opportunities and efforts to correct problems and diversify the economic to help building a growing middle class.
- Health & Healthcare...a solid, comprehensive system of health care, accessible to all, is vital to Collier County and a growing bio-medical industry is a valuable economic asset to the community.

Specific issues in which The Chamber may seek to become involved include but are not limited to: Housing, Wages, Health Care, Transportation, Immigration, Environmental sustainability, Climate Change, Education, Family Structures, Gender equality, Business Regulations, Culture/Race, Economic Opportunity/Diversity, Information Technology/Electronic Divide, Farming/Farm Labor, Human Trafficking, Fair Taxation, Recognition of Business.

Public Policy Protocol

Mission: To influence public policy to ensure Collier County is the best place to live, work and visit.

Objective: To proactively address issues deemed essential to our community. Issues and positions should be, whenever possible, vetted for their relevance to the community.

The evaluation should, whenever possible, include advice and consent and/or concurrence from The Chamber's Executive Committee, The Chamber's Public Policy Committee and Board of Directors.

The Chamber should, whenever possible, provide educational forums and discussion through the Civic Information Center (CIC).

While these conditions are deemed ideal and to be followed as standard operating procedure, it should also be acknowledged that issues or crises may arise from time to time that will require immediate action by The Chamber President or Executive Committee.

Goals: Develop a communication infrastructure and advocacy network to educate, inform and encourage action on public policy issues, including:

- Developing a chain of communication for education or action.
- Develop a list of member's employees' email addresses.
- Communicate with alliances as well as Leadership Collier alumni
- Utilize *Business Currents*, Leadership Link, *Chamber Matters* and other instruments to educate and inform the membership and alliance base on issues.

- Establish Relationships with key policy makers including County Commissioners, County Manager, School Superintendent (through the education committee), Legislators and decision-makers and opinion leaders.

- Identify Issues of importance

- Issues can be vetted by the Civic Information Center and/or through surveys that are professional and objective whenever possible, feasible or desired.

- Encourage civic involvement and participation.

Companion Memorandum of Understanding

Background:

The Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce [The Chamber] is a unique organization. It is important to recognize its policies are manifested by its behavior and its written protocols.

The Chamber is non-partisan, non-sectarian but political. It does not support candidates for office but does respect the sacral dignity of our secular public service. The Chamber exists to ensure the viability of the business climate as one means of advancing a progressive Collier county community.

Expectations

In accordance with The Chamber Bylaws, The Chamber Board determines general Chamber Policy. The Chamber Officers, including The Chamber President, oversee the direction of The Chamber.

Legacy Leaders [not mentioned in Chamber Bylaws] posit thematic and financial support for The Chamber's Public Policy Efforts.

The Public Policy committee facilitates Chamber consideration of public policy initiatives. The Chamber President is directly responsible for implementing all Chamber business. The Senior Vice President for Public Policy is an extension of the President and staffs the Public Policy committee.

The Chamber Officers have directed the public policy efforts [topics, strategy and tactics] of The Chamber for the past five years with the guidance and advice of the Chamber Board. This has allowed The Chamber to be opportunistically nimble and effective.

Chamber Legacy Leaders have thematically supported The Chamber's general approach and different Chamber Committees have been involved in defining specific topics and implementing focused strategies and tactics.

Today [September 2007] The Chamber, blessed with continuity of focus, consistency of leadership, has progressed to where it is, perhaps, better positioned in the community than it has been in recent years.

The addition of a Senior Vice President for Public Policy, reporting to the Chamber President, and the refreshment of The Chamber's Public Policy Committee, allows The Chamber to build upon its base, continue its momentum and strengthen its community position.

This can be done by codifying both The Chamber's behavior and its written protocols, especially the processes used by The Chamber to accomplish its aims, as well as the behaviors expected by The Chamber of its major public policy players.

Situations:

It may be useful to consider that The Chamber often finds itself in four situations when visiting public policy matters:

Situation # 1: This first situation concerns complex, long-term, systemic, multifaceted topics which, because of their effect on the community, demand...over a timely period...thoughtful definition, careful analysis, serious deliberation and significant conversation from a balanced variety of people. {Slow & deliberate}

Examples of aspects of current and past issues with which The Chamber deals in this regard would include the provision of reasonable employee housing, adequate and affordable worker healthcare, the tolling of US I-75.

The Chamber's Public Policy Committee, as a facilitating committee of The Chamber, using The Chamber's Civic Information Center and its Zoomerang surveying capacity as tools, should thoroughly vet aspects of these Situation # 1 topics and explores ways in which they may be addressed.

The Public Policy Committee should share its recommendations with The Chamber Board Officers and the full Board.

Situation # 2: Issues episodically surface in an untimely fashion. The Chamber does not have the luxury of applying its long-term processes.

Faced with this situation, the Public Policy Committee, the Chamber's facilitating arm, should share its opinions with the Board Officers, including The Chamber President, who need to make decisions with the advice and counsel of The Chamber Board via phone calls, face-to-face contact, emails, and other communications. {slow & deliberate}

Situation # 3: There are situations when topics appear instantaneous and require immediate action. Here, the Public Policy Committee, via phone, email, face-to-face communication should be constituted and with the advice and consent of The Chamber's Board Officers, The President will decide and direct action. Chamber Board Members should be informed of the issue background, decision rationale and actions taken. {Swift & wise}

Situation # 4: Matters surface that require sensitive, confidential exploration and, once defined, shall be exposed to thoughtful discussion. {Immediate adroit, sensitive, confidential}.

Communications

Public officials [elected, appointed and careerists] most resonate with supporters and constituents. Staff of the most effective organizations facilitate, coordinate, assist organization members with their public official communications. This approach also strengthens the organization because it engages members' ownership, passion and expertise in advancing both the organization's goals and its policies.

Expert staff is critical in both shaping policy and process. They are the professionals who focus fulltime on the organization's public policy. They presumably also understand the necessity of balancing and helping to shape communications for the organization's total benefit.

The Chamber should strive to develop a coordinated, focused group of members who have access and affinity with local public officials and who can be counted on to regularly communicate with them. Chamber staff should coordinate and add issue-value to these interactions.

The Chamber Bylaws should be followed in all Chamber public communications.

