



Nanton & District Chamber of Commerce Strategic Plan

April 21 and May 19, 2022

Facilitated by Ursula Sherwood, Executive Director, Community Futures Highwood

Introduction

The Nanton and District Chamber Board met on April 21 and May 19, 2022, to formulate a strategic plan/direction for the Nanton Chamber covering the next 3 years. The Board decided to meet at two separate times to allow for input from the community in between sessions. This input was gathered in the form of a survey, asking the community about the perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, as well as their ideal version of the Nanton Chamber (aspirations and results). Below is a summary of the discussions and their outcomes, as well as the agreed upon next steps with timelines and responsibilities.

Objectives

- Review Mandate and Objectives
- Establish Vision and Mission
- Define strategic goals (long, mid, and short term)
- Define desired relationship with Town
- Establish a process for succession planning/board recruitment
- Establish KPIs
- Establish accountability practices

SWOT Analysis

Below is a list of the identified strengths and weaknesses both from the perspective of the Chamber Board and from the perspective of the community as per survey results. Items that are highlighted in yellow in the Chamber Board table are items that were not mentioned in the surveys.

Strengths and Weaknesses – Chamber Board

Strengths	Weaknesses
Good relationship with Town	Uneven representation (i.e., store front vs. home-based businesses)
Website	Perception
Advocacy	No ED
Cohesive, collaborative, functioning board	Lack of engaged volunteers
Programming/events	Face-to-face engagement
Operation of VIC	
Projects (map, bookmarks, etc.)	
Communication	

Strengths and Weaknesses – Survey Results

Strengths	Weaknesses
Great support and knowledge from long-standing chamber board members	Stale – same old programs, copying from other Towns
Chamber leadership and progress of the Chamber in the past 2 years; increased reaching out to and bringing together of businesses	Information being in multiple places instead of just one; no public meeting info or follow-up info on meetings; meeting minutes do not include details on discussions
Communication	Lack of diversity of business members
Passionate; hard-working and caring	Long-term planning
Tourism support; promotion of Nanton and its businesses	Members have no say in strategy; decisions are being made without member feedback
Relationship with Town	No code of conduct
Beginning to show a clear voice for the business community which needs to be maintained	Lack of support and willful misunderstanding of the role and limitations of the Chamber by the community
Chamber members being great role models	Barrel planters
Outreach to newcomers and new businesses	Boards personal feelings interfering with the improvements to the Town

Below is a list of the identified opportunities and strengths both from the perspective of the Chamber Board and from the perspective of the community as per survey results. Again, items that are highlighted in yellow in the Chamber Board table are items that were not mentioned in the surveys.

Opportunities and Threats – Chamber Board

Opportunities	Threats
Social engagement / Round tables	Limited funding in the future?
New business = New members	Volunteer burn-out; lack of engaged volunteers
Part of EcDev Committee	Local political fallout
Collaboration with other Chambers	Inflation and high gas prices
Volunteer recruitment	BBC
Hybrid meetings	Lack of economic development
More travel/exploration of southern AB	Aging infrastructure
Provincial designation of grain elevators	No public Wi-Fi
More people moving out of the cities	Lack of serviced industrial lots in Nanton
Mix of businesses	Lack of rentals and housing
Antique and Art Walk	Lack of accommodations

Opportunities and Threats – Survey Results

Opportunities	Threats
Acknowledgement of land-standing members	Splintering of volunteer group; gossip; assumptions
Group purchasing	Loss of momentum and leadership due to burnout; lack of willing volunteers
Community and Inclusion	No contiguous succession plan for board
Increase tourism; promote Nanton as day-trip destination; continue to promote existing assets and services	Bypass of Q2 highway
Increasing residential and commercial base; Nanton being more affordable for new businesses and residents	Aging population
Make Nanton fantastic – fresh face, new ideas; inclusive and unique branding (create a “wow” factor); become a unique “Old Time Town (coal train robbery)	Lack of fresh drinking water
New and emergent economies; creation of new business opportunities	Lack of money for initiatives
Unified messaging from Town, Chamber and Volunteer organizations re new strategies and directions	No central business core – businesses are scattered throughout the community
Showcasing new and exciting businesses in Town	Keeping the Town interesting and vibrant

SOAR Analysis

Below is a list of the identified aspirations and results both from the perspective of the Chamber Board and from the perspective of the community as per survey results. Again, items that are highlighted in yellow in the Chamber Board table are items that were not mentioned in the surveys.

Aspirations and Results – Chamber Board

Aspirations	Results
Paid PT ED	Able to offer more programming and other services
EDO for Town	ED for the Town of Nanton
Supporting new and existing businesses	Increase revenue, volunteers, (networking) events, participation (send reps), surveys/round tables
Regular in-person engagement with members	Increased meetings and events (hybrid)
Facilitation of increased business collaboration	Member only website portion, mastermind groups, “Rainforest Calgary”, Nanton \$
Even membership representation	Different industries and types of businesses evenly represented (i.e., store-front and home-based, retail and services, etc.)
Enough volunteers	All the human resources to comfortably deliver all programs and services
Have other revenue streams	Increased events, signage, projects, insurance, maps
Positive awareness/recognition of Chamber role	Increased public support
Clarity with Town of Nanton (regarding roles)	Meeting with Town – updated MOU, clarified roles and responsibilities
75% increased membership	75% increased membership
Board Succession Plan	Board Succession Plan

Aspirations and Results – Survey Results

Aspirations	Results
Transparent	Meeting dates, plans and agendas, spending information easily accessible
Better communication on decisions and directions	Opportunity by membership to speak to possible decisions; Keep member information accessible (one spot-like a message board) for members and use a different format for non-members. Provide quick and easy access to dates of meetings, minutes of previous meetings and agendas.
Increased membership	Networking opportunities, social events, reg participation from 90% of businesses

Fresh and welcoming	Personal touch to new and existing businesses; warm treatment of business owners
Nanton promoting, forward thinking, tradition respecting, diverse in background and experience	Increased visitors/tourism
Continued commitment to hunting down grants and other financial opportunities to improve business life in Nanton	Increased revenue and ability to provide more programming and services
A support for businesses and a draw for new businesses with a balance found between industrial and commercial / tourism	Well supported business community; influx of new businesses; balanced business community
Separate from the town interests and more focused on business owners	Take businesses needs and wants into consideration, why they leave or close
Chamber is the go-to location for residents and tourists for ongoing events and initiatives	Leave policy and enforcement issues to town

Additional Survey Comments not captured above

- Include members in choices and directions
- Formal dinner event to showcase Chamber and Board, silent auction, recognition awards, annual, invite Mayor and Town Council, MLA, etc.
- New ideas and contests on social media
- Separate from the past and move to a new way of dealing with people
- Have a vision for Nanton a thriving community with varied interests
- The Chamber is doing a good job but lack the support of businesses in town. We have to make the members want to attend meetings, participate, speak, and share ideas. The members should be made aware of discussions at the meetings in regard to any promotions, open houses, etc., before they are confirmed. Advise and Inform the Members of the Chamber. If they choose to become a member of the Chamber, they have to feel like they are important and will be heard if attending a meeting.
- Lots of praise for the current Board!

New Mandate

To promote and improve trade and commerce and the economic, civic and social welfare of Nanton and District.

New Vision and Mission

Vision (Overarching “Big Hairy Goal”)

To foster a thriving Nanton and District business community.

Mission (the “How”)

To offer advocacy and support while encouraging collaboration, education and providing resources to the business community.

Details:

- Contributes to the creation of a thriving and successful business community
- Collaborative and supportive
- Provides access to business resources
- Liaises with Town
- Educates
- Communicates
- Visible
- Responsive

Strategic Goals

1. Chamber “Structure” (i.e., becoming a ‘Trade Board’)
2. Discussion with Town:
 - a. Role of the Chamber, especially as it regards Economic Development, VIC, Projects, Advertising/Promotion
 - b. Relationship with Town
 - c. Alignment with Town Strategic Plan
3. Chamber Board Succession Planning
4. Update Bylaws
5. Attend Chamber Conference (AB)
6. Continued regular outreach to all businesses
7. Website: Collaboration forum

Results/SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely) Goals

Chamber Structure – to be completed by End of May

Item	Who
Listen to the podcasts	All
Reach out to Stettler Board of Trade for more information	Pam
Talk with Brady from Claresholm about their arrangement with the Chamber (incl. Brady’s job description and salary)	Becky
Talk with Claresholm Chamber	Lorraine
Talk with AB Chamber of Commerce re “out of box” Chamber models	Amanda

Discussion with Town

Item	Who	Timeline
Make a list of all the items the Nanton Chamber already does, incl. completed projects and the costs/hours	Jennifer & Becky	Middle of June 2022 or sooner
Explore and discuss potential new operational models (i.e., Board of Trade?)	All	
Townhall meeting/survey with business community and asking for/receiving letters of support	All	End of June 2022
Informal meeting/conversation with Council Rep Kevin Todd and Mayor Jennifer Handley	Becky	May to mid-June 2022
Request for council presentation, incl. Chamber Council rep and CAO	Becky	June 2022
Presentation to Council:	Becky & another	August and September 2022

<p>1. Suggested roles and responsibilities Town & Chamber, incl. potential new Chamber model and feedback from business community, addressing the following items in a broad manner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. General business development ii. Projects such as VIC, beautification iii. Marketing iv. Events, promotions v. Public Wi-Fi vi. Infrastructure improvements (i.e., solar benches, swings) vii. Financing (business licenses, commercial tax base, grants)? viii. Chamber information included in business welcome package <p>2. Possibility of an EDO for Town of Nanton (Claresholm) OR PT ED/PT Marketer?</p> <p>3. Alignment with Town strategic plan</p>	board member	
Possible conversation with Town Administration (depending on council presentation outcome)	Becky & another board member	August/September 2022

Item	Who	Timeline
Acknowledgement of survey responses with link to surveys	Becky	End of May 2022
Check out Tourism Grant for a marketing person	Lorraine	End of May 2022
Solar benches	Becky	End of May 2022
Make Facebook business group private again	Pam	End of May 2022
Website: Collaboration Forum	Becky	End of June 2022
Change website to showcase what the Chamber is doing (i.e., VIC, beautification, Nanton Days, Art Festival, etc.)	Becky and Eva	May-June 2022
VIC Staff	Pam and Becky	End of June 2022
Find at least 1 alternate source of revenue Ideas incl.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognition event, golf tournament (possible collaboration with Okotoks, High River, Diamond Valley), Christmas party for businesses and their staff, craft fair, tradeshow, chili cook-off, etc. 2. Grants 3. Town of Nanton 4. Membership increase 	All	December 2022

Create annual budget	All	Prior to Year-End 2022
Increase membership to 70 members	All	AGM 2023
Increase volunteer base: Board (4) and events/initiatives (4)	All	AGM 2023
Review of Strategic Plan and KPI's	All	April 2023
Attend AB Chamber Conference	One board member	2023
Create annual budget	All	Prior to Year-End 2023
Find at least 1 alternate source of revenue	All	December 2023
Increase membership to 86 members	All	AGM 2024
Chamber Board Succession Planning	All	AGM 2024
Update Bylaws 1. Remove objectives 2. Review terms	All	AGM 2024
Review of Strategic Plan and KPI's	All	April 2024
Attend AB Chamber Conference	One board member	2024
Create annual budget	All	Prior to Year-End 2024
Find at least 1 alternate source of revenue	All	December 2024
Increase membership to 100+ members	All	AGM 2025
Review of Strategic Plan and KPI's	All	April 2025
Attend AB Chamber Conference	One board member	2025
Create annual budget	All	Prior to Year-End 2025
Find at least 1 alternate source of revenue	All	December 2025

Continued regular outreach to all businesses	All	Ongoing
Diversify business representation	All	Ongoing