

Chamber's Recent Survey: What Questions Aren't Being Asked?

The Hilton Head Island/Bluffton Chamber of Commerce recently sent a 29-Question Survey to members asking for opinions about how they have been doing.

Interestingly, The Chamber has never sent out a questionnaire asking members who they would nominate and select for their board of directors. *(Is it because the current CEO and Board*

prefers to keep things tightly controlled with their own "buddy board"?)

Most of this new survey was multiple choice, so it went on for 8 pages—too much to cover in my one-page ad. Therefore, I will just comment briefly, about how I would have answered some of the more pertinent questions, and what questions should have been asked, but weren't.

For Example, for some reason, they didn't bother to ask:

What do you think of your CEO making over \$320,000 salary with a pay package of \$400,000?

Very Satisfied Satisfied Neutral Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied

Since I didn't receive a questionnaire, I felt this ad space would be a great place for my answers to some of their 29 questions, plus important ones NOT asked.

QUESTION - Please select your primary reason for being a member of the chamber.

MY ANSWER- To be involved with others in the business community and be supportive of their needs. It is not to support a "for-profit" organization which operates under the disguise of a "non-profit" entity at the expense of many of its members. I like "Business After Hours," but where is all the money generated by "The Chamber Ball" and "Taste of the Season" going?

QUESTION - Evaluating your chamber membership what are the most important benefits?

MY ANSWER - It is difficult for me to comment on the importance of what the chamber claims it is doing, when the chamber refuses full transparency, as any publicly-funded organization must do, and declines opening its books to its membership and appoints its own board without input from the entire membership.

QUESTION - Please rate your satisfaction with the chamber in areas such as "value received" for your annual investment and "overall effectiveness of advancing the common interests of membership."

MY ANSWER - My issue is not rating levels of satisfaction, but rather levels of dissatisfaction. I presume the Chamber has many fine, hard-working employees. That's not the point. The reality is that the way this Chamber has been set up in our community is a hoax. It take huge chunks of money from public funds and then builds a 26-employee, self-serving empire in the name of being a "non-profit" organization - and, at the expense of local media companies.

QUESTION - What efforts are you interested in your chamber pursuing?

MY ANSWER - Promoting all members' products and services— not competing with its own members.

QUESTION - Do you plan to renew your membership?

MY ANSWER - Not until all Chamber abuses are cleaned up as stated in my recent 6-point STOP-CHAMBER-ABUSE Plan.

Questions Not Asked, But Should Have Been.

QUESTION - Should the Chamber also be a Convention & Visitors Bureau attracting tourism ?

MY ANSWER - Definitely NOT. By doing so, the opportunity to mix and mingle funds for the wrong purposes are too great. Each entity should be separate, with distinct and separate missions and transparency.

QUESTION - What should be the mission of the Chamber?

MY ANSWER - It should be a membership organization dedicated to meeting identified needs of the Hilton Head Island/Bluffton area by fostering economic opportunity and a favorable business climate through the promotion of community growth and development of support programs that improve the overall business environment.

The Chamber's decision to hire out-of-town lawyers to arrogantly refuse FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) transparency requests speaks volumes about things they are trying to hide from our community. **How are those attorney bills being paid?** Thanks again for your continued support, and understanding of the importance of fixing our Chamber. Please keep sending your emails of support to SpeakUp@StopChamberAbuse.com. Write to your council members and local editors. And, take me at my word. I will not stop until every rock is turned over . . . every abuse brought to light.

Skip Hoagland

(*NOTE ~ because of space restrictions, some of the Chamber's survey questions have been paraphrased).