

The business community in St. Elizabeth is expressing optimism, following the re-emergence of a Chamber of Commerce in the parish.

The re-establishment of the Chamber could contribute positively to the development and future of the parish, considered the bread basket parish of the island.

This was stated by newly elected President of the Chamber, Howard Hendricks, who told JIS News that the business community in the parish was robust and eager about the future and so the Chamber coming at this time was a good fit.

“You should see the response. Some people do not even know what a Chamber of Commerce is, and some do not see the significance of it. Many people are happy with it,” he said.

Mr. Hendricks noted that the parish previously had a Chamber of Commerce, which had become dormant for well over a decade. Concerns were raised by several members of the business community and other groups about the level of crime and indiscipline that were creeping into the commercial business areas, and calls were made for a revival of the Chamber to spearhead the protection and developmental activities for the parish. Interest heightened further following an introductory tour of the business community in Santa Cruz.

He further explained that efforts began in Santa Cruz, but a decision was made at the first preliminary meeting, to expand its reach to the whole parish. Good progress has been made since the first meeting, he added.

“We have a Mission Statement, a Vision Statement, we’re looking at the Constitution and we have a full slate of Executives. We discussed the upcoming Santa Cruz drainage plan and looked at the strategy for efficiently expanding the Chamber of Commerce,” Mr. Hendricks said.

Other issues being looked at by the Chamber of Commerce include procuring a network of cameras for the police for the town of Santa Cruz, creating a booklet on the town, and creating a set of maps of the major towns across the parish.

He said that having a Chamber of Commerce is important to the business community, especially for bustling towns like Santa Cruz, which suffer from chronic congestion on a commercial day, such as a Saturday.

“What I did was to invite the Road Safety Unit to come and change that. They (business people) saw some progress in a short while, and they are now very optimistic,” Mr. Hendricks told JIS News.