



Highlands Business Partnership

2003

Annual Report

HBP Board of Directors

The HBP Board of Directors provides leadership, oversight and financial control of the operations of the corporation, Highlands Business Partnership. The 4th year, 2003 assessment budget was \$89,122.00 and in addition Sponsorship, Grant and Event Income to offset the programs costs generated approximately \$60,000.

The Board is comprised of 17 voting members and four non-voting members. Mayor's designee, Mayor Rick O'Neil and the Planning Liaison Member and Councilman, John Urbanski, represent the governing body as voting members of the Board. There are seven commercial property owners and seven business operators that comprise the HBP Board of Directors.

4th Year Objectives:

During the fourth year of operation the primary objectives include:

- Expansion of destination marketing (events) and advertising to strengthen the anchor businesses, restaurants.
- Solicit Grants and Sponsorship to enhance improvements.
- Continue with the Borough and HBP to work together and build consensus for business growth and expansion that is business friendly and is consistent with Borough's Master Plan.
- Create new visual improvements to enhance the public areas that traverse the central business district and provide an attractive public space environment for customers and visitors to experience when utilizing Highlands' businesses.

Officers of the Corporation:

Carla Cefalo-Braswell, President; John Koenig, Vice President, Joan Wicklund, Secretary; Loriann Bodnar-Nolan, Treasurer. The Officers serve according to the bylaws and form the Executive Committee of the corporation providing the executive and oversight decision-making body on behalf of the Board of Directors. These Executive Committee members also serve as Board members and answer to the Board of Directors.

2003 Board Members:

Jay Cosgrove, Bahrs Restaurant, Carla Cefalo-Braswell, ShoreGrafx & Resident, Loriann Bodnar-Nolan, Lori's House of Beauty & Resident, Michael Kovic, Commercial Property Owner & Resident, Lisa Kochanik, Transcendence Spa & Resident, Kathryn Lustig, Christine Michelle Handmade & Resident, Anne Parmelee, Parmelee & Parmelee Attorneys & Resident, Eddy Sousa, Sandy Hook Cottage Bed & Breakfast & Resident (replaced Larys Cartaya partial 2003 term), Joan Wicklund, Sand Dollar Card & Gift and Resident, Joanne Wouters, Strokes & Stitches & Resident, Michael DuPlantis, Orleans Louisiana Bistro, John Koenig, Clam Hut Property & Marina on the Bay, Fred Rosiak, Captain's Cove Marina, Bill Weber, Nauvoo @ Sandy Hook (replaced Henry Moyer's remaining partial 2003 term), John Nasti, Bootlegger on Bay (replaced Joanne Wouters remaining term) and AJ Solomon, Resident Member. The Resident Member is a one-year term. The Executive Committee members comprised of the corporate Officers, who also serve on the Board, are Carla Cefalo-Braswell, President, Joan Wicklund, Secretary, Loriann Bodnar-Nolan, Treasurer and John Koenig, VP. Mayor Rick O'Neil served as 2003 Council Liaison and Councilman John Urbanski served as 2003 Planning Board Liaison to HBP. Highlands has a unique situation where a majority of the Board Members are also residents, which further enhances the benefits of our program.

Non-Voting Board Members:

These members bring institutional and corporate private-sector talent and resources to the Board. These members should bring an added outside viewpoint to the board that assists in their decision making process. Tom Lavery, Twin Lights Historic Site; Larry Novick, Brookdale Small Business Development Center; Roberta Sheridan, JCP&L Energy. These members provide for value added resources for HBP. These board members do not vote on issues or serve on committees.

Committee Chairs

Board Members Fred Rosiak, Carla Cefalo-Braswell, Loriann Bodnar-Nolan, Eddy Sousa and Residents Marcia Shaya, Nancy Thomas and Nick Evangelista all took leadership roles to Chair and Co-Chair HBP Committees. This process ensures linkage to the objectives of the Board.

HBP Administration:

Legal publication notices, as outlined in the state statute for BIDs, announced the HBP meeting schedule for three regular meetings and one annual meeting in 2003. State of New Jersey filing fee, dues for membership in Downtown New Jersey, postage, stationery, educational conferences were administrative expense line items. As required by the state statute, the Churchin Group completed an audit April 2003. HBP filed our Audit with the Department of Community Affairs, Division of Local Government Services, and Borough of Highlands and remains with HBP corporate records. Charitable Registration was completed for HBP 2003. HBP Insurance is provided through a partnership with the Borough and the Monmouth County JIF, Joint Insurance Fund. Anne Parmelee provided legal services at no expense to HBP for the review of the Allen Consulting (ACI) Contract renewal. Resident, Business and Commercial Property Owner, Nick Evangelista, provided management services for the first half of 2003 and Carla Cefalo-Braswell, a resident, business and commercial property owner, provided professional management services from June - December. The HPB phone # is (732) 291-4713 and Fax # is 732-872-1031. HBP has an account with Verizon for the Phone # only. Carla Cefalo-Braswell provided HBP free use of office space; fax machine, computer equipment and utilities in 2003.

Marketing Consultant

A summary was provided by ACI to Board members at the Annual Meeting for year 2003 outlining a total cash from events income, grants and corporate sponsors. ACI has worked with Chairs & Committees to expand the event calendar. Marketing services from ACI includes all public relations, media contacts, event calendar development, implementation and solicitation of corporate sponsorship to promote events that will showcase Highlands as a destination.

Marketing & Communications Committee Chaired By Carla Cefalo-Braswell in 2003 and Eddy Sousa, Sandy Hook Cottage Bed & Breakfast for 2004

The HBP Marketing Consultant, Allen Consulting (ACI), was rehired to sell sponsorship, manage events and initiate marketing incentives. The contract will end the calendar year 2005. It is important that corporate sponsorship be secured from outside of Highlands, as the community is small; and new partnerships need to be developed to undertake a successful destination-marketing plan for Highlands. Sponsorship provides the backbone of funding for events and advertising. Sponsorship funding maximizes the local BID investments funded by special assessment to fund advertising, event expenses and promotions to create destination

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environment to attract visitors. Having so many visitors in the surrounding area - Sandy Hook, Twin Lights and Shore areas - Highlands desires a greater share of the visitors to discover our restaurants and businesses. As a community with three Ferry landings, there is a year-round opportunity to direct market "Highlands as a destination". The HBP Marketing committee has initiated direct marketing programs with a coupon distribution system that extracts Highland's business coupons from our Website. Through the services of HBP, businesses can register and design their own coupons free of charge. Coupons can be changed as frequently as the business operator desires. Upon purchase of monthly or weekly ticket book, complimentary coupons are provided. HBP oversees, administers the coupon books and the Ferry Company includes the HBP coupon book with each weekly or monthly commuter ticket purchase. Use of Highlands' restaurants and businesses by Ferry riders is being nurtured, encouraged and brought to their attention on a daily basis through our partnership with ferry. Most downtown's striving to come back from decline must develop a destination agenda from scratch. Highlands has been able to develop and nurture a partnership with an existing resource.

Website www.highlandsnj.com

Maintenance and expansion of the Highlands' web site during HBP's 4th year has been continued. The Website enables HBP to provide maximum access to HBP information by all business operators and commercial property owners of Highlands included in the BID, as well as, the general public. Minutes, reports, newsletters, organization chart, mission statement, ordinance, budget, events, photo album, bylaws are accessible and printable from your computer. The Highlands/HBP web site is promoted on all HBP media contacts reinforcing the destination marketing objective activities. In the year 2003, we had 64 million media impressions from ACI utilizing our website address. All events held in 2003 provided visitors with coupons and additional event information as well as promoting our Website.

Advertising/Media Impressions

Marketing chair and ACI coordinated free pr for all new businesses in town and for those businesses hosting a newsworthy event.

For 2003 in excess of 64 million measured print impressions have been made. That means that Highlands' name is getting out there as a destination. Changing perception and customer habits take persistence and consistency. Allen Consulting prepares all new press releases for HBP that are approved through the Marketing Chair and Manager. Any business innovations or news are welcomed topics for a HBP media release.

HBP Newsletter

ACI prepared a condensed newsletter for 2003. This internal communication is mailed to all business operators and commercial property owners in Highlands. HBP is seeking ways to produce to the entire community of Highlands and hopes to enhance the newsletter in 2004.

The Highlands Visitor's Guide was created in 2003 and includes information on Highlands such as history, coupons, event information, ferry schedule, a map and a business directory. The visitor guides were distributed at all HBP events. Additional Calendar of events was distributed at Sandy Hook promoting our event calendar and Clam Fest.

Group Media Buys

One advertorial was purchased with Asbury Park Press for the Oktoberfest. A total of \$3,000 in double truck ads during October was initiated through the Marketing Committee with Board approval. Contained in the special pullout section of the Asbury Park Press were five or more stories highlighting Highlands' as a destination. ACI provided the editorial information that was approved by the Executive Board. Additional Group Media initiatives were assisting some of the restaurants with advertising in the publication, Night and Day Press. Meetings were held with Greater Media, Resort Maps and Jersey Shore Publications to offer additional advertising methods.

Funding Development - HBP

Private Sector Partners - Sponsorship Development

HBP Marketing Committee has served as the primary catalyst for attracting private funding to maximize the local assessment investment. Through professional efforts of Allen Consulting a corporate sponsorship track record is being developed that will ensure our corporate sponsors are provided value in the marketing initiatives set forth through HBP. Corporate sponsors budgets are allocated on an annual basis and long-term brokering must take place to deliver value to both partners. Sponsors for 2003 were Comcast, the Point Radio, Meridian, Shrewsbury State Bank, Foodtown, Hufnagel Tree Services and Budweiser.

Awards and Matching Grants

ACI and HBP Business Advocate submitted a nomination of the HBP Destination Marketing Strategy to the NJ Travel and Tourism matching grant for 2003. HBP was awarded a \$5,000 matching grant by NJ Travel and Tourism, NJ Commerce and Economic Development Commission. The grant is to be used to expand marketing outside of NJ targeted for NY State rack card marketing at visitor centers. HBP received a CAMA award from the Northern Monmouth Chamber of Commerce for a community partner.

Special Events Committee: Chaired by Carla Cefalo Braswell

The committee set an aggressive agenda. Destination Highlands is the objective of the marketing activities. Create Highlands as a destination for visitors partially by hosting events to showcase the community. The 2003 event calendar provided a "complete marketing package" for ACI to use to broker and solicit greater sponsorship opportunities for Highlands. Through this process Highlands can expand our destination marketing activities that will enhance the local business environment by attracting new and repeat customers. A comprehensive event schedule is packaged and our consultant serves as a broker between corporate and media partners who will provide sponsorship in return for media exposure.

Seaport Craft Show 2003 was held on Memorial Day weekend with a successful start of 61 crafters almost double from last year. The event was well received by crafters and visitors alike. This type of event grows over time but we intend to keep it on the calendar for expansion.

Cruise Nights 2003 were held under the direction of Lori Bodnar-Nolan (Lori's House of Beauty) and spouse, Frank Nolan, the local business volunteers and Highlands Police worked closely with the Jersey Shore Cruisers and Bob Dooly. Participation from local businesses provided certificates and prizes for the visitors. Over 135 enthusiasts participated during the event. Games and DJ were on hand for everyone. Loriann Bodnar-Nolan and Frank Nolan

worked together on a Tricky Tray Gift Auction and a Super 50/50 for the event. Loriann obtained the raffle license for the event. Over the event was a success.

Northern Monmouth Chamber of Commerce Concert Series

Through a partnership with NMCC and HBP, there were four Tuesday evening beach concerts in July at the Seastreak beach- front area. The concerts were funded through the NMCC and promoted in partnership with HBP. The concerts are always a big draw to visitors and HBP promotes our other events here as well. We are striving to keep the concerts in Highlands. ACI reported that the concerts would probably not be in Highlands for 2004.

Highlands Farmers Market HBP prepared and submitted the 2003 Farmer Market grant to the NJ Department of Agriculture. HBP was awarded \$400 to be matched in advertising and promotion of the Highlands Market. The 2003 season began a little early in May in hopes of having strawberry farmers but weather did not permit much. The Regular Market began late on the third Saturday in July due to severe crop damage from excessive rain and continued through until the last Saturday in October. Farmers participated with the Oktoberfest event with mums, fresh fall produce, pumpkins and squashes. Mike Kovic and Kathryn Lustig along with ACI took on the responsibilities of the market each Saturday. Outside vendors were solicited for the market and there were various successes with adding vendors to the market. Advertising and highway signs were installed to promote the market.

Clam Festival 2003 - Events Chair, Carla Cefalo-Braswell moved the Clam Fest to August in hopes of avoiding rain as in the prior 3 years when held in June. The event proved to be successful and was enhanced greatly by Carla obtaining a raffle license for HBP to have a money Wheel and 9 games of chance. It was a huge effort and took many volunteers. Local residents were a huge asset to the success of the games and HBP could not have run the games without them. The expansion brought a substantial income and growth to the event. The Clam Fest had 8 local restaurants of the 10 food vendor spaces sold. There were nearly 40 vendors. Live entertainment, rides, contests and games were also included in the four-day event. The event was powered by generator this year to save electrician costs. Electric demands will require a new look at Huddy Park electric requirements and new investments from HBP to upgrade event electric.

Twin Lights Bike Tour 2003- The Bike New York Twin Lights Bike event was held in Highlands at Huddy Park Area. The event was a great success and hopes to grow each year Seastreak ferry company cooperated with bringing bike enthusiasts to Highlands for a multi-tour bike event. The response to the event was in excess of 1000 registered bike enthusiasts to visit Highlands and sections of Monmouth County. There were 4 routes available. Many cyclists visited most businesses that were open this day. The Bike NY is a non-profit organization that donated helmets and other protective gear to our Recreation Director, Mr. Tim Hill. Mr. Hill administered the protection gear to Borough residents in need of the program. We are in the planning stages of the 2004 bike event and hope to draw 2000 cyclists.

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Oktoberfest 2003 The event proved to be a substantial loss due to severe rain conditions. There were no police reports for the third year, which is always a concern with an alcohol event. A liquor license was secured and Mayor Rick O'Neil, Councilmen John Urbanski and Bill Ciazza volunteered to man the beer operation. Many Residents volunteered. A non-Highlands food vendor provided German food loved by the crowds along with a lively German Band that warmed the crowds with traditional music that young and old enjoyed. There were only 10 vendors and 2 inflatable rides. The Police support was outstanding and this event is definitely will be a repeat performance for 2004.

I Love Highlands 2003 was a promotional event from Memorial Day through Halloween used to build a mailing list for businesses. No purchase was necessary to participate but entries can go into retail establishments and fill out the form to win a basket of prizes from Highlands Establishments. The winner was Liz Mammen, a resident of Berkeley Heights, NJ. HBP will not hold this event in 2004 due to lack of participation from the businesses and many of the same people re-entering too many times.

Holiday Lighting 2003 Councilmen John Urbanski & Bill Ciazza, Councilwomen Becky Kane and Anna Little joined Mayor O'Neil at the ceremony. It was another bad event due to severe weather conditions. There was a blizzard and very few people came out. Local residents volunteered in many areas of this event. Loriann Bodnar-Nolan prepared a program guide. All of our entertainers had to cancel due to the storm. The Highlands Community Singers were troopers and were the only performers who showed for the event. Local resident Rick Abair portrayed Santa and Mrs. Clause was Joan Schneider, resident and member of the Highlands Garden Club. HBP volunteers, under the direction of Carla Cefalo-Braswell, decorated Huddy Park and several public areas with the assistance of Tim Hill, Recreation Director and the Highlands Garden Club Members.

Holiday House Tour 2003 The Holiday House tour was also held during a snowstorm. The unusual weather had a negative impact on most of our events this year. Still and all during the snow, Sylvia sold about 100 tickets on the tour and we had eight lovely homes, 2 B&B's and a local business, Jerseywood Productions hosted a show during the event. This event will also grow over time and as usual we are always looking for more homes to expand the event.

Visual Improvement Committee –VIC Co-Chaired by Nick Evangelista and Loriann Bodnar-Nolan in 2003 and Marcia Shaya and Nancy Thomas for 2004.

This HBP Committee has a wide scope of objectives including Parking, Safety, Beautification, Capital Improvement, Maintenance and Design. During 2003 the committee focused on visual improvements in the business district. A tree Company, Hufnagel Tree Service trimmed and maintained our trees on Bay Avenue as well as some other areas. The tree services were on a barter arrangement for sponsorship arranged by Carla Cefalo-Braswell and Mike Hufnagel.

Public Safety

The speed monitor equipment purchased by the business community was repaired and Carla Cefalo-Braswell worked with Police Commissioner Councilman Bill Caizza to re-institute use of the sign in areas where there may be heavier traffic conditions in the district.

Parking Recommendations

HBP, as a private sector corporation, can facilitate the brokering of leased parking arrangements. Leased parking will improve parking utilization and provide existing underutilized lots with potential income to "pay the bills". This plan will assist the Borough and private property owners to manage the parking issues with a flexible strategy. No new parking leases were negotiated between privately owned lots was initiated in 2003.

Public Area Maintenance - Clean Communities Entitlement

The public area maintenance plan is part of an ongoing program funded through a publicly funded entitlement of \$5,500, Highlands' allocation from the Department of Environmental Protection, Clean Communities Grant Program fiscal year 2003. The lowest bidder came in at \$9,750 and HBP paid the difference of the entitlement in an effort to proceed with the HBP Spring Flowering plan. The public area maintenance plan had been approved by the Borough to be administered in partnership with HBP. The program had been administered successfully under the former Highlands Neighborhood Preservation Program, and HBP VIC Committee requested an opportunity to continue the program. Public area debris removal, maintenance, organization of volunteers and Highlands Adopt-A-Highway area — the Highlands Bridge Ramp are the primary components. During the past seven years there were five areas that this entitlement program served to maintain by a private sector landscape contractor. Highlands Bridge Embankment, Veterans Park Planters, Huddy Park planters, Highway Sign at Linden Avenue and Cornwell Park planters. These are areas of steep slope or areas that were severely neglected.

A scope of work was created and quotes were secured from licensed landscape contractors who could perform herbicide applications. Borough employees have not yet certified for conducting herbicide applications. These areas were cleaned with:

- Debris and litter removal
- Herbicide applications
- Plant replacement and maintenance and replacement mulch three times April, July and October. These areas were maintained through the 2003 publicly funded entitlement.

VIC Chair Nick Evangelista, submitted a proposal for a Downtown Pilot Maintenance Program where he proposed that HBP seek a part time maintenance person to sweep up, clean graffiti and public signs, possible window cleaning in the business district. Funding was not available in 2003 but plans to implement this pilot are underway for 2004.

Flower Containers

The VIC Committee purchased flowers and worked with the generous members of the Garden Club to plant flowers in all streetscape planters. HBP purchased HGC some flowers for Gertrude Ederly Park in exchange for their services. It saved HBP a substantial amount of money by utilizing the Garden Club resources. The Highlands Department of Public Works provided services for watering. Nancy Thomas of the garden Club also provided additional planting and watering services at Huddy Park. We had three seasons of arrangements in the street planters, spring, Fall & Holiday.

Public Area Maintenance Schedule - Holiday Decorations

VIC Committee created a maintenance schedule to ensure that regular maintenance of public area electric is undertaken. This project was started as a result of Committee attempts to design and purchase new electrical holiday decorations. All Holiday light displays were hung by the

Department of public works. Candy Canes were re-taped and displayed by VIC committee members as well as some teen volunteers. Red velvet bows, garlands, tree and wreaths were purchased for several streetscape areas. Installed bows, garland and the decorated tree in Huddy Park. Bows and garlands, and the Huddy Park gazebo tree was donated by mayor Rick O'Neil and cut from his yard by the DPW. It was a beautiful tree once purchased by the Mayor from the Fireman's tree sale.

Inventory of Way Finding Signs, Utility Poles, Parks and Streetscape Amenities

Further inventory records have been created and maintained of existing amenities through new management of HBP. This base information will allow the VIC Committee to plan and purchase new amenities in the public areas of the central business district.

Sign Projects

Way Finding

The Way Finding Signs along Bay Avenue were revisited and expanded to allow for additional businesses to appear on the posts. Currently, Business Owners pay for their own sign and the Borough installs the signs for HBP to save additional costs. Expansion will require an investment by HBP in 2004. Removal and installation of old signs have been taken on by HBP to ensure that signs are hung in an orderly fashion. Several signs were hung too low and they posed a danger to pedestrians. HBP is working with the Borough on this program. HBP purchased the wood materials, Borough installs wooden posts to sign fabricators specifications and signs are installed by the DPW & HBP to ensure that a comprehensive program can be offered and maintained to businesses.

Welcome Signs at Bridge Ramps

Welcome signs were repaired from Car accidents opposite Eastpointe and the bridge ramp. HBP continues to maintain the Bulkhead sign and showcases Highland's events and sponsors.

Economic Development Committee Chaired by Fred Rosiak

The Committee reorganized in 2003 as a new chairman was introduced. Meetings were held the 2nd Monday of each month with a focus on creating an agenda by order of importance. The overall consensus was to create a business friendly environment at Borough Hall in order to proceed with new projects and investors. A meeting with Birdsall engineers was held under the recommendation of Planning Liaison Councilman Urbanski. A proposal was discussed but not submitted to HBP as of 2003. New Members were recruited to this committee and are mainly waterfront Commercial Property owners. Carla Cefalo-Braswell and Nick Evangelista met with Borough assigned engineer Paul Ricci to provide HBP's input for the Master Plan update. Carla and Nick provided the engineer with a detailed tour of the Borough as well as any pertinent documentation. The Master Plan update will be completed in 2004.

Business Recruitment

Many initiatives were made by business advocate, Carla Cefalo-Braswell in 2003. She had numerous meeting with potential investors and provided tours to them as to what parcels are available for purchase or rent. HBP provided free resources to those potential investors such as bank programs, technical assistance and a hand holding process in order to streamline their plan. Meetings were held with Planning Liaison John Urbanski and Borough officials in an attempt to solidify the potential investor's business plan. Documentation was provided such as

the design standards, Tax Abatement & Sign ordinances as well as other pertinent documentation. HBP assisted in bringing two new investors into Highlands and those properties/businesses will be instituted in 2004. The Borough's Tax Abatement Program was also posted on the HBP website as a tool to attract new Commercial Investors.

Business Retention

Many initiatives were taken in order to provide assistance to existing businesses with retention issues. HBP helped businesses with parking, safety and other problems, which may impact their business. The Borough when approved faxes HBP new Mercantile Licenses. When received, Carla initiates a meeting with the new business to provide an informative background and the entire how to's of HBP. Packages are on hand with Meeting Schedules, a Business Improvement District Information Guide, Sign Requirements, Visitors Guides, HBP Registration Form and a copy of the by-laws are distributed to the new business. The meeting is usually an hour or more and all information and opportunities that HBP has to offer is explained. Training was provided on use of the free database driven website and free marketing is also provided as a retention tool.

Smart Growth Application for funding from NJ Office of State Planning

As part of HBP efforts to develop a business recruitment and retention program, an application was submitted with Monmouth County Planning Board and the New Jersey Office of State Planning some time ago. The application needs to be revisited as the scope has changed. HBP Business Advocate saw Joseph Donald, Office of State Planning at the Monmouth County Planning Board's 50th Anniversary in 2003 and re-discussed options for Highlands and HBP. HBP understands that re-development must have a **vision** for the waterfront and underutilized commercial areas. Plans to revisit Office of State Planning were discussed in 2003.

Annual Report 2003 Summary Statement

The development of resources, people, and activities is an ongoing process that has attracted many diverse people during the year 2003. The re-investment by Highlands' business community, of time, talent and money, is a commitment that has and will bring improvements to Highlands. The Borough has experienced the talents and impact of what creating a vehicle for change can have on a community. The re-investment by the business community will bring improvements to Highlands at a steady, systematic pace. The systematic, consensus building strategies that HBP will put forward will allow all Highlands' partners to share in its continued success.

Submitted by Carla Cefalo-Braswell