



Highlands Business Partnership

2009

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 10th year, 2009 assessment budget approved by the Board of Directors and submitted to the Council December 9, 2009 was \$57,000. The board cut the Water Taxi Program from the budget to lighten the burden on members due to the Borough eliminating commercial trash pick up. This was an added expense to business operators already suffering from a bad economy and 30% reduction in sales due to bridge construction. The governing body voted our budget down and approved an amount of \$40,000. This amount Council approved was not legal since tax bills were already mailed with last years assessment rate for a total of \$47,500 collected. The Board addressed Council and they voted to amend the adopted budget to \$47,500. Additional Sponsorship, Grant and Event Income to offset the programs costs generated approximately \$79,500. The Board is comprised of 17 voting members and four non-voting members. Mayor's designee, Planning Liaison Member, Chris Francy, and Council representative John Urbanski, represent the governing body as voting members of the Board. Councilman Urbanski did not attend any meetings. There are seven commercial property owners and seven business operators that comprise the HBP Board of Directors.

10th Year Objectives: During the tenth year of operation the primary objectives include:

- Expand image, brand identity, and slogan to promote Highlands as a regional waterfront destination.
 - Expansion of destination marketing (events) and advertising to strengthen the anchor businesses,
 - Expanded Ad Campaign to include spring, summer fall and winter
- Use database of 3000 emails to promote Highlands – quarterly email blasts
- Solicit Grants and Sponsorship to enhance improvements and programs.
- 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 and provide an attractive public space environment for customers and visitors to experience when utilizing Highlands' businesses.

2009 Officers of the Corporation:

Carla Cefalo-Braswell, President; Jay Cosgrove, Vice President; William Weber, Treasurer; Rafaella Lee, Secretary. The Officers serve according to the bylaws and form the Executive Committee of the corporation providing the overall management of the corporation 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. In 2009, the Executive committee included committee chairs Fred Rosiak (ED), Jim Bollerman, Co Chair (ED) and Nancy Thomas (VIC).

	2009 Board Members:	Business/ Affiliation	Resident	Board Assignment	Status	Replacement Unexpired Term
1.	Jay Cosgrove 3-yr term 12, VP	Bahrs Restaurant	CPO	Liaison to Bridge Committee		
2.	Carla Cefalo-Braswell 3 yr term 11 President	ShoreGrafx	Resident CPO	Chair – Events Co- Marketing/Comm	2009 Seat	
3.	William Weber 3 yr term 10 - Treasurer			Economic Development Committee		
4.	Rafaella Lee – 3yr term Secretary – 2012	Gateway View Apartments	Resident CPO	Visual Improvement Committee		
5.	Douglas Lentz	Inlet Cafe	CPO	Marketing & Events Committee		
6.	Fred Rosiak 3 yr term 08	Captain Cove Marina	Resident CPO	Co-Chair Economic Development Committee	2009 Seat	
7.	Lynda Rose 1 yr term		Resident	Resident	2009 Seat	Resident Member
8.	Margot Takian 3 yr term 10	Duane Realty	CPO	Marketing & Events Committee		
9.	AJ Solomon 3 yr term 09	Solomon & Associates	Resident BO	Visual Improvement Committee		
10.	Leo Cervantes 3 yr term 10	Chilangos Restaurant	Resident BO	Marketing & Events Committee		
11.	Jim Bollerman 3 yr term 2011	Sandy Hook May Marina	BO	Economic Development Committee	2009 Seat	
12.	Jim Filip 3 yr term 09	Doris & Eds	Resident BO	Economic Development Committee		
13.	Dick Walker 3 yr term 2012	One28Bay	BO	Marketing & Events Committee		
14.	Nancy Burton	In the Garden	Resident BO	Visual Improvement Committee		

Members of the district, according to the HBP By-Laws, elect HBP Board members that have expiring terms annually. Board seats that become vacant prior to the end of the expiration of the term are filled by Board action at regular or special meetings. Mayor annually at reorganization appoints these two positions. Highlands has a unique situation, where a majority of the Board Members are residents. Resident stakeholders, who are also commercial investors, enhance the level of commitment to improve Highlands. These board members maintain residency in the community where they have invested in their commercial businesses. This unique dual stakeholder brings a broader perspective to the decision-making process to improve Highlands.

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, **Jackie Hoehn**, Brookdale Small Business Development Center and **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, Jim Bollerman, Rafaella Lee, Jay Cosgrove, and Nancy Burton took leadership roles to Chair and Co-Chair HBP Committees. Committee chairs, which also serve as Board members, direct HBP activities that promote 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 2009. In addition, there were three special meetings since the Board was challenged with a governing body that was eliminating the BID ordinance at year-end. 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 will complete a certified audit in 2009. HBP will file 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 2009. HBP Insurance is provided through a partnership with the Borough and the Monmouth JIF, Joint Insurance Fund. Resident Linda Mikhail provided staff support.

The HPB phone # is (732) 291-4713 and Fax # is 732-872-1031. HBP has an account with Verizon for their Phone and fax#. HBP pays JCP&L for their electric meter usage. Checks are made payable directly to JCP&L from a detailed invoice. Carla Cefalo-Braswell and Ken Braswell provide HBP free use of office space, Internet and computer equipment.

Marketing & Communications – Co-Chaired by Carla Cefalo-Braswell, Jay Cosgrove, the Marketing committee worked to sell sponsorship, manage events, initiate new marketing incentives and expand on Destination Highlands. A summary of the 2009 activities includes the Jersey Shore Destination Marketing; Monmouth County Tourism Guide, Escapemaker 2009 contract, 2009 HBP Marketing/Advertising Media Buy opportunities.

Website www.highlandsnj.com

Maintenance and expansion of the Highlands' web site during HBP's 9thth year has been continued. The Website was enhanced for more transparency with new charts for Minutes, annual reports, organization chart, mission statement, ordinance, budget, events, photo album, and 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. The website was promoted throughout the year.

Escapemaker.com - An investment in destination marketing was completed with a 2009 contract. Email Blasts with weekend getaways were created and attracted over 2700 email addresses. The escapemaker.com site was modified to reflect new business spotlights and additions based on a visit from a travel writer. The escapemaker.com site was updated and reflected the new information. All Highlands businesses are listed on escapemaker.com.

The Highlands Visitor's Guide was created and enhanced in full color for a 2010/11 version that includes information on Highlands such as history, biking and hiking trails, lighthouses, event information, ferry schedule, a map and a business directory. 2009 Visitor Guides were distributed at all HBP events, the Great 5-Boro Race, NJ Pride, the NJ Lighthouse Challenge, County Tourism Office, Historic Twin Lights Visitor Center, the Sandy Hook Visitor Center, aboard the Water Taxi, as well as in our local businesses and Borough Hall. HBP produced 30,000 guides for distribution during 2009.

Tourism Video The Tourism Video was unveiled and proves to showcase Highlands as a destination and as an investment tool. The video will be distributed to the general public, realtors, businesses, and tourism kiosks.

Funding Development - HBP

Private Sector Partners - Sponsorship Development

HBP Marketing served as the primary catalyst for attracting private funding to maximize the local assessment investment. Through efforts of the Exec Committee, a corporate sponsorship track record is being maintained and expanded, 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 2009 include Comcast, 95.9 WRAT, Frank Rahm Landscaping, Hufnagel Tree Experts, New Jersey Tourism (visitnj.org), Shore Point, T&M and Super Foodtown.

Awards and Matching Grants

HBP applied for the NJ State COOP Marketing grant to promote Highlands. HBP was awarded \$10,000 for destination marketing projects. HBP applied for a Farmers Market Grant through the New Jersey Department of Agriculture for 2009. The funding was matched 50/50 to promote the Jersey Fresh Farmers Market along with all promotional information about Highlands. HBP applied for a COSTCO grant in the amount of \$20,000 for environmental educational projects and was not awarded.

Special Events Committee - Chaired by Carla Cefalo Braswell

Destination - Highlands is the objective of the HBP events. HBP promotes Highlands as a destination for visitors partially by hosting events to showcase the community. Councilwoman Rebecca Kane has advised HBP that the Borough will host Earth Day. The HPD, Jacqui Kane has advised HBP that they will work directly with the Lenny T. Abbott Foundation thus both events were removed from 2009 Calendar. A letter was passed out to our vendors signed by Councilwoman Kane at the HBP St. Patrick's Day Parade advising vendors that we would not be putting on our events in 2010. HBP has no intention of turning our successful programs over to another organization. Mayor Little advised the Asbury Park Press that the letter was not on official borough letterhead and was not valid. Mayor Little advised HBP to plan all events as usual and to submit the 2010 calendar to the Council. HBP worked with Tim Hill and Tom Kavookjian for the Baseball Field Restoration Project. HBP utilized their charitable registration and conducted the raffles for the committee. HBP processed all payables and receivables for this fundraiser. A separate GL account was created for tracking and audit purposes. Mr. Hill worked directly with HBP exec board accounting responsibilities.

The 2009 event calendar and marketing plan reached over 100,000 visitors. HBP promotes Highlands at several regional events during the year. HBP Visitor Guides, event collateral materials, complimentary bags, marketing and promotional materials are distributed during the following regional events:

Bike New York-Great Five Boro Race – 31,000 cyclists – Ft. Wadsworth, Staten Island, NY (1st Sunday in May)

NJ Pride – Asbury Park – 15,000 people (1st Sunday in June)

HBP 2009 Special Events Calendar:

Saint Patrick's Day Parade March 21, 2009 was held with 11 pipe bands and local and regional floats, along with a host of local business participation. The parade brings an early start to the busy spring/summer season for local restaurants and businesses.

Seaport Craft Show May 24, 2009 – was held on Memorial Day weekend with over 55 specialty vendors/ crafters. The event was well received by crafters and visitors alike.

Highlands Farmers Market 2009 July – October - The 2009 season began in Huddy Park in July and continued through

until the last Saturday in October. 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 August 6 – 9, 2009 - The Clam Festival proved to be successful and attracted nearly 33,000 visitors over a 4-day period. Efforts of over 40 volunteers, many which are local residents, were a huge asset to the success. Clam Fest had all local restaurants and 43 vendors. Live entertainment, rides, contests and games were also included.

2009 Twin Lights Ride - September 26 - The 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. There were near 1780 bike enthusiasts visiting Highlands and sections of Monmouth County. There were 4 routes available. Many cyclists visited most businesses. Promotions with local businesses were advertised and announced. The Bike NY is a non-profit organization that works with HBP and our Recreation Director, Mr. Tim Hill to promote cycling through education and recreation.

Oktoberfest 2009 – October 3 – German food sales by HBP were expanded with help of Board Members, Jay Cosgrove, Rafaella Lee & Doug Lentz. There were no police reports for the ninth year. A German Band that warmed the crowds with traditional German music and dancers. There were specialty vendors, lots of desserts, a trackless train and inflatable rides. The event concluded with Fireworks on the river and attracted 5200 visitors.

Holiday Lighting 2009 - December 5 - The event features local entertainers performing holiday programs. Local residents portrayed Santa and Mrs. Clause. Tim Hill, Recreation Director and the HBP decorated the tree.

Visual Improvement Committee –VIC - Chaired by Nancy Thomas

This HBP Committee has a wide scope of objectives including Parking, Safety, Beautification, Capital Improvement, Maintenance and Design.

Tree Maintenance

Continue to provide trimming services of trees on Bay Avenue, in public parks and Commercial areas. Removed dead trees for the Borough with Hufnagel Barter at request of Bruce Hilling.

Flower Containers/Streetscape

For the first time since the inception, HBP did not pay for the flowers for the HGC to plant. Borough gave the Garden Club taxpayer money for the flowers instead of utilizing HBP funding.

Holiday Decorations

HBP holiday light displays were hung by the Borough and the map was not utilized.

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 \$50 per sign and HBP pays for the installation. This includes re-alphabetizing annually.

Economic Development Committee Chaired by Fred Rosiak/Jim Bollerman

Business Recruitment

HBP Economic Development DBIZ Loan Project Proposal

HBP economic development committee project of underground utilities to create a visually attractive streetscape for new commercial and residential investment and the attraction of professional services stimulated by the availability of WIFI Internet access have been denied by the Council thus the DBIZ application will not be processed in 2009.

Business Retention

HBP contributed to small business inquiries and provides assistance to existing businesses. HBP helped businesses with problems that impact their business. The Borough provides HBP Office with new Mercantile Licenses. HBP Members schedule meetings with the new business to provide 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. Linda Mikhail sent welcome packages to all new homeowners in Highlands in 2009

Annual Report 2009 Summary Statement

The governing body voted to eliminate the BID in Highlands after a decade of successes. In November 2009, Council paid for a DBAT (Downtown Business Assistance Team) Assessment in the amount of \$3500. It was a bias report as the Board of Directors of the HBP were not interviewed adequately and our website with ten years of history and experience was not taken into consideration. Mayor Little wrote a detailed letter to Downtown NJ regarding the HBP achievements and the political nature of the elimination of the BID ordinance. The process was political and personal. The letter was discredited by Downtown NJ Executive Director Beth Lipmann and was not shared with the DBAT team. Although the DBAT consultants recommended not eliminating the BID, the council voted in December 2009 to dissolve the BID. The Council thought by eliminating the BID ordinance they would eliminate the non-profit corporation Highlands Business Partnership. HBP met with industry experts not associated with DNJ, Inc. and voted to amend our by-laws and remove our assets from the Borough Property and revamp our work plan to continue as an independent 501C3 non-profit corporation in 2010 with no assessment dollars. HBP has been a member of Downtown NJ for a decade but will no longer be affiliated with the unprofessional organization.

Submitted by Carla Cefalo-Braswell