

**Highlands Business Partnership
2006 Summary Report
Business Improvement District
Borough of Highlands, Monmouth County**

**MARKETING/EVENTS & COMMUNICATION
Co-Chairs Eddy Sousa, Sandy Hook Cottage Bed & Breakfast
& Carla Cefalo Braswell, ShoreGrafx**

2007 Objectives

- Develop, implement and expand regional image, brand identity of Highlands as a destination.
- Seek and apply for marketing Grants.
- Paint approved Murals throughout the community.
- Develop newsletter in conjunction with the Borough to send out to business and residential members of the community.
- Develop a comprehensive marketing campaign/media buy for winter (Nov – Feb).
- Complete the long-overdue promotional video for travel and business.
- Modify Annual Visitors Guide reducing Place of Worship.
- Develop more sponsorship opportunities with local corporations.
- Maintain 2007 event calendar to include St. Pat's Parade, Seaport Craft Show, Summer Concert Series, Clam Fest, Twin Light Bike Ride, Oktoberfest, Highlands Cares Breast Cancer Walk and Holiday event.
- Attend Annual events such as Great 5 Boro Race, Asbury NJ Pride, the NJ Lighthouse Challenge and other marketing opportunities to promote the community.
- Expand Farmers Market for Summer 2007.

Budget Request \$50,000 for both Marketing and Events Committee combined. Expenses for Annual Event calendar are funded through income from Vendors & Sponsorship.

Marketing/Events 2006 Accomplishments

- Expanded and enhanced event calendar to include 16 events in 2006.
- HBP obtained a NJ Travel & Tourism grant from the State of NJ in the amount of \$15,000 for our comprehensive marketing & events plan as well as the Water Taxi.
- HBP obtained a \$400 grant from NJ agriculture to promote the farmers market.
- HBP obtained 4 direct sponsors and 3 unique Barter Agreements.
- Every new business was contacted and welcomed by HBP. Business Advocate met with new business owners and provided documentation about HBP including meeting schedules and the NJ SID/BID Statute. Additional information and training was provided for use of free website as well other free marketing opportunities.
- Business Spotlight's stories were done for several businesses by Terry Gauthier-Muessig of the APP coordinated by HBP.
- Press releases were created for each event and distributed to Media list by the HBP President & Vice President.
- Promoted Highlands on escapemaker.com EscapeMaker.com, who hosts a website that promotes destinations surrounding the New York Area. HBP purchased space on EscapeMaker.com starting this July. All the marinas, B&B's, Twin Lights Historic Site, restaurants, water taxi and local park destinations for biking, etc. were included in the write up that is promoted on the website. EscapeMaker.com will be doing an e-mail blast to their mailing list including our Highlands destination information and special rates will be available. An EscapeMaker.com web page banner, featuring Highlands as a destination with details of what to do, where to stay, and dining promote our businesses.

Marketing/Events 2006 Accomplishments continued -

- EscapeMaker.com is regularly featured on Good Morning America and the New York Times as a destination resource. In addition through HBP's listing with EscapeMaker.com, a Pennsylvania regional magazine, *Leighigh Valley Style*, featured Highlands in their next issue. HBP events are picked up and displayed on Escape-Maker.com site, which provides additional exposure to the NY and regional markets for visitors/investors. HBP is able to change the web-page banner throughout the year's contract term.
- Attended the NJ Downtown conference to develop relationships and/or opportunities.
- HBP contacted PBS News12 and was featured on TV promoting the Water Taxi.
- Ads were placed in NJ Shore Life Magazine that included promoting the water taxi.
- Developed new media relationships with Travel Writers, TV & Radio shows.
- Interviewed on live Broadcast promoting Highlands on Radio AM 570 Journal and KCNO 94.5 FM in Alturas, CA
- Interviewed on live Satellite Radio with Martha Stewart for the Clam Fest.
- Interviewed with NJ Gateway Guide Food Festival.
- Enhanced Highland's destination marketing theme – Where the Jersey Shore Begins.
- Continued to maintain a Barter relationship with Foodtown, Sugar Shack and Frank Rahm Landscaping.
- Print Collateral materials were produced on a timely schedule and distributed.
- 2005 Visitor Guide was created and 10,000 copies were distributed.
- Worked with local newspapers especially the Courier and the Asbury Park Press to create newspaper ads and feature stories supporting events and local businesses in Highlands.
- Web site updates have been completed and enhanced throughout the entire year to promote events, update town profiles, demographics, transportation, historical, HBP BID Facts, HBP agendas, reports, minutes, meetings, newsletters, and photo album files. E-Coupon access is available "free" for all commercial/business operators through the HBP section of the web site.
- Event promotion was and is available "free" for all commercial/business operators, Highlands clubs, and organizations.
- Organized HBP Visitor information booth to distribute marketing materials and visitor guides at events such as NJ Pride, the Lighthouse Challenge, and Bike New York's Great Five-Borough Bike Race. All of which were visited by thousands of people.

VISUAL IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

**Nancy Thomas – In The Garden
Highlands Garden Club, VP**

2007 Objectives

- Implement Anti-V (vandalism, victimization, violence) Program with our youth, HPD, HBP/VIC and community at large from January-June 2007, with a March community event, Earth Day Highlands Community Pride.
- Continue partnership with the Borough code enforcement officer to promote community safety and maintenance standards.
- Hire a seasonal maintenance employee assigned specifically to clean the streets and sidewalks throughout the business district. Other duties may include litter pick-up, graffiti and sticker removal, weeding and watering streetscape planters.
- Hire landscape contractor for seasonal landscape maintenance at Borough Gateway Entrances and parks for weed and litter removal, and mulch replacement 3 times a year at the following locations:
 - Highway sign at Linden Ave. and Rte. 36
 - Linden Ave. jug handle at Rte. 36
 - Huddy Park Gazebo
 - Streetscape Planters
 - Veteran's Park
 - Cornwall Square Park
 - North Bridge Embankment
 - Ederle Park
- Repair and upgrade Linden Avenue entrance at the highway sign. Replace current dangerously uneven sidewalk bricks with pavers and add a block "knee wall" for hillside retention next to the sidewalk.
- Research the cost and method of installing flowerbed border retaining system for all planting beds at Veteran's Park to remedy current loss of soil and mulch due to runoff.
- Maintain partnership with the Borough Clean Communities Entitlement Program for annual funding of \$5,000 - 10,000.00, amount subject to change as mandated by the State.
- Maintain partnership with the Highlands Garden Club for the purchase of seasonal plant material. In return Club members plant the materials free of charge in the following areas:
 - Streetscape planters
 - Huddy Park
 - Veteran's Park
 - Kavookjian Field entrance planter (is required)
- Renovate the Highlands entrance Linden Ave. landscape with colorful multi-seasonal interest perennials and evergreens.
- Reassess the parking objectives and needs of the business community and business district residents. Follow up with partnership with the Borough as necessary.
- Evaluate the need for and placement of a business directory kiosk for the more remote parking areas of town to direct visitors to the central business district.

2007 Budget Proposal for the Visual Improvement Committee is \$23,000.00

2006 Accomplishments

- Submitted grant funded application to the NJ State Department - Martin Luther King Commission that proposes a partnership with HBP/VIC, youth at Highlands' schools, and Highlands Police Department to promote anti-vandalism awareness in youth in out community.
- Barter System for professional tree services to maintain trees on Bay Avenue and in the Commercial areas.
- Created a Barter Program with Frank Rahm Landscapers for the renovations at Cornwall Square.
- Worked with Borough to facilitate and complete the Clean Communities Program.
- With an excellent Partnership project with the Borough, HBP was able to restore the street planter containers by completely emptying, cleaning and purchasing new mulch and dirt for repotting and planting.
- Purchased all plants/flowers for the street planter containers for each of 4 seasons.
- Purchased all plants/flowers for the public parks in Highlands with the exception of Gertrude Ederly.
- Completed the Street Banner Program already installed.
- Purchased new signs and maintained existing signs for Highlands Welcome Area's & Parks.
- Completed a maintenance schedule in an effort to follow code for more visual improvements in the business district.
- Continue to update and maintain Way Finding System.
- Worked with the Youth to include them in the holiday decorating plan in an effort to promote awareness and avoid vandalism.
- With permission of the Highlands Shade Tree Commission, we had the large damaged tree from Veteran's Park removed this summer, improving the safety and appearance of the park.
- The HBP Visual Improvement Committee worked on projects with sponsors and other groups in the borough that foster community pride in Highlands.
- Collaborated with the Borough's recreational and public works departments to implement the Holiday 2004 decorations and Tree Lighting Program.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Chairmen – Fred Rosiak, Captains Cove Marina

2007 Objectives

- To implement a project that will enhance new and existing business interest in Highlands which will:
 - Bring more business and customers to our existing business base;
 - Encourage new business and expand existing businesses in town;through networking and promotion using eco-tourism activities with the HBP Water Taxi Service/shuttle linking Highlands anchor dining & marina establishments with Sandy Hook access and connections in the Two River region.
- Identify the range of issues that create problems or discourage businesses from staying and thriving in Highlands and develop solutions with our Governing Liaisons.
- Work to secure grants to expand the HBP Water Taxi Operation that promotes eco-tourism.
- Improve Sandy Hook landing, working with National Parks/R. Wells on permitting and securing floats docks for improved access to landing and Sandy Hook Beaches.
- Develop loan/grant programs for existing and new business for façade and building improvements.
- Work with Borough to continue to implement Highlands Master Plan Action Plan activities.

Budget Request for Economic Development Committee is \$45,000.00

2006 Accomplishments

- Collaborated with potential and new commercial investors to bring new business to Highlands.
- Worked with new commercial investors to promote use of Highlands Design Standards.
- Worked closely with the Borough on the Master Plan Action Plan to implement approved activities (i.e. Water Taxi).
- Created a comprehensive plan to implement an eco-tourism HBP Water Taxi/Shuttle.
- Developed landing improvement plans with Sandy Hook and Monmouth County Transportation Planning.
- Tracked commercial property ownership and business operator changes for business recruitment mailing list updates, and on-line business listings.
- Developed working relationship with Sandy Hook/Gateway National Park regarding water taxi landing improvements, permitting and partnerships to expand service.
- Implemented HBP Water Taxi operations and staffing schedule for the Memorial Day to Labor Day season.
- Developed working relationship with Monmouth County Planning Board – Transportation Council regarding future grant funding opportunities for the Water Taxi growth and expansion and the impact of the bridge project.
- Worked on the Smart Growth Planning/Open Space Inventory/Regional Bayshore Smart Growth Plan to identify supporting activities from the Highlands Master Plan and regional plan for 2007.