



Highlands Business Partnership

2006

Annual Report

**Highlands Business Partnership (HBP)
District Management Corporation
Highlands Borough Business Improvement District
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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 7th year, 2006 assessment budget was \$95,000 (as approved at the 4/21/06 Special HBP Board Meeting) and in addition Sponsorship, Grant and Event Income to offset the programs costs generated approximately \$69,000. 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.

7th Year Objectives: During the seventh year of operation the primary objectives include:

- Develop, implement and expand regional image, brand identity including logo, slogan to be used to promote Highlands as a regional waterfront destination.
 - Expansion of destination marketing (events) and advertising to strengthen the anchor businesses, restaurants – including a HBP Water Taxi Project.
 - Campaign for summer and winter
- Finalize and update as necessary a promotional video using new image components to promote destination travel and business investment
- Develop a joint newsletter between HBP/Borough to send to all business and residential stakeholders
- 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.

2006 Officers of the Corporation:

Carla Cefalo-Braswell, President; John Koenig, Vice President; William Weber, Treasurer; Eddy Sousa, 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 2006, the Executive committee expanded to include committee chairs Fred Rosiak (ED), and Nancy Thomas (VIC).

2006 Board Members:

Jay Cosgrove, Bahrs Restaurant; **Carla Cefalo-Braswell**, ShoreGrafx & Resident (Events/Marketing Committee Chair); **Loriann Bodnar-Nolan**, Lori's House of Beauty & Resident; **Michael Kovic**, Commercial Property Owner & Resident; **Kathryn Lustig**, Transcendence Spa & Resident; **Dan Shields**, Windansea & Sugar Shack); **Eddy Sousa**, Sandy Hook Cottage Bed & Breakfast & Resident, Events/Marketing Committee Co-Chair; **Katharine James-CPO/Joan Wicklund (Desig)**, & Residents; **Fred Rosiak**, Captain Cove Marina (Chair Economic Development Committee); **AJ Solomon**, Solomon & Associates, Resident; **Jim Bollerman**, Sandy Hook Bay Marina; Resident; **John Koenig**, Clam Hut Property & Marina on the Bay, **Bill Weber**, Nauvoo @ Sandy Hook Lodging; **Marsha Shaya**, Resident (Chair VIC); **Nancy Thomas**, In The Garden, Resident (Co-Chair VIC). HBP Board members who have expiring terms are elected annually at the election and annual meeting by members of

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the district, according to the HBP By-Laws. 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.

Marsha Shaya, the Resident Member, will serve for a one-year term. The Executive Committee members comprised of the corporate Officers, who also serve on the Board, are Carla Cefalo-Braswell, President; Eddy Sousa, Secretary; Bill Weber, Treasurer; and John Koenig, VP. Executive Committee members are elected by members of the Board of Directors. **Mayor Rick O'Neil** served as 2006 Council Liaison and **Councilman John Urbanski** served as 2006 Planning Board Liaison to HBP.

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. **Tom Lavery**, Twin Lights Historic Site; **Larry Novick**, Brookdale Small Business Development Center; and **Roberta Sheridan**, JCP&L Energy, **Richard Wells**, Superintendent Gateway National Park at Sandy Hook. 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 took leadership roles to Chair and Co-Chair HBP Committees. Committee chairs, who also serve as Board members, direct HBP activities that promote the objectives of the Board. In addition, business and resident HBP committee members become experienced leaders who can become good candidates for future position vacancies on the Board of Directors.

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 2006. 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 April 2006. HBP will file our Certified 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 2006. 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 all contract renewals or changes. Resident, Business Owner, Lori Ann Bodnar-Nolan, provided management services for the first half of 2006 and Downtown Network Co. provided professional management services from July – December 2006, approved by special vote action of the Board/Executive Committee in July, and approved at the August 23, 2006 regular meeting of the HBP Board. HBP 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 2006.

Marketing & Communications/Events Committee:

Chaired By Carla Cefalo-Braswell and Eddy Sousa, Sandy Hook Cottage Bed & Breakfast for 2006

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The Marketing committee worked to sell sponsorship, manage events and initiate marketing incentives. 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 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. Highlands has been able to develop and nurture partnerships with existing resources, including ferry transportation to NYC and Gateway National Park Sandy Hook, and Twin Lights Historic Site. HBP purchased holiday destination advertising showcasing dining and lodging in three issues of Currents Magazine from November 2006 through March 2007. Monmouth County Tourism Guide advertising with our band identity and destination offerings was booked in 2006 for 2007 distribution. A marketing contract was signed with Escapemaker.com and a travel writer visited Highlands. All Highlands destination packages and tourist related businesses are showcased on escapemaker.com. Escapemaker appeared on Good Morning America and draws a large audience from NYC.

Website www.highlandsnj.com

Maintenance and expansion of the Highlands' web site during HBP's 6th 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. All events held in 2006 provided visitors with coupons and additional event information as well as promoting our Website. An investment in destination marketing was completed that showcases Highlands on www.escapemaker.com

The Highlands Visitor's Guide was created and enhanced with full color in 2006 version that 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 Guides were distributed at Sandy Hook promoting our event calendar and Clam Fest, aboard the Water Taxi, as well as distribution at every 2006 HBP events.

Tourism Video The marketing committee developed a theme and script that will be used to create a video for distribution to showcase Highlands as a destination. Local business changes require revisions to the video for 2006/2007 seasons. Secretary and Marketing Chair Eddy Sousa made a commitment to get voiceover updated and have video ready for 2007.

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 efforts of the Marketing 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 2006 were Comcast, 94.3 the Point, Valley National Bank Frank Rahm Landscaping, Foodtown, JCP&L First Energy, and the Sugar Shack Seastreak America, Inc..

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Awards and Matching Grants

Carla Cefalo-Braswell reported the HBP's success in securing the 2006 NJ Travel & Tourism grant in the amount \$15,000. HBP's success was related to the linking of the region through the HBP Water Taxi and Sandy Hook Beach areas.

HBP applied for a Farmers Market Grant through the New Jersey Department of Agriculture for 2006. The funding was matched 50/50 to promote the Jersey Fresh Farmers Market along with all promotional information about Highlands' events and marketing. HBP was awarded \$450.00

V-Free grant that HBP submitted to the Secretary of State for funding in 2007. Highlands V-Free was organized to bring the youth, schools and community together for anti-vandalism, violence, and victimization activities that would kick-off 2nd quarter of 2007. The grant was a maximum allocation of \$3,000 used to promote positive strategies to improve Highlands. HBP was not awarded but received an excellent rating on application and will resubmit in 07 when there will be additional funding.

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 2006 event calendar provided a "complete marketing package" for the Marketing Committee 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 committee serves as a broker between corporate and media partners who will provide sponsorship in return for media exposure.

HBP promotes Highlands at several regional events during the calendar year. HBP Visitor Guides, event collateral, complimentary bags, marketing and promotional materials are distributed during the following regional events:

- **Bike New York - Great Five Boro Race** – 33,000 cyclists – Ft. Wadsworth, Staten Island, NY (1st Sunday in May) Board President Carla Cefalo-Braswell and family volunteers coordinate and work this event.
- **NJ Pride – Asbury Park** – 15,000 people (1st Sunday in June) Board President Carla Cefalo-Braswell and family volunteers coordinate and work this event.
- **NJ Lighthouse Challenge – Twin Lights** – October 2006 HBP staff booth space for the two-day weekend event with some assistance from Ken Braswell. Event promotes visitation to the NJ Lighthouses during a weekend with over 15,000 in attendance. HBP provided shuttle services from parking lots to Twin Lights and distributed complimentary bags filled with marketing and promotional materials.

Saint Patrick's Day Parade 2005 – March was held with 10 pipe bands and local and regional floats, along with a host of local business participation. The parade is growing each year and brings an early start to the busy spring/summer season for local restaurants and businesses.

Seaport Craft Show 2005 – May 28 - was held on Memorial Day weekend with over 65 specialty vendors/crafters. The event was well received by crafters and visitors alike. This has grown over time and we expect it to continue.

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Antique and Classic Car & Motorcycle Show 2006 - September 3 was cancelled with the loss of our established car club partner.

Concert Series 2006 – July 11, 18, & 25 and August 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29 -HBP hosted eight Tuesday evening beach concerts in July & August at Veteran's Park, Bay Avenue waterfront park area. The concerts were funded through sponsorship by the Sugar Shack 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 concerts in Highlands. Concerts were previously undertaken in partnership with the Northern Monmouth Chamber of Commerce and held at the Seastreak Conner's Landing beach area. The 2006 HBP Concerts included entertainment from: Brian Kirk & the Jirks, Daddy Pop, The Fever. Fund raising by 50/50 sales supplemented the cost of each concert.

Highlands Farmers Market 2006 July – October HBP prepared and submitted the 2006 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 2006 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 2006 - August 3-6- The Clam Festival proved to be successful and was continued to be enhanced greatly by obtaining a raffle license for HBP to have a money Wheel and 9 games of chance. It was a huge effort and took over 50 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. HBP rented a new stage set-up which really put the event over the top. There were 6 bands performing over the four-day event.

Twin Lights Ride - September 30 - 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. The event was to benefit Lance Armstrong Foundation this year, which added over 500 riders totaling nearly 1500-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 works with our Recreation Director, Mr. Tim Hill to promote bike recreation and bike safety. We are in the planning stages of the 2007 bike event and hope to draw more cyclists.

Oktoberfest 2006 – October 7 – German food sales by HBP proved to be beneficial as it added approximately \$2800 to the gross income. There were no police reports for the sixth year, which is always a concern with an alcohol event. A liquor license was secured and Mayor Rick O'Neil, and HBP volunteers manned the beer operation, the grills, the children's bounce ride and many more festivities. Entertainment was provided by a German Band that warmed the crowds with traditional German music. There were 10 vendors and 2 inflatable rides. The event concluded with Fireworks over the river.

Highlands Cares 2006 (for Breast Cancer Cure) October 22 – The Highlands Police Department approached HBP shortly after the Clam Fest to join in partnership to host a Breast Cancer Walk with the donation proceeds to benefit the American Cancer Society. HBP and the HPD implemented a successful walk at Sandy Hook with cooperation from Superintendent Richard Wells, the Park rangers and the administration at the NPS. Registration

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was \$25 per adult and \$15 per child. The fee included a long sleeve t-shirt and lunch following at the Clam Hut Restaurant. The event will be heavily promoted in 2006 in hope to double the 100 participants.

Holiday Lighting 2006 December 1 Rain Date December 2 - The event was held the first Friday in December with local entertainers performing holiday programs. Local residents portrayed Santa and Mrs. Clause and member of the Highlands Garden Club. HBP volunteers, decorated Huddy Park and several public areas with the assistance of Tim Hill, Recreation Director and the Highlands Garden Club

Visual Improvement Committee -VIC

Co-Chaired by Marcia Shaya and Nancy Thomas

This HBP Committee has a wide scope of objectives including Parking, Safety, Beautification, Capital Improvement, Maintenance and Design. During 2006 the committee focused on visual improvements in the business district.

Public Safety

Continue to expand the partnership with the Borough code enforcement officer to promote community safety and maintenance standards. HBP authorized preparation of a grant application to the Martin Luther King Commemorative Commission, in the NJ Department of State for a proposed Highlands V-Free Program in partnership with the Highlands schools and the Highlands Police Department. The program summary included education and action activities for the entire community with emphasis on Highlands' youth to promote anti violence, vandalism and victimization. The Highlands program submission was not funded (requested \$3,000) with the average points allocation being two points short of funded programs. A summary was provided to the Board and VIC Chair Nancy Thomas, HBP President, Carla Cefalo-Braswell, Chief Joe Blewett, and Sgt Armentti contributing to the proposed program activity that linked the HPD Explorers to HBP, Schools, Police and the community at large. Program activities will be phased into the annual Pride in Highlands/Earth Day event in spring.

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 since 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 and by HBP. The lowest bidder was selected to proceed with the various public area maintenance activities 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 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

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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 2005 publicly funded entitlement

Former 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 2005 & 2006, but plans to implement this pilot are underway for the future.

Flower Containers/Streetscape

The VIC Committee purchased flowers and worked with the generous members of the Garden Club to plant flowers in all streetscape planters and public parks except for Gertrude Ederly, which the Garden Club maintains. It saved HBP a substantial amount of money by utilizing the Garden Club manpower for planting rather than paying a landscaper. 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 four seasons of arrangements in the street planters, spring, summer, fall & holiday.

Holiday Decorations

All Holiday light displays were hung by the American Flag Company. Red velvet bows, garlands, tree and wreaths were purchased for several streetscape areas. Volunteers installed bows, garland and the decorated tree in Huddy Park. Bows and garlands, and the Huddy Park gazebo tree were installed by the DPW. Street side utility pole electric outlets malfunctioned during holiday 2006. After troubleshooting with American Flag Company and Highlands DPW, a plan for replacement is underway by the committee. Outlet replacement will be undertaken through the JCP&L holiday outlet program. Initial information from the utility company regarding the cost of new outlets is a unit cost per outlet of \$400 or more.

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

Street Maps have been created and maintained of existing amenities through new management of HBP. This map system will allow the VIC Committee to plan and purchase new amenities in the public areas of the central business district and will assist in the placement of annual holiday decorations and street banners.

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 2006. 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.

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Welcome Signs at Bridge Ramps

The Highlands Welcome sign opposite the East Point Shopping plaza was removed by the HDPW per the order of the Middletown officials. HBP continues to maintain the Bulkhead sign and showcases Highland's events and sponsors. The sign was \$3500 and HBP would like to find a relocation area for the sign in 2007.

Economic Development Committee Chaired by Fred Rosiak

Using the completed Master Plan summaries of strategies and responsible parties, the HBP Economic Development Committee worked to formulate a transportation link between the NYC Ferry and local Highlands waterfront destinations and Gateway National Park – Sandy Hook by drafting a Water Taxi Plan. The Water Taxi Plan would support and implement strategies from the 2004 Master Plan.

Highlands Business Improvements District, Economic Development Committee, comprised of Jim Bollerman, John Koenig, Fred Rosiak, Carla Cefalo-Braswell, and William Weber, HBP Board members and commercial stakeholders, prepared a Water Taxi Plan.

The objectives of the Highlands Water Taxi Plan include:

- Stimulate business for existing commercial stakeholders, and attract new commercial investors.
- Contribute and expand the brand identity/image of Highlands waterfront assets and anchor restaurants/marinas

The HBP Water Taxi Plan was presented March 24, 2005 to the HBP Board of Directors and Highlands governing body. By action of the HBP Board of Directors at a May 2006 meeting the Water Taxi Plan was approved for implementation along with the authorization of the 2006 HBP Annual Budget by the Highlands Mayor and Council.

Highlands Water Taxi connects five (5) Highlands' waterfront landings and Sandy Hook

May 26 through September 4, 2006

Friday (4-10PM), Saturday & Sunday (noon-10PM)

- Ferry Landings: Neil's Original Oyster Restaurant/Sandy Hook Bay Marina and Seastreak Conner's)
- Sandy Hook ferry landing at the Seastreak barge (connection to beach via Seastreak beach shuttles
- Highlands' Landings: Clam Hut, Windansea Restaurant/Inlet Café, and Schupp's (adjacent to Bahr's Restaurant

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Highlands Business Partnership:

- Funded the 2006 start-up of the Highlands Water Taxi including vessel leasing, crew, insurance, fuel, routine maintenance, and marketing.
- Negotiated berthing agreements for all landings
- Leased a US Coast Guard inspected/approved vessel – Rip Ryder III with capacity of 20 passengers.
- Recruited professional crew for operation of vessel
- Insured operation to meet National Park standards (5 million liability)
- Created and installed wayfinding and landing signs.
- Created and distributed posters, collateral materials and press releases to the media.
- Transported over 1,500 passengers during the season (weather permitting)

WATER TAXI FUTURE OBJECTIVES

1. Develop consensus on steps to improve Sandy Hook Landing.
2. Explore linkage with MCTP and National Parks Service to improve and expand the service.

Explore shared parking strategies and the impact of 2007 Highlands/Sea Bright Bridge construction.

Business Recruitment

Many initiatives were made by HBP Executive Committee members during 2006. There were numerous inquiries and meetings with potential investors. HBP provided tours regarding available properties 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 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. 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 provides HBP

Office with new Mercantile Licenses. HBP Members schedule meetings with the new business to provide key business related information. Each new member is provided 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.

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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 President saw Joseph Donald, Office of State Planning at the Monmouth County Planning Board's 50th Anniversary and re-discussed options for Highlands and HBP. HBP President met with Russell Like from NJ Smart Growth and Tim Hill, Director of Recreation HBP to modify old award to be used for an open space plan that will directly benefit both Borough and HBP for recruitment. The award was \$10K. HBP understands that the land use issues and planning for the rehabilitation of the downtown and the waterfront must have a community vision. Plans to revisit Office of State Planning were discussed in 2006. HBP and the Borough participated in the regional Smart Growth Planning for the Bayshore Region during 2005/2006.

Annual Report 2006 Summary Statement

The development of resources, people, and activities is an ongoing process that has attracted many diverse people during the year 2006. The re-investment strategies of HBP by Highlands' business community, including their time, talent and financial contributions, make a staggering impact. The Borough has experienced the impact of creating a vehicle for change and the role of the business community to manage that change. HBP is committed to bring improvements to Highlands at a steady, systematic pace - working with government leaders and residential stakeholders to craft the best strategies for improvement Highlands.

Submitted by Carla Cefalo-Braswell