



Highlands Business Partnership

2007

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 8th year, 2007 assessment budget was \$95,000 (approved at the November 9, 2006 HBP Board Meeting); and in addition, Sponsorship, Grant and Event Income to offset the programs costs generated approximately \$75,000. 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, Frank Nolan, and Council representative Nancy Thomas, 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.

8th Year Objectives: During the eighth year of operation the primary objectives include:

- 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.
 - Ad Campaign for summer and winter
- Promote video media tool using new image components to promote destination and business investment
- Use database of 2500 emails to promote Highlands – quarterly email blasts with commercial and residential investment opportunities & local happenings.
- 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.

2007 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 2007, the Executive committee expanded to include committee chairs Fred Rosiak (ED), and Nancy Thomas (VIC).

	2007 Board Members:	Business/ Affiliation	Resident	Board Assignment	Status	Replacement Unexpired Term
1	Jay Cosgrove 3-yr term 09	Bahrs Restaurant	CPO	Liaison to Bridge Committee		
2	Carla Cefalo-Braswell 3 yr term 08 President	ShoreGrafx	Resident CPO	Chair – Events Co- Marketing/Comm	2008 Seat	
3	Michael Kovic 3 yr term 10	Commercial Property Owner	Resident CPO		Resigned Nov 19. 2007	Vacant unexpired term
4	Margot Takian 3 yr term 10	Duane Realty	BO			
5	Dan Shields 3 yr term 09	Windansea & Sugar Shack	BO			
6	Eddy Sousa 3 yr term 10 Secretary	Sandy Hook Cottage B & B	Resident CPO			
7	Lynda Rose 1 yr term		Resident		2008 Seat	Resident Member
8	Fred Rosiak 3 yr term 08	Captain Cove Marina	CPO	Co-Chair Economic Development Committee	2008 Seat	
9	AJ Solomon 3 yr term 09	Solomon & Associates	Resident BO			
1	Leo Cervantes 3 yr term 10	Chilangos Restaurant	Resident BO			
1	Jim Bollerman 3 yr term 08	Sandy Hook May Marina	BO	Economic Development Committee	2008 Seat	
1	John Koenig 3 yr term 09 Vice President	Clam Hut & Marina on the Bay	CPO	Co- Chair Economic Development Committee		
1	Lori Ann Bodnar-Nolan 3 yr term 08	Lori's House of Beauty	Resident BO	Events Committee	2008 Seat	
1	Jim Filip 3 yr term 09	Doris & Eds	Resident BO			
1	William Weber 3 yr term 10 - Treasurer	Cottages @ Sandy Hook	CPO	Co-Chair Marketing/Communicatio n		

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. Lynda Rose who will serve the unexpired term until the 2008 board elections replaced Marsha Shaya, the Resident Member. 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. Members of the Board of Directors elect executive Committee members. **Council woman Nancy Thomas** served as 2007 Council Liaison and **Councilman Frank Nolan** served as 2007 Planning Board Liaison to HBP. The 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, **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, Bill Weber, John Koenig, Sherry Ruby, and Councilwoman 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 2007. 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 2007. 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 2007. HBP Insurance is provided through a partnership with the Borough and the Monmouth County JIF, Joint Insurance Fund. Resident Carol Bucco, provided staff support and Downtown Network Co. provided professional management services as needed by the Board. There were temp services provided during periods of time when Ms. Bucco was absent for health reasons. The HPB phone # is (732) 291-4713 and Fax # is 732-872-1031. HBP has an account with Verizon for their Phone #. In September of 2007, HBP began to pay for their JCP&L electric 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; fax machine, Internet and computer equipment.

Marketing & Communications – Co-Chaired by Carla Cefalo-Braswell, Sherry Ruby, Seascape Manor B&B, and Bill Weber, Nauvoo Cottages, the Marketing committee worked to sell sponsorship, manage events, initiate new marketing incentives and expand on Destination Highlands.

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 for advertising, event expenses and promotions 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.

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. Use of Highlands' restaurants and businesses by Ferry riders is being nurtured, encouraged and brought to their attention on a daily basis through our sponsorship with Seastreak 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 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 Currents Magazine, EscapeMaker.com, and Monmouth County Tourism Guide advertising with our band identity and destination offerings.

Website www.highlandsnj.com

Maintenance and expansion of the Highlands' web site during HBP's 8thth 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 2007 provided visitors with coupons and additional event information as well as promoting our Website.

Escapemaker.com - An investment in destination marketing was completed with a 2007 contract. Email Blasts with weekend getaways were created and attracted over 2000 email addresses. The escapemaker.com site was modified to reflect new business spotlights and additions based on a visit from a travel writer. Sherry Ruby and Carla Cefalo-Braswell brought the travel writer to nearly 20 businesses. 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 with full color in 2007 version that includes information on Highlands such as history, coupons, event information, ferry schedule, a map and a business directory. The 2007/2008 Visitor Guides were distributed at all HBP events, the Great 5-Boro Race, NJ Pride, the NJ Lighthouse Challenge, 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 20,000 guides for distribution during 2007.

Tourism Video The marketing committee developed a theme and revised the script that will be used to create a video for distribution to showcase Highlands as a destination and as an investment tool.

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 2007/2008 include Comcast, 95.9 WRAT, CBS FM1.01, Frank Rahm Landscaping, Hufnagel Tree Experts, New Jersey Tourism (visitnj.org), Dr. Gelcoat, Seastreak and Super Foodtown.

Awards and Matching Grants

HBP applied for a Farmers Market Grant through the New Jersey Department of Agriculture for 2007. The funding was matched 50/50 to promote the Jersey Fresh Farmers Market along with all promotional information about Highlands. HBP obtained 4 direct sponsors and 3 unique Barter Agreements. A new \$8,000 barter agreement with Dr. Gelcoat was negotiated to complete all improvements/repairs to the Water Taxi. NYC based radio spot (CBS FM 101) was negotiated with a barter arrangement to promote Highlands.

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 2007 event calendar and marketing plan reached nearly 100,000 visitors.

HBP promotes Highlands at several regional events during the calendar 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** – 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 2007 the two-day weekend 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. HBP Bags were distributed by Historic Twin Lights Volunteer, in coordination with Ken Braswell.

HBP 2007 Special Events Calendar:

Saint Patrick's Day Parade 2007 – 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 2007 – May 27 - 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.

Highlands Farmers Market 2007 July – October - The 2007 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 2007 - August 2-5 The Clam Festival proved to be successful and attracted nearly 40,000 visitors over a 4-day period. Efforts of over 50 volunteers, many which are local residents, were a huge asset to the success. The Clam Fest had all local restaurants and 39 specialty vendors. Live entertainment, rides, contests and games were also included.

2007 Twin Lights Ride - September 23 - 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 1500 bike enthusiasts visiting Highlands and sections of Monmouth County. There were 4 routes available. Many cyclists visited most businesses that were open this day. Promotions with local businesses were advertised and announced. Registrations for the Breast Cancer Walk were also available at the HBP tent by volunteers from the Highlands Police Department. The Bike NY is a non-profit organization that works with HBP and our Recreation Director, Mr. Tim Hill to promote bike recreation and bike safety.

Oktoberfest 2007 – October 6 – German food sales by HBP proved to be beneficial as it added 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 specialty vendors, trackless train and inflatable rides. The event concluded with Fireworks on the river.

Highlands Cares 2007 (for Breast Cancer Cure) October 21 – Working with The Highlands Police Department, HBP hosts a Breast Cancer Walk with the donation proceeds to benefit the American Cancer Society. HBP and the HPD implemented a successful walk at Hartshorne Woods Park with check-in at Henry Hudson High School and a lunch following the walk at The Clam Hut Restaurant. The event is promoted through HBP and continues to grow in participants and partners to benefit the American Cancer Society.

Holiday Lighting 2007 November 30 Rain Date December 1 - The event features local entertainers performing holiday programs. Local residents portrayed Santa and Mrs. Clause. Tim Hill, Recreation Director and the Highlands Garden Club decorated the tree and all public areas. HBP coordinated and hired the American Flag Co to remove summer banners and install Holiday lighting displays and winter banners. The VIC Chair worked with JCP&L to repair damaged sensors.

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.

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.

Tree Maintenance

- Obtained a 3-year Barter contract for professional services to maintain trees on Bay Avenue, in public parks and Commercial areas.

Public Area Maintenance

Scope of Services for areas maintained:

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

Flower Containers/Streetscape

The VIC Committee purchased flowers and through our generous partnership with the Highlands Garden Club, flowers in all streetscape planters and public parks except for Gertrude Ederly were planted. It saves 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 the containers. The HGC provided additional planting and watering services at all Public Parks.

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.

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 allows the VIC Committee to plan and purchase new amenities in the public areas of the central business district and assists 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 \$44 per sign and HBP pays for the installation. This includes re-alphabetizing annually.

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 2008.

Economic Development Committee Chaired by Fred Rosiak

Highlands Business Improvement District, Economic Development Committee, comprised of Jim Bollerman, John Koenig, Fred Rosiak, Carla Cefalo-Braswell, and William Weber.

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.

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 Highland's waterfront assets and anchor restaurants/marinas.

Highlands Water Taxi connects four (4) Highlands' waterfront landings

May through September 2007

Friday (4-9PM), Saturday & Sunday (noon-10PM)

May through September 2007

Saturday & Sunday (noon-9pm)

Highlands Water Taxi Project:

Funded the 2006 start-up and continued during 2007 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

Created, installed, and maintained way finding and landing signs.

Created and distributed posters, collateral materials and press releases to the media.

WATER TAXI FUTURE OBJECTIVES

Develop consensus on steps to improve Sandy Hook Landing.

Explore linkage with MCTP and National Parks Service to improve and expand the service.

Explore shared parking strategies and the impact of 2007/2008 Highlands/Sea Bright Bridge construction.

Business Recruitment

HBP Executive Committee members made several business recruitment initiatives during 2007. HBP member meet with potential investors regarding small business programs offered by HBP and land use opportunities to expand business in the central business districts along Bay Avenue. 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. Business investment tools are networked with perspective investors including standards and Tax Abatement as well as other pertinent Highlands regulations or HBP programs.

Business Retention

HBP contributed to small business inquiries and provides assistance to existing businesses. 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.

Smart Growth Land Use Strategies

As part of HBP efforts to develop a business recruitment and retention program, HBP continues to work closely with the Borough and Monmouth County Planning Department to plan and implement Smart Growth land use strategies that promote mixed use in fill projects that will expand business opportunities and promote flood mitigation design and construction. HBP strives to implement the action plan that resulted from the adoption of the Highlands Master Plan. The continued rehabilitation of the downtown and the waterfront uses a community vision that HBP continues to refine, using our residents and business partners. Flood mitigation strategies must be integrated into the land use design and construction regulations to affect sustainable results in new in fill mixed use projects. HBP worked with Council Liaisons, Councilman Frank Nolan and Councilwoman Nancy Thomas to identify projects such as underground utilities to enhance the future growth of our downtown community.

Annual Report 2007 Summary Statement

The development of resources, people, and activities is an ongoing process that has attracted many diverse people during the year 2007. 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