

2018 Annual Report

Seaside Heights Business Improvement District

2018 brought major change for the Seaside Heights Business Improvement District (BID). It was the first time in its 16-year history that it had a trained, certified, business district manager overseeing its operations. This has brought a new perspective and set of values to the organization, to the great benefit of the business community and the community as a whole. Michael Redpath, the new Executive Director, has a long history with Seaside Heights and was one of the founding directors of the Seaside Heights Business Improvement District. He has a great sensitivity to Seaside Heights' history and culture. Kristina Wehrenberg, the new Assistant Executive Director, partners well with Redpath in bringing fresh perspectives and solid management to the BID.

The year was a transitional one for the BID. 2019 will still be a somewhat transitional time, though to a lesser extent. Much of what was dealt with in 2018 was already in place and could only be minimally impacted when new management took hold in the early part of the year.

Highlights

Overall improvements in financial and administrative controls

Connecting more "across the bridge"

Regular email communications with customers and businesses

Enhanced, regular Instagram and Facebook promotion

833-4SEASIDE virtual toll-free telephone with updated outgoing messages

Substantially enlarged Arts and Crafts by the Sea June and August

Small Business Saturday retail promotion

A Taste of the Boulevard restaurant promotion

Ongoing off-season restaurant promotion

Assisted Borough with crisis communications

Helped achieve two Asbury Park Press Best of Ocean County People's Choice Awards

The BID undertook restructuring its operations in order to more effectively support the many new exciting initiatives within Seaside Heights. Through 16 years of operation, the organization had become focused on producing events in order to draw people to town. While maintaining events as important tools, the BID will be giving greater attention to economic development and activities that put people directly into businesses.

The underlying purpose of a business improvement district is to increase the value of commercial properties and increase commercial rateables in the district by both attracting investment and increasing the value of existing properties. In many districts, that purpose fades from consciousness as the work to accomplish



it begins to be seen as the purpose.

Administration and Organization

In order to increase the capacity of the BID to fulfill its purposes, significant attention has been given to making the office function more affectively. Financial controls and management continue to evolve. The office has overhauled in order to improve it as a resource for the business community and for guests. The records of the organization are being re-organized, including off-site electronic storage, in order to improve access and protection. For the first time in several years, the BID is compliant with statutory operating and reporting requirements, which improves its transparency, accountability, and efficiency. Regular communications go out to stakeholders in order to increase their involvement.



The BID is committed to partnering with the Borough to contribute its capabilities to the administration's efforts. For example, the BID assisted the Borough with the public relations aspect of the Beachnik NJ incident and the one-day beach closure in August. And the BID used its communications with fans of Seaside Heights to help us achieve recognition as Best Ocean County Boardwalk and Outdoor Amuse-

ment in the Asbury Park Press Peoples' Choice Award voting.

Promotions

The promotional efforts for 2018 were already in the works when the new BID management began. It was necessary to go forward as planned with many of them in order to evaluate their effectiveness. Attention was given to optimizing everything that was already underway while considering improved direction for 2019.

A redesign of the website and the replacement of the Vacation Planner brochure were begun towards the end of the year. These changes are in response to the tremendous upswing in the use of digital devices for recreation and travel planning. The Vacation Planner is being replaced in 2019 by a smaller, more widely-distributed, brochure that will drive people to our web site that better helps them with planning their visits.



Greater attention is also being given to better telling Seaside Heights' story and helping people to connect the betterment of their lives with that story. For example, images of the beach, boardwalk, bayfront, and other aspects of our story are being emphasized more than the Exit 82 license

plate image. Social media is being used extensively to distribute images of people enjoying Seaside Heights in various ways.

Resources have been developed to collect contact information from people who participate in the various large events, such as St. Patrick's Day Parade, in Seaside Heights in order to be able to deliver promotional messages to them regularly via email. The Oktoberfest was done away with in 2018, and the 2018 Que by the Sea was the last for the BID. It is seeking an independent producer for Que, however. Both events were consumers of significant resources with inadequate return as far as developing customers.



Arts and Crafts by the Sea is growing as an event that further enhances Seaside Heights' image. In 2018, the event was held both June 9 and August 12 (weather postponed from the 11th). In addition to the August date being added, the event was nearly double the size of previous times it was held.

833-4SEASIDE, an internet-based toll-free telephone number, was instituted in order to better serve our guests. The number allows the employment of extensions with easily-changed outgoing messages so

that guests can get up-to-date information 24/7 as far as events and conditions.



As part of our strategy to build ourselves as an extension of the communities on the mainland side of the bridge and to take greater advantage of the year-round population there, we partnered with the Seaside Heights Volunteer Fire Department to promote First Night in the Toms River Halloween Parade. The Windish Drummers rode in a lifeguard boat accompanied by two Fire Department vehicles.

Business Recruiting and Planning

The BID has reclaimed its role as a business advocate, actively participating in discussions regarding ordinances that affect businesses and assisting new businesses to settle into town.

We are concentrating on programs that put people directly into businesses in order to familiarize more people with all that Seaside Heights has to offer. The BID instituted participation in the national Small Business Saturday "Shop Small" promotion the Friday after Thanksgiving and a Taste of the Boulevard dine-around Dec. 7. Both introduced many new customers to some of our leading retailers and restaurants.

One ingrained challenge facing our efforts to grow year-round business is decades of both the hundreds of thousands of customers across the bridge and our own businesses accepting that we close up when the lifeguards leave and Casino Pier closes. That will take a few years of off-peak season education on both sides of the bridge, but we are already progressing. In addition to the two events mentioned in the previous paragraph, we also are including promotion for all of our restaurants that are open in our weekly email newsletter and featuring them on our web site. Increasing restaurant traffic is key to supporting other businesses.

Maintenance and Improvement

Improving the visual environment for our guests is an important aspect of enhancing their enjoyment of Seaside Heights. We feel it important that the BID serve as an example for other businesses, so considerable attention has been given to offering a more inviting appearance to the exterior of the BID offices on the Boulevard. The BID also contributed to the cost of the artistic shrink-wrap coverings that have enhanced the traffic light control boxes throughout town.

On the Boardwalk, the BID provides and maintains the decorative planters that contribute to a more attractive appearance. The BID manages the Sponsor a Board program which both adds interest to the

boardwalk and raises money that funds additional visual improvements throughout town.

Looking Ahead

The foundations laid in 2018 have begun to reposition the BID as a greater economic development force for Seaside Heights in the coming years. We look forward to many exciting new initiatives in 2019.

Seaside Heights Business Improvement District 2018 Board of Directors

Jeff Bowden Sand and Surf Motel	Angela Lombardi Angie Lombardi Photo
Tommy Boyd Chief of Police	Joe Loundy Seaside Liquors
Michael Carbone Beachcomber	Mike Loundy Seaside Realty
Nick Dionisio Park Seafood	Sid Loundy Sunrise Motel
Carol Durkin Casino Pier	Jim Maglies Captain Hooks
Ricardo Gomez Santeria	Glenn McCarthy Klee's Bar & Grill
Mike Graichen Borough	John McGrath Hershey Motel
Patty Hershey Shake Shoppe Arcade	Kristopher Sabey Surf Liquors
Jeff Jackson Jimbo's	Harry Smith Borough
Elizabeth King Property Owner	Chris Vaz Borough
Greg Kohr Original Kohr's	Steve Whalen Lucky Leo's

Seaside Heights Business Improvement District

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John McGrath, Chairman of the Board

Michael Redpath, Executive Director

Kristina Wehrenberg, Assistant Executive Director

