

2020 Annual Report

Seaside Heights Business Improvement District

2020, was one of the most challenging years that has faced our community. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic were so far-reaching, disruptive, and long-term that we easily could have experienced unparalleled financial loss and the closing of many businesses. Seaside Heights once again demonstrated resilience and agility in facing overwhelming challenges. The Seaside Heights Business Improvement District (SSHBID) partnered with Borough government, the business community, and residents to effectively deal a dual challenge. The SSHBID needed to both function differently organizationally and invent initiatives that helped businesses to weather the difficult economic environment.

The year was particularly challenging for the SSHBID as a major decrease in sponsorship from Coca Cola coupled with COVID-driven cancellations of SSHBID and outside organization events reduced the tools available to us for business development. And we needed to work remotely in order to keep our small staff healthy. It also did not make sense financially or from a health risk standpoint to hire two summer interns as we had for the past two years. In spite of the collection of challenges and the continually changing landscape of the pandemic, the partnership of the BID, Borough, and community resulted in a year much better than the potential disaster threatened by the pandemic.

Highlights

Maintained organizational financial health and support of businesses despite COVID disruptions

Kept businesses informed of grant and loan availability

Virtual Easter Egg Hunt

Massive pizza, soda, and supply delivery to Community Medical Center May 6

Worked with Borough to increase COVID-restricted business capacities through use of sidewalk and Boardwalk

Able to continue Wednesday fireworks and, Tuesday Kites in the Heights in spite of COVID restrictions

Obtained federal and county assistance to make up for some reduced revenue from events

Increased retail promotions including Small Business Saturday live and on-line

Virtual First Night event

Administration and Organization

We were able to adjust readily throughout 2020 to the continuous changes dictated by various government restrictions, the necessary precautions to keep our staff healthy, and reduced resources.

As we reorganized SSHBID functioning in 2018 and 2019, one of our many focuses was utilizing “the cloud” more effectively for security, collaboration, flexibility, and supporting remote work. We had planned for remote work being facilitated during occasional weather disruptions, illness, and for the flexibility to work anytime any-



where. That planning resulted in being able to very quickly transition to remote work early in the pandemic when all non-essential workers were ordered by the Governor to stay home.

Our ongoing restructuring of financial management systems outdated from 16 years of evolving continued to reap benefits. The BID had some financially challenging years prior to the current management team being in place. Since 2018, the organization has been on solid financial footing.

As part of our citizenship in the larger Ocean County community and to continue to build relationships “across the bridge,” we partnered with Liberty Coca Cola and our Fire Department to deliver 100 pizzas, 75 cases of beverages, and PPEs to the over-worked staff of Community Medical Center on May 6.



Promotions

Promotions were probably the most challenged of our tools for business development. Many of our most effective tools, such as events, were not available to us due to pandemic restrictions. Plus, we needed to be very cautious about our messaging and use of resources. We worked to draw as many people as possible without exceeding our state-mandated capacity and having to turn people away.

Early in the year, we embraced a responsibility to Seaside Heights fans to be faithful to our role as a major source of their recreation and enjoyment. In addition, it remains critical that we maintain Top Of Mind Awareness (TOMA). Even though many of our fans chose to restrict their travels and not enjoy a visit to Seaside Heights, we would be at a handicap if we had to rebuild TOMA once pandemic restrictions and perceptions improve.

We were already in a good position to respond to the pandemic challenges as we had been utilizing online apps to help us manage in-person events. This gave us a head-start in creating virtual or hybrid (blended virtual and in-person) activities.

Our first virtual event was the Easter Egg Hunt, which we used as an opportunity to familiarize our fans with our website. The hunt had participants visiting different pages on our website and picking up the answers to clues. We had 1150 participants and gave away 100 prizes. Creating a successful formula right out of the box enabled us to more quickly create other activities through the year.



The COVID virus proved to not spread significantly in outdoor settings. Once we were confident of the public or a portion of the public holding back we felt confident in

providing both our Tuesday evening Kites in the Heights kite festivals and Wednesday evening fireworks. We monitored them closely for social distancing and were pleased with the outcome.

We minimized expenditures on paid advertising through the year to avoid over-promoting and conserve resources in order to do a major promotional push once pandemic restrictions are behind us. Particularly in-season, we posted regularly on Instagram and Facebook to remind people of the enjoyment they could have in Seaside Heights. We also partnered with the Borough continually to put out, through social media, our email list, and our website, the most current information as far as enjoying Seaside Heights in a healthy and safe way.

With our tremendous collection of food establishments at great risk of failing because of the pandemic restrictions, we gave particular attention to communicating which food outlets were providing takeout and delivery and, ultimately, which were open for in-person dining.

FALL SCAVENGER HUNT
explore the Classic American Boardwalk
it's easy and fun take pictures
WIN PRIZES

find Coca Cola clues on Seaside Heights' Boardwalk
photograph yourself in front of them
finish Hunt by Nov. 8.. enter.. win prizes
details & entry at exit82.com/hunt



Other promotions we undertook included an early Shop Small Campaign in conjunction with American Express, a town-wide business sidewalk sale supported by Liberty Coca-Cola, a Coca Cola scavenger hunt, Small Business Saturday, and a virtual First Night. Generally, our promotions resulted in

good response from our fans.

Business Recruiting and Planning

Once it became clear that the capacity of our businesses could be increased by the Borough allowing them to utilize sidewalk and boardwalk space, we moved quickly to put together recommendations for the Borough to enact such a program. We did significant research nationally to find best practices from similar communities. Mike Redpath did a tour of all of the commercial properties with Borough Administrator Chris Vaz in order to evaluate and fine-tune the recommended program. The program worked quite well and the SSHBID is working with the Borough to put outdoor dining in place more permanently.



The SSHBID has increased its involvement with businesses either considering locating in Seaside Heights or with projects that they are with which they are moving forward.

Maintenance and Improvement

It was felt that the planters on the boardwalk, as much as they enhance the atmosphere, would consume space that people could use in maintaining social distancing

As a result it was decided to not put the planters out in 2020.

We continued with the program of making memorial boards on the Boardwalk available but eventually had to suspend it as a result of pandemic-caused logistics issues. A very few boards were installed in 2020.

The SSHBID believes that the new carousel and historic museum location by Carteret Ave. will have a major positive impact on the North Beach area as well as the town as a whole. It continues to promote the project and assist where possible.

The SSHBID contributed to the purchase of the Christmas tree for the Franklin Avenue stage and is working on doing something similar for the Cartaret Avenue stage starting this coming Christmas. Angie Lombardi worked with a number of artists to do a pilot project painting business windows with Christmas themes.

Looking Ahead

We learned a lot from being forced to pivot in many different directions quickly as a result of the pandemic and the continually-changing restrictions that were necessary in order to contain the spread of the COVID virus. Entities throughout the world have found that being forced to adapt so rapidly has produced a benefit of having to be extremely inventive. This has resulted in new concepts that will serve everyone well post-pandemic. Some of these concepts would have benefited entities earlier, but there was no impetus to adopt them.

While COVID-19 will still be impacting us for a long time to come, we anticipate being in a position for much more successful years ahead. 2021 will more-than-likely not be a fully normal year, but between sanitary practices that have become somewhat routine and vaccines, we expect that it will be a good year for Seaside Heights, its business community, and its residents

Seaside Heights Business Improvement District 2020 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	Arron Rustici Lucky Leo's
Jeff Jackson Jimbo's	Kristopher Sabey Surf Liquors
Elizabeth King Property Owner	Harry Smith Borough
Greg Kohr Original Kohr's	Chris Vaz Borough

Seaside Heights Business Improvement District

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John McGrath, Chairman of the Board

Michael Redpath, Executive Director

Kristina Wehrenberg, Assistant Executive Director

