

2021 Annual Report

Seaside Heights Business Improvement District



The primary purpose of a special/business improvement district is to increase commercial rates in a community by attracting investment in new commercial construction and new businesses and to improve the profitability of existing businesses. The Seaside Heights Business Improvement District (BID) employs numerous initiatives to those ends.

Administration and Organization

The diminishing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic enabled the BID to return to some more normal operations. The Business Improvement District also stayed on top of the various pandemic relief programs available to nonprofits and received a second PPP grant and a grant covering nine months of rent. Combined with a \$10,000 Ocean County tourism matching grant for the BID and an equal one for the Tourist Development Commission, which the BID manages, the BID staff generated and managed almost \$40,000 in grants for 2021.

The BID was able to employ two interns for the summer. The interns both added promotional capacity and freed core staff from some routine tasks to devote more of their time for creative undertakings.

The BID staff continually researched grants and other potential assistance for Seaside Heights businesses and communicated those opportunities frequently via email.

Nationally, staffing for businesses nationwide has been a challenge since the start of the pandemic. The BID has collaborated on the challenge with numerous organizations throughout the state, provided guidance to Seaside Heights businesses, and maintained a year-round Virtual Job Fair web page with job listings for Seaside Heights businesses. As the season neared, and throughout the season, the BID promoted working in Seaside Heights.

The BID maintains a sponsor relationship with Liberty Coca Cola, with Coca Cola being identified as the official beverage of Seaside Heights. Managing the sponsorship has been a particular challenge since 2019 as Casino Pier/Breakwater Beach changed to Pepsi sponsorship just as the COVID pandemic hit. As a result, sales for Liberty in Seaside Heights were unpredictable in 2019 and 2020. Since sponsorships are predicated on revenues produced for a

Highlights

Continued to increase building up the nearby mainland market for year-round vitality

Kept businesses informed of grant and loan availability

High tech/ socially distant Easter Egg Hunt

November business-to-business networking event partnering with the Greater Toms River Chamber

Worked with Borough to allow outdoor dining on the Boardwalk

Instituted a mobile platform, accessible via a QR code throughout town, to keep guests informed

Pressed a number of initiatives to counter the growing staffing shortage in Seaside Heights

Obtained a Christmas photo scene and installed it on the Carteret Ave. Stage

Enhanced our First Night event with better entertainment and wheeled Boardwalk trains

sponsor, it required a lot of flexibility to make the sponsorship work for the BID and Liberty. The BID developed creative promotional activities which enhanced the partnership with Liberty while providing some fun for Seaside Heights guests.



The Boardwalk Memorial Boards program, managed by the BID, continued to grow in popularity. The BID works with Central Regional High School's wood shop program, where the boards are engraved, and Borough Public Works to carry out the program. Approximately 80 boards were purchased in 2021; quite a number to manage.

Permits for charter buses unloading and loading in town are managed by the BID, at the request of Casino Pier/Breakwater Beach and with the concurrence of the Borough. This arrangement improves the experience for groups utilizing buses to patronize attractions in town. The BID has established an online permit process to facilitate groups making their arrangements.

The organization was also pleased to initiate a Christmas season appreciation program in which it gave a \$15 gift certificate for one of six Seaside Heights food establishments to all first responders and Borough staff.

The Business Improvement District ended the year in excellent financial condition, again carrying a cushion into the subsequent year (2022). This good financial position was in spite of having expanded programs in 2021.

Maintenance and Improvement

The BID continued its program of placing and maintaining decorative planters on the Boardwalk. It also continued to contract for weed control on sidewalks and curbs throughout the commercial district.

The BID, with assistance from various businesses, purchased a Christmas photo scene that was placed on the Carteret Avenue Stage. The scene consisted of seven more-than-human-size fiberglass Christmas light replicas in front of which people could pose for photographs. This provided a balance against the Christmas tree that is normally on the Franklin Avenue stage and to draw attention to the Carousel Pavilion.



Business Recruitment, Retention, and Planning

The BID's Executive Director (ED), Michael Redpath, was present at most Planning Board meetings during the year that dealt with commercial projects. This showed support for the projects, on behalf of the BID, and provided understanding of any issues with the projects in order to assist businesses through the approval process.

The BID has worked with many of the new businesses and potential commercial investors coming into town. It worked with Hooks and the principals in the renovation of the property

at Sumner Avenue and the Boulevard. We also worked to help the bakery that was attempting to locate in town and worked with Offshore BBQ. The BID gives particular attention to making investors aware of the tax abatement that is available for the rehabilitation of commercial properties.

The BID continued to build a robust relationship with the Greater Toms River Area Chamber of Commerce. That both addresses the underdeveloped year-round marketplace on the mainland and reminds business people of the desirability of locating in Seaside Heights.

The BID sponsored one of the business networking breakfasts that the Chamber holds monthly. Both our Executive Director and Mayor Vaz spoke at that gathering. In addition, the BID put together a business networking event on November 6 at the Carousel Pavilion. Again, the purpose was twofold: pursuing mainland business community leaders as potential customers for our businesses and encouraging them to consider locating in Seaside Heights. Fifteen Seaside Heights businesses, including six restaurants and Heavy Reel Brewing, had displays at the networking event.

Promotions and Public Relations

Numerous enhancements were made to the BID's promotional efforts last year, to the extent that it would require many pages to present them all. An overview is provided here.

A focus on building awareness and engagement in three areas continues to be central to BID promotional efforts:

- Traditional Seaside Heights markets
- The under-developed market within about a 30 mile radius on the mainland
- Potential investors in commercial projects and new businesses

One of the BID's major focuses is increasing

engagement and per capita expenditure by guests by making them more aware of, and reminding them of, what is available to them for their enjoyment. Simultaneously, the BID was cautious that it did not generate crowds to the extent that it increased the potential for the spread of COVID. It was less necessary to have that concern during the core season, but the organization did have to exercise caution in the shoulder season months. For example,



the BID Easter Egg Hunt was essentially a scavenger hunt throughout the Boardwalk that participants undertook at their convenience and then entered for prizes online.

For its First Night event New Years Eve afternoon, the BID strongly encouraged people



to exercise COVID precautions. At the same time, it upped the quality of First Night entertainment and provided two wheeled-trains on the Boardwalk to transport attendees.

The BID Promotions Committee and staff continually evaluate communications to offer

the most effective messages through the most effective platforms. The BID also provides the administrative services for the Borough's Tourist Development Commission, so the promotional dollars of the two organizations are well coordinated.

At the same time, the BID staff is continually watching for and evaluating evolving communications technologies and platforms in order to both encourage potential guests and serve our many fans. The BID has an email newsletter that goes out a minimum of weekly to more than 21,000 subscribers. The BID regularly posts to the official Seaside Heights Instagram page (15,000 followers) and Facebook page (nearing 91,000 followers).

The robust exit82.com website is continually monitored and improved upon, again to both be its most effective in attracting guests and serving Seaside Heights businesses.

Focusing on the nearby huge mainland market, the BID created an eight-page special section in the Toms River, Berkeley, and Manchester times on June 24th. It reminded people in that market of the tremendous recreation and entertainment opportunities in Seaside Heights, encouraging purchasing one of the many new high-end residential options in town, and investing in business in Seaside Heights.

The BID enhanced its ability to keep Seaside Heights guests informed by creating a dedicated mobile-device-focused landing page/portal for the exit82.com website. It provides information about what is happening in Seaside Heights that day, a map, a link to the full website, and the ability for the BID to post bulletins such as informing people of weather-

caused postponements of activities. Table tents, posters and handouts were distributed throughout town featuring a QR code that took people directly to that special portal.

As part of its role to be an adjunct or partner to Borough efforts, the BID's Executive Director regularly assists Borough government with press relations. This included working with CNN's Affiliate Division for more than a full day in May to produce an extensive Memorial Day Weekend report on shore resorts reopening post-pandemic.

Seaside Heights Business Improvement District 2021 Board of Directors

Jeff Bowden Sand and Surf Motel	Joe Loundy Seaside Liquors
Tommy Boyd Chief of Police	Mike Loundy Seaside Realty
Michael Carbone Beachcomber	Sid Loundy Sunrise Motel
Carol Durkin Casino Pier	Kenneth Macchiaverna Macc's Mac & Cheese
Mike Graichen Borough	Jim Maglies Riggers and Razzles
Patty Hershey Shake Shoppe Arcade	Glenn McCarthy Klee's Bar & Grill
Jeff Jackson Jimbo's	John McGrath Hershey Motel
Elizabeth King Property Owner	Arron Rustici Lucky Leo's
Greg Kohr Original Kohr's	Kristopher Sabey Surf Liquors
Angela Lombardi Angie Lombardi Photo	Harry Smith Borough
	Chris Vaz Borough

Seaside Heights Business Improvement District

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Angela Lombardi, Chairman of the Board
Michael Redpath, Executive Director
Kristina Wehrenberg, Assistant Executive Director

