



## **SEARCH – EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT**

The Hoboken Business Alliance (“HBA”) is currently seeking a full time Executive Director to lead the HBA to fulfill its mission:

“To energize and enhance Hoboken’s business environment, maximize consumer engagement through collaborative alliances with businesses, government and community; and create a place where small businesses desire to be and thrive.”

The ultimate goal of the HBA is to attract more people to Live, Work, Shop, and Dine in Hoboken. The City of Hoboken is the perfect backdrop for economic success with its panoramic views of New York City, its charming main street, home to the 2<sup>nd</sup> busiest transportation hub in New Jersey, its diverse population and its rich history.

**All interested candidates, please submit your cover letter and resume to [HBAExecDirSearch@gmail.com](mailto:HBAExecDirSearch@gmail.com). Only submissions with a cover letter will be considered.**

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The Executive Director will

- have a strong Hoboken presence and be the public face of the HBA,
- be the advocate for commercial property and business owners in Hoboken,
- oversee all operations of the HBA, and
- be the liaison with all stakeholders including the HBA Board of Directors, HBA members, the local governing body, and local commercial property and business owners within Hoboken.

To be successful in this role, the ideal candidate will have the following:

- Clear vision of what the HBA can accomplish for its members within the City of Hoboken.
- Commitment to acting in the best interests of the HBA and always promoting and protecting the HBA brand.
- Strong interest in advocacy for business and commercial property owners.
- Finger on the pulse of retail, commercial and residential tenancy and occupancy and best practices to reduce vacancy rates.
- Successful track record managing and growing stakeholder relationships.
- Entrepreneurial spirit with energy for what is an exciting opportunity to create economic growth within the City of Hoboken.
- Experience in creating exciting and innovative in-person and virtual events.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills.
- Significant business planning, financial, accounting, and 501(c) 3 reporting experience.
- Established network of marketing, service, maintenance, IT, legal, cleaning and landscaping, programming, and events vendors.
- Demonstrated proficiency with the most current and up-to-date social media, data and web platforms.
- Accomplished fundraising background.
- Bachelor’s Degree and minimum five years of experience in managing business and economic development programs, preferably in a SID and/or Main Street Program.

The Board is specifically looking for an Executive Director who can “hit the ground running” with an immediate focus on expanding communications with all stakeholders, developing a strategic marketing and advertising plan for the year, delivering on planned visual improvements programming, and expanding best practice policies and procedures that were established in HBA’s first year of operations. Although not required, preference will be given to candidates who have achieved a high degree of success for at least five (5) years in a directly comparable role and have specific knowledge of the New Jersey regulations for Special Improvement Districts.

### **DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY OF THE HBA**

The Hoboken Business Alliance is a Special Improvement District (“SID”) that was established in January 2020 after a two-year planning process by a steering committee consisting of local property and business owners and community and government leaders. The HBA is an independent entity that is funded via tax assessments based upon a budget approved annually by the Hoboken City Council. A critical distinction that the Executive Director will need to embrace is that the HBA is a partner with the City of Hoboken, not a division of the local government.

The SID encompasses the entire City of Hoboken, NJ which covers 1.4 square miles and has eight separate districts that determine the rate assessed to each commercial property in the SID. The HBA Board has 11-13 directors who are commercial property and business owners, one mayor’s designee and one who is the City Council designee. The approximate 1,400 members of the HBA include all commercial property owners with a Class 4 tax property description and certain properties designated as Class 15F. Membership is dispersed citywide with approximately 25 members accounting for 40% of the current total assessment. These members include residential rental, office and hotel properties, some which include retail on the ground floor.

The current assessment rate ranges between .81% to 3.4% of property taxes and aggregates to a total assessment of \$1.4 million. The HBA’s assessment is based upon a property owners tax bill and its location within eight subdistricts. Currently, those properties in Hoboken’s main commercial districts are assessed at a higher rate as these higher assessed areas receive a greater portion of direct benefits like visual upgrades and cleaning. The HBA’s budget is currently used primarily for visual and capital improvements, business attraction, marketing, events, and communication.

In the HBA’s first year, it planned to complete a retail market analysis to drive strategic marketing programs and campaigns to help better attract businesses and people to Hoboken. When the global pandemic hit, the HBA successfully shifted its focus to providing critical information to businesses, advising the city’s business recovery task force on safety protocols, working with the City of Hoboken on expanding outdoor eating and retail, actively marketing via social media on behalf of business owners, providing visual improvements to Hoboken’s main commercial corridor and creating retail programs to entice Hoboken residents to support local businesses. The feedback on the HBA’s efforts in its first year has been extremely positive.

The HBA’s 2021 budget of \$1.7 million was approved by the City Council in December which includes \$300,000 carried over from 2020. **In 2021 overall, the HBA plans to continue with many of its successful 2020 programs; however, the new Executive Director will create a strategic plan for the year that will also including improving communications with all stakeholders, building relationships with members, extensive outreach to local businesses and developing a cohesive marketing and advertising program.**

### **CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS FOR THE HBA**

1. HBA has to always be and act as advocate for Hoboken's business and commercial property owners.
2. HBA should honor the public's trust and not be considered a wasteful bureaucratic arm of the local government.
3. HBA is not a substitute for providing city services but a partner with the City to supplement City services and add value to the community.
4. HBA will operate in a fully transparent manner internally and externally.
5. HBA strives to use a modern, creative marketing and communication approach that also incorporates the many cultural and historical characteristics that make Hoboken what it is.
6. While procuring the best resources, HBA will look first to the vast intellectual resources right here in Hoboken.

### **SCOPE OF SERVICES FOR THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE**

#### **Outreach and Communication**

##### HBA Members and Businesses

- Develop, maintain and grow relationships with HBA members and businesses in and outside of Hoboken.
- Become the primary point person for new businesses in Hoboken.
- Communicate regularly – at least monthly - via email to all members.
- Actively look for ways to expand contact information and email database of members.
- Create a newsletter or other method of periodic communication to regularly update HBA members.
- Collect feedback from HBA members directly and/or via surveys on how the HBA can better support them.
- Invite members to become more active in the HBA including as committee members or potential board members.
- Specifically contact residential property owner members to better understand their needs and what the HBA can do to support them.
- Promote the HBA brand to members as the key advocate for commercial business owners in Hoboken.

##### Board of Directors

- Develop and maintain relationships with HBA board of directors.
- Use Microsoft Teams as the primary vehicle for non, in-person communication.
- Provide weekly update on all activities via Microsoft teams to all HBA board members.
- Encourage opportunities for brainstorming as a way to solicit ideas.
- Include Board of Directors on all press announcements and mailings to members to keep them updated.
- Work closely with Executive Committee of the Board of Directors.

## Governing Body

- Develop and maintain relationships with Hoboken's City Council and administration including, but not limited to parking, community development, planning, zoning, preservation, the green team, cultural affairs, environmental services, and health and human services.
- Quickly get up to speed on the city's calendar of events and activities for the year to better understand how the HBA can be part, if it makes sense, and events that the HBA can organize to supplement City efforts.
- Become learned on the city's protocols concerning events, ribbon cuttings and applicable zoning regulations to the HBA's planned activities.
- Protect the HBA's brand in all partnering activities with the City of Hoboken
  - o As the HBA establishes itself, it is important to ensure that the public is clearly aware of the HBA's role and that its investment / actions are not ascribed to the City of Hoboken instead of the HBA.

## **Strategy, Planning and Budget**

- Develop for approval by the Board of Directors, a strategic, fiscal, marketing, and operations plan for the calendar year that will support the HBA's mission and goals.
- Recommend strategies to ensure that all members will receive benefits from the HBA commensurate with its contribution to the HBA
- In future years, recommend amendments to the assessment rates to give more direct benefits to other districts in the SID.
- Prepare a detailed annual budget and supporting reports and documentation to be presented to the public and to the Hoboken City Council for their approval at a public hearing.
- Establish goals and create a 3–5-year plan for the SID.
- Identify other revenue opportunities as a source of additional funding for the SID.

## **Administration & Fiscal Management**

### Board of Directors:

- Collaborate with chair and team members on plans and strategies.
- Prepare all reports requested by the Board.
- Maintain all records physical and digitally for Board review and access.
- Establish a calendar for board and committee meetings.

### Committees of the Board:

- Assist Board in forming and administering committees and attracting talented committee members from the community
- Coordinate the activities of the HBA committees, ensuring tasks are moved to completion and on budget, good communication among committees, and a cooperative environment.

### Office Management and Administration:

- Be accountable for all day-to-day activities such as but not limited to office management, purchases, record keeping, accounting, and filing of 990 and other statutorily required reports.
- Work closely with City of Hoboken Tax Assessor office to maintain Schedule A list of all HBA members and to document the calculation of all tax assessments.
- Set and Maintain procedure for creation of annual budget and approvals for overall budget with the Hoboken City Council.

#### Office Management and Administration (continued):

- Ensure timely receipt of assessments from the City of Hoboken (the collection agent on behalf of the HBA) including collection efforts on members who have not paid their assessments to the city.
- Work with Auditor to comply with all laws, supports audit committee as required.

#### Website, Social Media and Email Database

- Maintain the HBA's website with updated information and in a manner that is visually attractive.
- Establish a mail program to use to communicate with members and others including email templates reflecting and promoting the HBA brand.
- Maintain and grow the member email database.
- Use social media to promote the HBA brand, events and activities, provide information to our members and the community, and support our local businesses.

#### Vendor Relations

- Identify and maintain good relationships with vendors and service providers to work for the HBA.
- Coordinate the review of proposals, hiring, supervision and communication of any other third-party vendors.
- Closely manage implementation of vendor services to ensure quality and contract compliance.
- Seek out Hoboken/local vendors who will be given preference.

#### Fundraising

- Identify revenue generating opportunities
- Develop and deliver on an annual fundraising plan
- Identify grants available to the HBA including those at the local, state and federal level.

#### Member Information

- Develop and maintain a data system to track the progress of the HBA program including how benefits have been derived for each district and member.
- Maintain available commercial site inventories.
- Track residential trends including vacancy rates at large residential rental properties and rent pricing changes and concessions.

#### **Community Partnerships**

##### Develop strong working relationships with:

- Local corporations like EY, Burgiss, Mission 50, Academy Bus, SJP, Mack-Cali and others.
- Hudson County Chamber of Commerce.
- Hoboken Rotary Club.
- The Stevens Institute of Technology.
- New Jersey Transit, New York Waterway and Port Authority.
- PSE&G, Verizon and/or other utilities with assets in Hoboken that are relevant to HBA goals.
- Hoboken's Historic Preservation Commission, Planning Board, and Zoning Board.
- Local volunteer and civic groups including Hoboken Happy Hours, Hoboken Harriers, and Zogg Sports.
- Nonprofit organizations including, but not limited to, Care Point Hospital, Hoboken Community Center and Food Pantry, Hoboken Museum, Mile Square Theater, Hoboken Shelter, True Mentors, and others.

## **Operational Programming**

### Visual and Capital Improvement

- Create a plan and calendar for annual plantings, seasonal decorations, banners and placemaking programs and identify critical path / time constraints for any seasonal plantings.
  - o Coordinate with the City of Hoboken to ensure that Hoboken’s commercial and gateway corridors always have banners.
  - o Develop holiday lighting and decorating for commercial and gateway corridors.
- Develop requests for proposals (“RFP”); evaluate and provide recommendations, with priority given to local vendors.
- Maintain supplemental cleaning program, routinely assess best implementation of such program, and make recommendations to improve or expand the cleaning program.
- Evaluate areas in the SID in need of additional cleaning and consider expansion of program.
- Support streetscape plan and communicate plan with members.
- Create a beautification plan for empty storefronts.
- Expand HBA utility box program which “wrapped” unsightly utility boxes with historic content.

### Parking and Transportation

- Parking has been identified as one of the top concerns by HBA members and the new Executive Director will liaise with the City of Hoboken and private Parking Garages to identify ways to provide better parking solutions for those who want to visit, shop or dining in Hoboken.
- Create a city-wide parking map on the HBA website including municipal and private garages.
- Work with the Hoboken Parking Utility to create programs and make recommendations to improve or expand the cleaning program.
- Create partnerships with private parking garages to provide validated or discounted parking programs – in particular in uptown, west and southwest Hoboken where there are no municipal parking garages.
- Source new transportation programs like shuttles to provide easy access to local businesses.

### Marketing, Advertising, and Public Relations

- Identify a winning marketing firm for the HBA.
- Along with the HBA’s marketing firm, develop an annual strategic marketing plan for the HBA that promotes the goal attracting more people to live, work, shop, dine and visit Hoboken.
- Promote and protect the HBA brand in all marketing, advertising and PR activities.
- Ensure all marketing, advertising and PR efforts are branded HBA.
- Create a PR policy to ensure consistent and correct messaging including ensuring all quotes are approved before included.
- Specifically consider residential rental commercial property owners when developing marketing and advertising campaigns – the “Live” part of the goals.
- Create a season marketing plan that culminates in a Christmas / End of year campaign to attract people to Hoboken to do their holiday shopping and entertainment.

### Business Retention / Attraction

- Procure a retail specialist to conduct a retail market analyses: advise and consult with the Board on data collection, develop an RFP and procure a specialist to conduct the analysis and develop the report. Evaluate and provide recommendations.
- Work with the City of Hoboken to streamline the process of opening a new business in Hoboken.
- Create a One Stop Shop digital guide to new business for doing in business in Hoboken.

Business Retention / Attraction (continued)

- Work with Real Estate firms and developers to attract new businesses via Opportunity/Vacancy List.
- Develop incentives to attract businesses to Hoboken.

Events

- Establish a calendar of all major city and non-profit events, assess what HBA participation and sponsorship should be.
- Work with City of Hoboken on all established major events to advocate for the interests of local business.
- Work with Events subcommittee to design at least one major HBA sponsored and branded event and 2 smaller retail centered events annually to promote community awareness and attract both resident consumers as well as visitors.
- Raise funds for the events.
- Plan recurring signature event.
- Provide an overview of successful events in other urban communities, for the events committee to evaluate.
- Analyze and report potential events generated revenue streams.

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