

# DOWNTOWN BUSINESS WELCOME PACKET

## Opening a Business Downtown

This welcome packet is designed to help you through the process of opening a new business. The accompanying handbook is intended to direct you to the correct departments and help streamline the process of opening a business. Please read through the information provided in this packet. If you have any questions about the process of opening a new business, please contact Director of Development Beth Jacobson at 219-942-5517 or [bjacobson@cityofhobart.org](mailto:bjacobson@cityofhobart.org).

## Why Downtown?

Businesses located in the downtown business district benefit from the foot traffic and synergy created by neighboring businesses, as well as Lakefront Park. Purposefully designed to increase exposure to our local businesses, the Oak Savannah Bike Trail runs two blocks south of downtown. Hobart's beautiful Lake George and its accompanying parks make Hobart's downtown unique. The brick trail along Lake George connecting Lake Front Park and Festival Park draws in locals year round. Hobart is all about community, and our downtown businesses have come together to form a cooperative marketing group exclusive to the downtown. For more information about the Downtown Hobart Business Coalition, see below and back page.



**Take advantage of Downtown Hobart's attractive rents and finally open your business. Contact Beth Jacobson, Director of Development, to discuss business opportunities in Downtown Hobart. (219) 942-5517 [bjacobson@cityofhobart.org](mailto:bjacobson@cityofhobart.org)**



City Hall of Hobart on Main Street

## Downtown Hobart Business Coalition

The Downtown Hobart Business Coalition (DHBC) is a new organization of downtown businesses, city officials, and realtors dedicated to strengthening the downtown. Current goals include cooperative marketing among the downtown businesses.

# Hobart History

Due to Hobart's prime natural resource, the waterways of Deep River and Lake George, Hobart was one of the first settled areas in the region. Hobart's history dates beyond the days of the settlers. This area was communally used and revered by the native Potawatomi people.

The town was platted in 1849 by George Earle who named the town after his brother Frederick Hobart Earle.

The first industry to develop in Hobart was a gristmill. Within ten years, railways were being developed. An opera house was opened along with meat markets, shoe stores, and lumber yards.

Because brickmaking was a prominent industry in the nineteenth century, the School City of Hobart adopted the Brickie as its mascot.

Downtown Hobart is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



Main Street in Downtown Hobart

## Lake George Commercial Historic District

Because Downtown Hobart is also a local historic district, it is important to check with the Planning and Zoning Department at (219) 942-7985 to see if your business is located within the boundary of the Lake George Commercial Historic District.

### Advantages of Locating in the Historic District

The Lake George Commercial Historic District preserves the history and charm of the façades of downtown buildings, creating a more cohesive and interesting look for the downtown. This added character attracts tourists to the downtown, helping your business and the local economy.

### Business Opportunities

Locating your business in the Historic District offers many advantages including district based grants. The Façade & Signage Grant program provides financial assistance for the renovation of your building's front exterior, your business's sign, and/or your business's awning. For details contact Redevelopment Grant Manager Dawn Hostetler at (219) 942-5517 or [dhostetler@cityofhobart.org](mailto:dhostetler@cityofhobart.org).

### Historic District Guidelines

Design guidelines for the historic district ensure that the historic character of the buildings in downtown are being properly preserved. Exterior renovations to buildings in the historic district require a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) from the Historic Preservation Commission. It is important to contact City Planner Ross Pietrzak at (219) 942-7985 or [rpietrzak@cityofhobart.org](mailto:rpietrzak@cityofhobart.org) to discuss these regulations and the approval process before starting renovation. Please reference the map included in the Downtown Hobart Business Handbook.



Lakefront Park on Lake George in Downtown Hobart

## For Business and For Family

The City of Hobart knows that opening a business is an important decision. This section provides information about the City of Hobart's quality of life. Low cost of living and high quality of life make Hobart a great place to live and do business.

### Hobart School District

Hobart is served by three different school districts, the largest of which is the School City of Hobart. The School City of Hobart schools are highly rated by the State of Indiana. Hobart High School offers a variety of AP/Early College courses in addition to skill-based training through the Porter County Career Center. A student can graduate from Hobart High School with a variety of certifications such as CISCO and EMT. Hobart schools provide excellent opportunities with a personal connection to its students to ensure their success.

### Community Connections

Hobart Events aims to bring the community together with activities for the whole family all year round. Residents can always expect large turnouts for the Annual Hobart Lakefront Festival, weekly Summer Markets, and the annual Dam Duck Race. Please visit the City of Hobart's website at [www.cityofhobart.org](http://www.cityofhobart.org) for more information on the special events offered throughout the year.

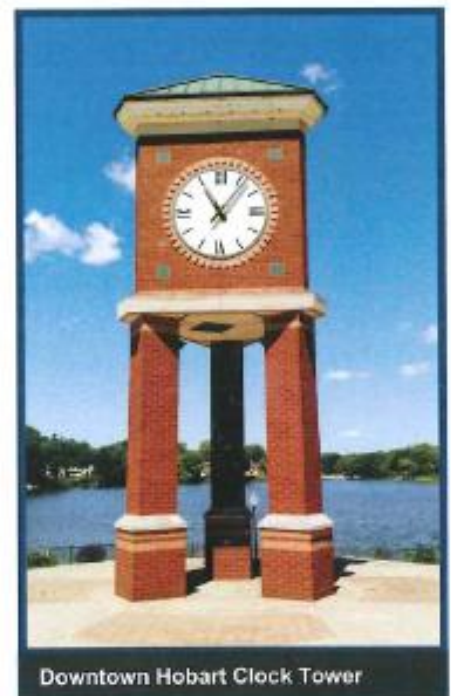
Hobart is a growing community with plenty to offer. Hobart's proximity to larger regional cities means that our market extends beyond the city limits. Residents are close enough for day trips to Chicago or afternoons on Lake Michigan, yet the suburban setting offers large yards and quiet streets.

Hobart's dedication to green space and active living allow residents to explore our numerous parks and preserves. Hobart has more than 215 acres of recreational parks and over 800 acres of wildlife preserves. In fact, Hobart has several parks and playgrounds located right on Lake George and Robinson Lake.

## Riverfront District and Riverfront Liquor Licenses

Hobart's Riverfront District was established to encourage unique restaurants to open downtown. The district runs along Main Street and extends all the way to New Street. A map is included in the Downtown Business Handbook.

One potential advantage to locating your business in the Riverfront District is the low cost Riverfront Liquor License. To see if your restaurant qualifies for this competitive license, contact Redevelopment Grant Manager Dawn Hostetler for details. (219) 942-5517 [dhostetler@cityofhobart.org](mailto:dhostetler@cityofhobart.org)



Downtown Hobart Clock Tower

# Staying on Schedule: Calendars and Deadlines

During the process of opening a new business, approval may be needed from a City board or commission. The City staff will assist you in obtaining any necessary approvals that may be required from the City's boards or commissions. Please refer to the schedule below for meeting dates and filing deadlines. Should you have any questions about the meeting schedules, please feel free to contact a member of the City staff.

- The **Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA)** approves Developmental Standard Variances, Conditional Uses, and Use Variances. They meet the first Thursday of every month at 6:00 p.m. Applications are due by noon the Tuesday after the previous meeting.
- The **Plan Commission** approves site plans and makes recommendations to the Common Council regarding rezoning applications. They meet the first Thursday of every month at 7:00 p.m. Applications are due by noon the Tuesday after the previous meeting.
- The **Common Council** approves rezoning recommendations. They meet on the first and third Wednesday of every month at 6:00 p.m.
- The **Hobart Historic Preservation Commission (HHPC)** approves the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) applications. They meet on the third Tuesday of every month at 5:30 p.m. Applications must be provided a minimum of 15 days before the meeting at which they will be discussed.
- The **Redevelopment Commission (RDC)** approves the Façade and Signage Grant applications. They meet on an as needed basis.

Hobart, Indiana is a Community Built on Cooperation

## Contacts in the Community

### Hobart Chamber of Commerce

Tel 219.942.5774

info@hobartchamber.com

### Regional Development Company

Tel 219.476.0504

www.rdc504.org

### Northwest ISBDC

Tel 219.644.3513

northwest@isbdc.org

### Downtown Hobart Business Coalition

Tel 219.940.3174

DHBC.Kaydee@gmail.com



Downtown Hobart  
Business Coalition



## Have Questions? Contact Us

For questions concerning  
business development,  
please contact:

Beth Jacobson  
Director of Development  
(219) 942-5517  
bjacobson@cityofhobart.org

For questions concerning  
the site planning process,  
please contact:

Ross Pietrzak  
City Planner (BZA, HHPC &  
Plan Commission)  
(219-942-7985  
rpietrzak@cityofhobart.org

For questions concerning  
Façade & Signage Grants  
or Riverfront Liquor  
Licenses, please contact:

Dawn Hostetler  
Redevelopment Grant  
Manager (RDC)  
(219) 942-5517  
dhostetler@cityofhobart.org

For questions concerning  
permits or building  
requirements, please  
contact:

Jeremy Ogden  
Building Official  
(219) 942-1722  
jogden@cityofhobart.org

Visit us on the web at  
[www.cityofhobart.org](http://www.cityofhobart.org)