



MEET THE  
CANDIDATES



## Tiffanie Fisher, Ward 2 Candidate

### How can Hoboken...

**...better support local business development, particularly locally-owned retail and small business development on Washington Street?**

*Where do I start.... In the first instance, our businesses need to be thought of as an amenity to our residents and something worth protecting. When I first was elected, and we passed the Washington Street Redesign project, I met with the administration and the contractor and discussed what I felt were necessary steps to support our businesses through what we knew was going to be a rough project. We agreed on steps to promote "Hoboken Open For Business", but other than some initial outreach, there was no further implementation. The challenge with our local government is that economic development has not been a priority in a long time, and we do not have the staff or resources to promote it.*

*As you are aware, we recently established Hoboken as a Special Improvement District. This was something I had raised with the administration and worked with Hoboken's Business Administrator for my first two years to try to understand what more could be done. I was then asked by Mayor Bhalla in early 2018 to be the Council liaison on the steering committee along with about twenty other commercial property and business owners. To me the two best things about a SID for Hoboken - one, it puts economic development back on our map and in the hands of those best suited to push it forward. And I honestly believe that if the city doesn't have to lead this effort, but rather can join the effort, we are going to see much more progress. Two, it is a partnership between the City and our business community including the Chamber of Commerce. It creates a funded vehicle where we can get all of those who are best suited to make change, in a room to make that change.*

*So all that being said, the changes I think we need to make include: doing a market analysis to understand better what the obstacles are to a more successful business environment, giving our local businesses more buying power to do visual upgrades and marketing, make it more streamlined for small businesses to open, link with the Chamber, County and State to support and attract new businesses, and working with the City and private parking garages to coordinate a better parking solution for people who are visiting and shopping in Hoboken.*

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<p><b>...streamline the approval and permitting process for businesses that want to locate in the City.</b></p>	<p><i>There are two main parts to this - zoning and building code. We recently updated our zoning code for the first time in decades to reflect more current uses that we see today. This has the desired effect of reducing the steps to the municipal boards - which are timely and costly - to open a business. I would also like to see a less burdensome application process for new businesses and a more predictable build out / code compliance process. These are all things that the SID should be able to advocate for in a way that is both representative and organized.</i></p>
<p><b>...rationalize its parking policies to promote commerce in the City.</b></p>	<p><i>We need to have a committee that represents the myriad stakeholders in Hoboken. Unlike most commercial areas, ours overlaps with significant residential density that brings the need for safety and residential parking. We need to figure out a way to see less new cars in Hoboken - we are just getting to crowded. But that is not to discourage people from coming to Hoboken by car to visit. We definitely need to see the price of parking increase, but in a way that is informed of the impact to local businesses. I was not supportive of the drastic increase proposed last year - from \$1 / hr. to \$4 / hr. in our busiest locations. But I was supportive of working towards that number over time. I think we also need to think about parking NOT just as municipal parking, but also as a Citywide parking system that also includes private garages. I am hopeful that the SID will help initiate this broader discussion on parking.</i></p>
<p><b>As you may be aware, there is a new Special Improvement District in Hoboken. What is your position on this new SID and what do you expect it to accomplish on behalf of Hoboken businesses?</b></p>	<p><i>See my comments above. I think this is a game changer for Hoboken for two reasons. The biggest reason is that due to priorities and rising tax pressure, there is no near-term solution that would see City Hall allocating meaningful resources to economic development. It just wouldn't happen. Without the SID to drive the process, there is no plan B. This has been a passion of mine for at least two years and I have loved working alongside so many business leaders in our community to make this happen. It is a true labor of love. What I expect to happen are great things. We will see more people come to shop in Hoboken, we will see more businesses open and more importantly stay open, we will see the cleanliness and quality of our main street improve, and we will see a much needed and holistic approach to parking in Hoboken.</i></p>



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<p><b>What other projects/initiatives are a priority for you and which you believe will significantly elevate Hoboken?</b></p>	<p><i>I think making our streets safer and more accessible is critical. Roads filled with angry people who are in a hurry and don't care about safety is a problem that affects all of us including our businesses. And I would say we need to make sure all of the redevelopment that we expect to happen over the next decade is done in a way that contemplates the needs of Hoboken. We are a small town with big city issues and mostly a bedroom community. We need to shift towards what will best support the most important amenity to residents - our businesses.</i></p>
<p><b>Please add any other comments you want to include in your response here.</b></p>	<p><i>Thank you so much for asking these questions. Economic development in Hoboken has really lagged and I am excited about what the future now holds on such an important topic.</i></p>