

THE GRA MONTHLY MONITOR

The final Full Council meeting of the Makana Municipality was held three weeks later than originally scheduled, but was nevertheless well attended (despite the recently departed Municipal Manager) and appeared to swiftly wrap-up council business for the year. The upbeat executive mayor mentioned in his summation that the municipality had again been nominated for a Vuna Award in two categories – we have since learned that the bid was fruitless and clearly there is real competition now from other municipalities. Competition in this regard will hopefully up the delivery stakes for 2009.

Promises, promises...

The quarterly IDP (Integrated Development Plan) Report again reared its confused head on the agenda in a revised form in an ongoing attempt to seek a comprehensible format. In spite of promises to address uncertainty this continues to present a challenge with the reader confronted with missing data and funding information. There was also an admission that the promise of the eradication of the bucket toilet system still experienced problems and had not been fully met, despite claims elsewhere to the contrary.

Soft 4X4 for rural recce's

On the financial front it is most distressing to learn that only R24 000 has been spent to date on recapitalisation ... presumably the approximately R550 000 for the mayors new BMW X5 had not yet reflected on the balance sheet! It really does seem bizarre that the mayor prioritises a 'more appropriate official vehicle' when the real service delivery vehicles - refuse compactors, graders, bakkies *et al* are long past their prime and often unserviceable. One can but wonder how a soft mall-cruiser 4x4 with low profile tyres and limited ground clearance is going to survive the rural rigours of forays into the Makana territory!

Tiresome taverners

Also most alarming is that more than a full year down the line the municipal by-law regulating Liquor Trading hours has still not been passed. This crucial item was withdrawn from the council meeting agenda as it was claimed that taverners and shebeen owners had not been consulted. We consider this is a serious indictment both on the director responsible for this process and the municipality in general. Grahamstown once again finds itself having to survive the festive season without legislated control measures, and brace itself for the inevitable alcohol fuelled crimes and disturbances.

Car wash

Latest economic development news to hand is that the Goat Farms Project now has a trust that will administer the significant funding received from the EU and government, thereby relieving the municipality of these responsibilities. We though still appear very far away from seeing Makana branded chèvre and feta cheese on our new Pick & Pay shelves! Dust still has not settled around proposals for kaolin mining and there may still be business opportunities to be excavated. The new R1 Million

Raglan Road car wash has been 'waxed' and ceremoniously unveiled despite fears that it may become another white elephant, as did the taxi rank where it is sited. How much for a BMW X5 valet?

Positions vacant

Vacancies within vital municipal departments continue to be cause for distress - with the Water and Sewerage section listing 12 vacancies, Roads and Maintenance 14, and electricity 10. The GRA continues to foreground this problem of staff vacancies and the inevitable lack of service delivery and resultant demand and supply fall-out.

The GRA hopes that all residents of Makana survive the festive season effectively hydrated and illuminated by their municipal service provider, safe and secure, and we wish all the best for the holidays.