

GRAHAMSTOWN RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Minutes of a Meeting of the Management Committee held in the Graphic Art Annexe on Tuesday, 5th. December, 2006, at 5 pm.

1. Present: Miss J. Dalton, Mr. R. Embling, Prof. D. Hendry, Mr. D. Hodgson, Prof. D. Thorburn, (Chairman), Prof. R. van der Merwe, Mr. J. van der Walt.

Apologies: Prof. D. Rivett.

2. Minutes of the Meeting held on the 7th November, 2006: These were approved after Mr. Embling noted that in item 3.2, there were too few nurses to do the testing, and hence no figures on HIV prevalence.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes:

3.1 Caravan Park: Work has started.

3.2 Umthombo Project: see 6.2 below.

3.3 Goat project: See report in 6.2.

3.4 Noted that there had been no response to our letter. A number of Councillors have criticised the poor communication from Officials during the water and electricity failures.

4. Correspondence: Chairman has written with condolences to Mrs. Hobson.

5. Finance: Mr. Hogson reported that membership fees collected were up from 2005, with few still outstanding. He thanked Mr. Embling for his collection efforts.

6. Reportbacks:

6.1 Aesthetics, 13.11, Chairman: High Corner signage was approved; and a Donkin Street alteration. **Slipstream Sports Bar's** late application was considered. A site meeting was held with our Chairman, Mr. Makkink, the Project Manager, the Owner, the Building inspector, and Mr. Behrens from Freelance Drafting. Alterations to the plans were agreed and are being carried out. Signage to come back again. Chairman admonished Mr. Behrens for not advising his clients more fully on SAHRA and Aesthetics requirements. It was satisfying to see Aesthetics provisions being enforced, especially with constructive discussion. Hopefully this and other issues will counter the free-for-all image that has been developing. **Entrance kerbs to the Greens** were collecting stormwater runoff, and had to be remedied. Proposed signage to be re-sited.

6.2 EDT, 14.11, Prof. Hendry: The LED Officer (Mr. Nduna) was criticised for the lack of Executive Committee minutes, and the still-unavailable **Kaolin Report** which was sitting on the Mun. Mgr's desk. Was the report unfavourable, and being suppressed? MM should have been present to answer, as he had insisted on handling it himself. **Goat Project:** Funding of R563 000 was available from Makana and DEAT. A further R600 000 was claimed via the "Treeladies", another Terry Myburgh project. It was unclear if this was part of the Goat Project. Further funds are being sought from the European Union for the farmers (R4.1m.) and for the Co-op and the Village (R6m.) Councillors remained unhappy and had many queries: Why no site inspection yet; who controlled the money; had demand studies for Goat's Cheese been done; where are the Trustees? They insisted that Mrs. Myburgh be present at the next meeting with a report. **Kwam e Makana** was queried by Cllr. Reynolds. Why did it only operate at Festival, and why have some participants not yet been paid by Bhisho?

Umthombo Youth Project: Proposed that Council should dissociate itself from the Dept. of Social Development in this project, due to its incompetence shown. Not approved; Makana should remain involved as R860 000 was at issue. **Fort Brown Agri Village:** Cllr. Whisson queried why there was no business plan for the R250 000 expenditure? LED Officer came in for more flak here. There was a lengthy report on Alicedale, but no clear decisions taken.

6.3 Social Services, 16.11, Mr. Embling: **Provincial Takeover of Health Services:** There was concern at this and over issues of DOT Volunteers (too few) and monitoring of ARV rollout. **Fingo Village Library** has funds of R500 000, and will soon be a reality. **The Dirty Town** was discussed, and the widespread dumping of rubbish and rubble. An official explained that irregular dumping was cleaned up, and the culprit charged with the cost. But only if known; could the public act as watchdogs? The Sports officer, Mr. Budaza, lamented the lack of a **Council plan to assist sporting activities**. Pointed out that this was his responsibility to progress.

6.4 LHID, 20.11, Mr. van der Walt: **All dams are 100% full. Building plans** are 43% up from last year. **Gravel roads** poor in urban area. There was an **Electricity Feeder trip** in September, due to weather and poor condition of lines. Council's insurers are still hedging about the **Sub station claim** from 2005. **Rural roads** are "being destroyed" while the MEC's action is awaited on the appointment of consultants and contractors. **Sakhile Housing** (Fitzroy St.): No report at meeting, but received later and tabled at the Special Meeting of 5 December. Mr. van Staden makes counter-accusations against Council, but does not supply the figures requested or the money owing. Resolved to hand the matter over to the Council's attorneys. **Flats, Croft Street:** Town Planning considers the objections valid but not enough to halt the project. Proceeding, but now only two storeys, not three, and 8 flats not 12. **Special Meeting, 5 December:** Presentation from **Global Solutions on low cost housing** : Based on a cast slab and light, pre-cast panels, easy to erect. They will build a show house and donate it to the Municipality. **World of Homes** propose a small shopping centre with flats above on corner of Beaufort and Matthew Streets. Also a **shopping complex for Kingsflats**. They must do presentations on both.

6.5 EDMH, postponed twice, held 22.11, Miss Dalton: Cllr. Simakuhle (Chair) called for better disaster management plans, and was critical of poor communication over the water and electricity failures. Councillors were also admonished to take their responsibilities more seriously. There were the usual routine reports. **Rainfall** was 128mm. for October. **Stray Animal collections** have declined, with only 7 for the month. A tender is out for their collection again, with no response, as intimidation makes it very difficult for operators to function. Stockowners are **refusing to move cattle** from the Townships to the farms, until there are houses for herdsmen with electricity and telephones. **Botanical gardens development** is proceeding. Plans are in for the renovation of Ornee Cottage , plus an Admin Complex which will also house a tearoom and the Rhodes Dept. of Environmental Education as an "anchor tenant". There was a report on the **Oldenburgia Conservancy** , 5000ha. bounded by the N2, Kenton Road and Woest Hill. The area has abundant Fynbos, mammals, birds, reptiles and historical sites. Extensive outdoor recreational activities are envisaged, and it will be a visitor attraction. **Egazini Project:** The proposal (for R11m.), is to develop around the Egazini monument, and provide various activities for the area to give it living relevance. There will be a multiple sports complex, the Vukani Green Belt, and an Initiation Support Centre. The Chairman described it as "well thought-out".

6.6 Finance, 23.11, Mr. Hodgson: It was a useful, well-chaired meeting. DA Councillors commented on **low capital spending and growing debt** ; and Cllr. Reynolds asked that the Government debt (which should be collectable) should be shown separately. **A Fraud Policy** was tabled, and noted. (Few items are discussed and approved).

There was a lengthy report from the National Treasury on **MFMA (Finance Act) Reforms** which, amid much verbiage, seeks to strengthen the “Political oversight role” of Councillors over Management, and promote greater community participation. The Report acknowledges the “past ... non-existence of any trust and commitment by the People towards the Municipal Council”. (A problem seems to be that few people will understand the dense language that characterises these reports).

Grants-in Aid: Cllrs. Wells and Whisson recused themselves for the Museum application. It was asked “what the Museum had done for transformation?” and referred back again; as was St. John’s Ambulance as “questions had not been answered”. As the questions were set after the applications had been received, this is not surprising. The War Memorial Grant was approved. All this discussion was “rather chaotic”.

7. Any Other Business:

7.1 Secretary noted that Makana had again won the major Vuna Award, now R950 000, as the best Category B Municipality in the Eastern Cape. Areas placed first were Municipal Transformation, Basic Service Delivery, and Good Governance and Public Participation. Chair to write congratulating the Municipal Manager. Makana now goes into the National Finals.

7.2 Year-end Review: Time was short for this item, but Prof. Hendry suggested we look at a Scorecard format. Secretary and Prof. Hendry to progress, possibly early in the New Year.

7.3 Mr van der Walt noted that the newly-appointed Director of Technical and Infrastructural Services, Mr. Xolani Masiza, has resigned and will be returning to Ndlambe. A source says that he found the technical staff backup inadequate for the challenges in this Department

8. Next Meeting: 6 February, 2007, provisionally accepted.

The meeting ended at 6.45 pm.

Roux van der Merwe, Hon. Secretary, tel. 6225687.

14 December, 2006.