

GRAHAMSTOWN RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Minutes of a Meeting of the Management Committee held in the School of Art, Somerset Street, on Tuesday, 6th March, 2007., at 5 pm.

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

2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 February, 2007: These were approved. Mr. Embling queried whether “nominal” was the appropriate word for GRA’s R10 annual subscription.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes:

Mr. van der Walt requested to present items 3.2 and 7.4 in order to meet another commitment. Agreed. These appear in agenda order below.

3.1 Memorandum on Service Delivery Breakdowns: Secretary tabled a response from Prof. Whisson who warned that a due diligence report may not result in action. There were managerial problems that had to be addressed from the top, including routines of inspections and attention to monthly reports. There has been no report from Electricity for 3 months, for example.

Positive responses from St. Andrews and the Grahamstown Foundation were tabled, and Dr. Badat’s verbal comments from Rhodes. Secretary to follow up on Rhodes and SAIAB (also positively received) for written responses. Responses also to be requested from Danny Biermann (Don Hendry); DSG (David Hodgson); Nombulelo, Graeme and VG (Chairman); Kingswood: Don to try Debbie Smuts again, for a comment from Headmaster. Secretary to ask Mr. van der Walt to follow up on P.J. Olivier.

3.2 Goat Project, Mr. van der Walt: Little has happened in Council. Miss M.L. Groom’s reply is awaited, but material has been received from the University of Pretoria on their Goat Breeding and Production research. This is ongoing and detailed, and suggests that there may be shortcomings in Makana’s proposals. Boer goats crossed with milk goats are under investigation. Milk goats require very careful management and cleanliness, and it is not yet clear what problems the crossed progeny would be subject to. High infant mortality, heartwater and mastitis are common in milk goats, and controlled feeding of an expensive diet may still be necessary for the crossbreeds. Small-scale processing of milk products also still needs research. Resolved to await Miss Groom’s response before going public.

3.3 Report Card: This was submitted late and is probably old news by now.

3.4 Liquor By-Law: Mr. Esterhuysen says the by-law is in the final draft stages, and the problems encountered earlier are being addressed. In the next few weeks we can expect an ad in the paper, a public meeting for inputs, followed by a published draft. After 21 days for comments, the by-law goes to Council. (Next meeting June)

4. Correspondence: Letters from Mun. Manager, St. Andrews, and Grahamstown Foundation over Memorandum.

5. Annual General Meeting: This is to be held in the Library Hall, Hill Street, on Tuesday 27th. March at 5.30 pm.

Minutes, Notice of Meeting and Agendas (100 copies) are to be printed and circulated. Draft copies to Dominic who will set and print. Secretary and Treasurer to progress; Jane Dalton and Doug Rivett to assist with addressing and distribution. Ad in Grocotts about 7 days pre.

Agreed on an open discussion in place of a speaker. Prof. Thorburn to chair. Secretary to do a brief lead-in using Memo. as starting point, and issues raised in replies. Also from Chair's report. Cllrs. Whisson and Reynolds to be asked to be present, also Mr. Beer and Ted Avis.

Secretary and committee members to approach possible persons to join the Management Committee. There was a request from several members to again try to get Councillors to use their microphones, as many are inaudible in the visitor's gallery.

6. Finance: Mr. Hodgson. Nothing to add before AGM accounts.

7. Reportbacks:

7.1 Aesthetics, 12.02, Chairman: A Routine meeting on signage matters, and a change to a façade for a Cuyler St. motor workshop.

7.2 EDT, 21.02, Prof Hendry: The agenda was preceded by criticism of the LED Officer for the late processing of the Exec. Mayor minutes extract (November) which were tabled at this meeting. Many long-delayed items could have been processed in the interim, such as **the Kaolin Report, the Goat Farm and railway links**. Resolved that the Mun. Manager receive a letter conveying disquiet at his continued absence from these meetings.

Ms. Myburgh appeared at 4.30, and was taken to task for her absences and lack of reports. Agreed she would submit a report and speak to it at a special meeting.

Other matters covered were community concerns about the **Agri-Village** buildings at Fort Brown; and lack of progress on the **Carwash project**. No decisions were taken. The GRA observer commented: "Prevarications, circumlocutions, postponements, round-and-round; deferments and shifting of responsibility *ad nauseam*, accompanied by ceaseless nit-picking and discussion about procedure but no progress on any front. "

7.3 Social Services, 15.02, Mr Embling: Besides the usual routine reports, there was an emphasis on **Waste Management:** New compaction and roll-on vehicles have been purchased; the Community-based Maintenance Project is working well (even using donkey carts); and a detailed waste management plan from the Local Environmental Action Plan (LEAP) was tabled – but not discussed or decided upon. Proposals were also tabled from the Mzam' Omhle youth group for a composting (up and running) and re-cycling business.

An ominous note was sounded: "The paying of members of the public to participate in clean-up campaigns has reportedly resulted in littering being regarded as a job creation opportunity". But fines are to be levied for littering and dumping.

Results of all the **Inspections of Clinics** were given.

Cllr. Ntshiba questioned the **time taken to repair vehicles**. Mr. Esterhuysen has pointed out that as they are up to 25 years old, it is often a long and expensive process to source spare parts.

The Riebeek East Library is open and functioning.

7.4 LHID, 19.02, Mr van der Walt: **Minutes:** Noted that repairs to high mast lighting in Ext. 7, promised by Christmas, had still not been carried out, as "**there are no electricians**". Councillors demanded a full report on the Electricity Department by next meeting.

Substation Explosion Claim: Dispute with the insurers over the amount claimed is ongoing. Matter will have to go to Court. **Sakhile Housing:** No written response yet from Mr. van Staden. Council's lawyers to progress the matter.

Agenda items: All **Dams 100% full.** **Housing Plans** for 2006 are 40% up on 2005. Some new houses are building on the Bushman Sands golf estate. **Sewerage Upgrades:** There is R15m. of MIG money for the Mayfield and Belmont Treatment Works. A further R9m. for bucket eradication. No progress on Alicedale ponds, as Land Affairs have not yet transferred the site. (more than a year now?)

Non-performing RDP Housing contracts: Province has decreed that "Big League" contractors will be asked to tender on non-performing contracts, but should employ emerging firms as sub-contractors. Note Makana does not feature among non-performing contracts.

East Cape Housing Budget: Only 21.5% spent in the first half of 2006.

Sub-divisions, Consolidations, and Re-Zonings: Twelve applications approved without any discussion - it was coming up to 5 o'clock.

7.5 EDMH, 20.02, Miss Dalton: The meeting mainly considered routine reports and housekeeping matters. **Fire Awareness Training and Outreach** is being stepped up. **Disaster Management Centre:** Need for a centre discussed, and upgrades of current Control Room and communications equipment. **Relocation of Families** from flooded areas now completed, but not all infrastructure yet. **Fire Fighters, Alicedale and Riebeeck East:** No progress on recruiting "retainers"; now considering full-time employees. Riebeeck East has a "skid unit" and staff are being trained. Makana has a Hazardous Materials Handling Unit (Hazmat)

Greening: Vukani has some funds for its Green Belt, but a R1m. SANBI project for greening was not awarded, as none of the bidders were successful. They advise Makana to get a project manager with relevant experience. **The Caravan Park** is delayed while contracts are re-advertised; also the **Botanical Gardens** due to a dispute over buildings.

Urban Stockfarming: Complaints about animals in town, eg in George, Fitzroy and Webber St. areas. Municipality now transporting strays to the pound, as contractors appear to be fearful of tendering.

Umthati's Africulture Project: There is a detailed report and proposal on this externally-funded project, (UK, Germany and RSA funders) which has SANBI assistance. It covers sustainable use of indigenous plants.

7.6 Finance and Service Delivery, 22.02, Secretary: **Outstanding Debtors** are at R129m.; were R113m. a year ago. Note that accrued interest at R1m. a month is still added, but this is not real money. Monthly amounts in and out remain roughly in balance, but arrears are not being recovered.

Staff vacancies: These are at serious levels, for example, 7 out of 30 in Finance, leaves no capacity to follow-up on debtors. The newly-required quarterly report on "Service Delivery and Budget Implementation," notes that salaries are under-spent by R600 000, and service delivery is declining due to vacant posts. For example, R2,4m. was under spent in Primary Health Care. The Auditor General has also mentioned serious problems arising out of staff shortages. **Auditor General's Annual Audit Report:** The CFO, Mr. Dredge, has reacted to audit qualifications, especially on stock adjustments and the fixed assets register. There has been a detailed rebuttal of the latter, citing the AG's "inconsistent approach". As the qualifications have serious implications for Makana, the matter is to go to Council. (But it is not on the current agenda). The AG also makes critical negative comments on **Environmental Issues**, and specifically waste collection, littering and landfill management. These were also issues in 2004 and 2005. Also severely criticised was **Mooimeisiesfontein**, the now-disused orphanage building in Riebeeck East. This is being systematically vandalised, is an asset that has been mismanaged and now poses "serious health and safety hazards".

Loan from Cacadu: Makana is one of four local municipalities who have the credit rating to qualify for a loan to fund infrastructural backlogs. Agreed that this be taken up.

Grants in Aid have been made to the Masonic Temple Company, and the Albany Museum.

Water and Electricity outages: A task team has been set up to look at problems experienced recently, to report by 8 March. It will also look at rebates on availability charges.

Sales in Execution: Thirteen properties in Kings Flats and Extension 4 have been attached for debt. Ward Councillors to speak to debtors about payments to avoid sales. This has been successful in the past.

8. Next Meeting: Agreed to postpone this to Tuesday 17thApril, 2007, at 5pm in the Art School.

Roux van der Merwe, Hon. Secretary, Tel. 046 6225687.

8th March, 2007.