

GRAHAMSTOWN RESIDENT'S ASSOCIATION

Minutes of a meeting of the Management Committee, held in the Fine Art Annexe, St. Peter's Campus, on Wednesday, 11th July 2007 at 5 pm.

1. Present: Mr. R. Embling, Mr. D. Hodgson, Mr. W. Makkink, Mr. C. Pitman, Profs. D. Thorburn, (Chair) and R. van der Merwe, Mr. J. van der Walt, and Mr. C. Whitford.

Apologies: Mr. D. Biermann, Miss J. Dalton, Prof. D. Hendry, Mrs. R. Hobson.

2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 June, 2007: These were confirmed.

The Chairman noted with regret the passing of Marthie Hendry, the wife of our Vice Chairman, after a long illness. He would write with condolences. Also noted was the intention of the Secretary to leave Grahamstown by the year-end.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes:

3.1 Goat Farming Project: Mr. van der Walt regretted no further progress with his contact in Irene. Secretary to check with Prof. Whisson re earlier documents received. . There is, reportedly, European Union funding of over R4m. GRA to keep an eye on where money goes if project should stall. There is still no information on number, location, and output of the small farmers, and the collection of milk. Terry Myburgh was again absent, and there is no business plan as yet.

3.2 S.139 on Dysfunctional Municipalities: Agreed that Makana not yet there, but provisions to be borne in mind.

3.3 Stones Hill Road, Chairman: E. Cape Roads and Transport have acknowledged our letter re the R67 and it is receiving attention.

3.4 Township Liaison: For report from Mrs. Hobson.

3.5 Railway Links, Alicedale – Port Alfred line: Mr. Makkink reported on a meeting in Port Alfred. The line from Grahamstown is leased by “Ndlambe Arts and Culture Committee”, and the Kowie – Bathurst toy train is being run by a private company. The Grahamstown – Bloukrans leg could be leased, and the bridge is useable, but the costs of rolling stock and maintenance make it non-viable. So Grahamstown – Port Alfred is not on the cards, and Alicedale – Grahamstown is still under discussion with Spoornet.

3.6 African Street Humps: Warning signs have been replaced, and humps repainted, at the new Rhodes lecture hall complex. Traffic calming measures at Oatlands School still not in place. Chairman has written on the latter.

3.7 Liquor Trading Hours: A lengthy and generally constructive meeting was held at the City Hall on 20 June. Most of the role players were represented, but not the Shebeens in Grahamstown East. There was also no considered position from the Hospitality Guild. Presentations were made by Prof. de Klerk, (Rhodes), Rhodes SRC, Pubs and Taverns in Town, New Street residents, GRA, and Rat and Parrot. The Tavern Owners had a lawyer, who spoke at length. Remaining issues are Closing versus Trading hours; later weeknight hours, as loss of income due to midnight closing. GRA supported the Municipality's proposed hours. There will now be further consultation until 30 July, when an amended By-law will be published for comment. Remains on agenda.

4. Correspondence:

4.1 Letter from Mun. Manager following on our memorandum meeting with the Mayor: A very positive response, and an invitation to stay involved. We can regard our Memorandum as a successful interaction.

4.2 Letters on Budget to National Treasury, and to Auditor General: A one-page objection to the Budget overruns and expenditure on salaries, together with supporting Press reports, was sent to

National Treasury . Mr. J.V. Pillay has not responded, despite a registered follow-up; and the AG “did not receive our letter”. A much longer representation from the DA has also had no response. There is concern at this lack of acknowledgement. Resolved we send a copy to Province, and then go to the Press.

4.3 Reply from Roads and Transport re R67, Stones Hill.

4.4 Letter to Municipality, on Erven 237 and 238, (St. Andrew’s playing fields) calling for correct details to be re-advertised, with more time for responses. This has happened. See 5.8 below.

5. Reportbacks:

5.1 EDT 12 June, Mr. Makkink: **The Goat Farm** has been reported under 3.1 above. There was little else achieved, except for an item on the more than 600 “shareholders” in **Small Scale Kaolin mining**. Mintek is now looking at the viability of mining, but very little is happening. Rest of agenda not new. It is disturbing that two Councillors constantly attack the LED Officer. Hoped that the new Chairperson, Cllr. Masoma, may improve matters. But the Committee remains problematic, and little is ever decided or finalised.

5.2 Social Services, 14 June, Mr. Embling: Chair Simakuhle opened on **City Cleanliness**, then on overtime abuse by higher-level staff especially. **Library** now charging R5 per DVD rental, to cover damage and abuse. Library Committee (Chair Prof. Whisson) is working well. **TB Testing** and work on TB commended. **HIV Aids workplace education** is being carried out in Municipal departments. A ton of **Chicken Condemned** at Metro Cash and Carry. This has been buried.

5.3 LHID, 18 June, Mr. Whitford: A three and a half hour meeting; Councillors on to personal issues and harassing Officials. GRA Comment “ Underpaid (other than the Director), understaffed, under-equipped, underbudgetted; and all they get is being bombed on.” **Housing:** Proposal to computerise priority list for housing allocation. This would negate allegations of “corruption, nepotism, or political patronage”. These words seemed to touch a raw nerve, and the Director was castigated and ordered to remove them. **Fingo Village Houses:** 200 was the correct number to be built, not 577. Director ordered to investigate further. **Subdivision of a 1000 sq. m. site** into two plots in Tantiy refused, but 65 townhouses per hectare approved in Miles Street. **Also approved:** A shopping Mall in Kings Flats; and an upmarket housing development on the Highlands Road.

5.4 EDMH, 19 June, Miss Dalton: An abridged report was given to the Secretary . **Fencing** between North Commonage and Army Base continues. Old, dying **Pine Trees lining Market Street** being removed. **Vukani Greenbelt** to be part of a Makana-wide greening project to be funded by National Treasury. **A Project Manager** to be employed to coordinate all environmental projects. **Stock Farming:** Livestock still in urban areas, but some progress in immunisation, branding and dipping of cattle on the new commonage farms. Anthrax immunisation in July. **Speed Humps in place** in Park Road, Miles Street, Market Street, and Frances Street.

5.5 Finance Committee, Postponed, Secretary: GRA was not advised of the re-scheduled date, but a few items from the Agenda follow: **Incomes and Expenditures:** Income R14m. over budget; but Primary Health Care income (from Province) R3.7m. under. Technical and Infrastructural Division R1.4m. overspent, - at least something is happening to infrastructure! But R2.7m. underspent on Community and Social Services. Unable to spend due to staff shortages? All other incomes up: Water by R11.1m. **Total Debtors** down from R129m. to R126m. There is a detailed paper from Treasury on the new definition of a “Vote”; now much narrower. Nearly 40 pages of **Over-expenditures** by vote. Only “noted”. **Grants in Aid:** Concern that Albany Museum Grant (around R800 000) is again deferred; as is nearly R 1m. for the Grahamstown Foundation. Bowling Club and Golf Club also deferred. Agreed that what appears to be cash flow management at the expense of important local institutions and clubs, should be pursued at the highest level.

5.6 Full Council, 27th June, Chairman: Speaker complains that **Ward Committee System** not working very well. No reports for a long period. Lengthy **Preamble from Mayor:** On Festival Transformation and Property Act re-valuations. There is a 3 year window period for compliance. Some vagueness about **Bucket Eradications** in informal areas. **Electricity Losses in distribution:** 32.8% in 2005; 57.9% in 2006. Problem is bypassing of prepaid meters: no ongoing record of consumption can be checked. Dredge says old bulk meters are faulty, and the real figure is nearer 13%. **Housing proposal from ABSA Development Co.** for 5000 to 10 000 houses on Grahamstown East Commonage. Some subsidised, and some bonded houses in about the R500,000 bracket. But infrastructure is lacking: Water supply is tight, and Waainek treatment plant needs substantial work. Sewage works are overloaded in total. Mayfield OK, but Belmont Valley needs at least a R4.2m. upgrade. Note this important independent assessment of our infrastructure.

5.7 Crime Forum, 29 May, Mr. Biermann: Richard Gaybba now deputy Chairman. 106 Reservists have been trained. **Liquor By-law:** trading hours are not closing hours. Serious **Drug Trafficking in High Street:** Organised "Alerts". Drugs appear to be coming in from Port Alfred. **Business Against Crime** are planning surveillance cameras in High Street and New St., to be monitored from the Police Station.

5.8 Housing development on St. Andrew's playing fields at **Top end of Oatlands Road:** Chairman and Secretary attended a meeting of area residents, where concern was voiced over the proposed lifting of restrictions to rezone for residential development. Bounded by the railway line and developed properties, there is access only via Oatlands Road and Bennett St. Only rough concept plans at this stage, for 125 residential units. Further objections have been called for, with a 27 July cutoff.

6. Finance, Mr. Hodgson: Subs. coming in, and nearly up to last year's total. Collectors please continue, but report in, as treasurer is leaving shortly, and will be overseas until September. Please submit all claims now.

7. Any Other Business:

7.1 Festival: Went well; good police presence; services held up, and Municipal management was good. Over-trading a problem, as was lack of ablutions for stall-holders on Church Square, who slept in their shops. Fire Station provided some facilities; toilets at taxi rank locked on a Saturday.

7.2 Civic Centre: Advertisement noted for an "advisor" on a proposed Public Private Partnership to develop a Civic Centre on the land adjoining the City Hall.

8. Next Meeting: Agreed to revert to the FIRST Tuesday of the month for the Management Committee meeting. Please note Tuesday 7th August, 2007 at 5pm. in the Art School.

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

13 July, 2007.

GRA MINS 7.07