

GRAHAMSTOWN RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Minutes of a meeting of the Management Committee held in the School of Art, Somerset Street, on Tuesday 4th September, 2007, at 5 pm.

1. Present: Mr. D. Biermann, Miss J. Dalton, Mr. R. Embling, Prof. D. Hendry, Mrs. R. Hobson, Profs. D. Thorburn, (Chair) and R. van der Merwe, Mr. J. van der Walt, Mr. C. Whitford.

Apologies: Mr. D. Hodgson, Mr. C. Pitman.

2. Confirmation of Minutes of the meeting held on the 7th August: These were approved. Noted from the supplementary minutes, that no Police Forum meeting was held.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes:

3.1 Goat Farm, Mr. van der Walt: The current position was outlined. The project was registered as the Makana Goat Farmers' Cooperative Ltd. in 2005. Provisions for Board of Directors and financial accounts not yet complied with. Total funding of R 4.6m. to date; a further 4.5m. required for the Village. Technical advice from Scientific Roets Ltd. on infrastructure, and procedures for development. 50 "learner farmers" registered. (with whom?) Details of ambitious "Village" given. There's now also a Goat Village Cooperative Trust with 5 trustees. Resolved to keep an eye on progress; Mr. Biermann and Prof. Hendry to take over from Mr. van der Walt. A letter to go in due course to the Municipal Manager raising concerns over inter alia, compensation of consultants, conflicts of interest, and to query where the learners have been registered.

3.2 Township Liaison, Mrs. Hobson: Clarity is still lacking on Mrs. van Wyk Smith's proposal to encourage liaison with and involvement in Grahamstown East by the GRA. Mrs. Hobson will explore further to clarify Mrs. Smith's intentions and degree of involvement. Chair and members agreed that we don't have the resources to run such a project without outside help.

3.3 Submission to Treasury on Makana Budget: No further response from Bhisho yet, but Mr. Madibi says that he has written to the Director of Local Government with our concerns, and has asked for comments. He will send us a copy. Secretary to follow-up, and then to pass the correspondence to Prof. Hendry.

3.4 Place and Street Name Changes: An item in The Herald of 3 September has reported that the Mayor has noted the concerns over re-naming Grahamstown, and wants to consult further with Makana Tourism, and the Business Chamber over economic consequences.

4. Correspondence: Letter from Chairman to Town Planner Renier van der Merwe re no Aesthetics Committee meetings for 5 months, and the serious consequences of yet another lapse in the Town Planning Department. See also 5.2 below.

5. Reportbacks:

5.1 Strategy Meeting, 21 August, Chairman: A useful meeting. The minutes have usefully covered the issues of the Secretary leaving, and a way forward. Secretary to liaise with Mr. Whitford to hand over records and papers and archived material.

5.2 Aesthetics Committee: **Still no meetings.** Chair has been unable to find or contact Mr. van der Merwe either in person, by telephone, or via e-mail. A most unsatisfactory situation.

5.3 Social Services, 16 August, Mr. Embling: A brief meeting. New Director Planga welcomed by Chair Simakuhle. An excellent presentation by **Mrs. Di Hornby**, of the Angus Gillis Foundation (**Kwandwe**) for a joint project with Makana Municipality to address social development and serious shortcomings in rural healthcare. Shocking E. Cape statistics on rural areas: Child mortality, malnutrition and poverty. Self-help groups proposed; donor funds available for a vehicle; Kwandwe to manage and cover running costs; Makana to supply a Nursing Sister. A useful PPP model, but coolly received and no discussion or decision. **Libraries:** Riebeeck East now has a librarian. Noted that security needed to be upgraded at Alicedale and Riebeeck East libraries.

5.4 LHID, 20 August, Mr. Whitford for Mr. van der Walt: No Chairperson and several absentees among the Directors. Recently-completed **Time and Motion Study** has shown up the effects of under-staffing: 12 years to re-surface all gravel roads; one year to fix all potholes; Kowie Ditch can be cleaned up once in 3.5 years; drains

and catchpits 2.5 years. No teams for sidewalks and gutters. **Water Pumps:** One back in operation at James Kleynhans Dam; but two submersibles returned after sub-standard repairs. One pump out again at Howiesens Poort. **Seven Fountains Agri-Village:** Lack of a water supply has delayed this for 7 years. Has it in fact been permanently shelved? **Mountain Drive** has been repaired, graded and drainage re-instated. Now passable again. 5.5 EDMH, 21 August, Miss Dalton: Very short meeting, little discussion. **Egazini Memorial:** Funds may be available from National Treasury. **Stock Farming:** Dipping, branding and immunisation continues. But organisation often poor. **Stray Animal Collection** out to tender again; shut down due to intimidation. A specially-adapted vehicle will be required. **Arbour Week:** More than 3000 trees planted over 5 years. **Aerodrome:** 5 year lease now due, but there have been delays in renewal. The Flying Club is running it well. Military use is increasing; also as a City Airport. A valuable asset. Renewal recommended. Vacancy for **Fire Station Commander** not yet advertised.

5.6 EDT, 22 August, Mr. Biermann: **Goat Farm Project** was main item; already reported under 3.1 above. **Carwash** still not fully operational; only toilets and tuckshop completed. Still not up to standard of previous informal washers, and nearly R 1 million spent. Unpleasant **Attack on Cllr. Reynolds:** Why is a non-ANC Councillor chairman of Makana Tourism? Reynolds cool, pointing out that any Councillor is free to join the Tourism Committee, which is not a Council body.

5.7 Finance, 23 August, Mr. Whitford for Secretary: Short meeting; little discussion. **Need for Qualified Financial Officers:** Trevor Manuel, after a Wits Business School study, has decreed that by 2013 all Chief Financial Officers must be properly qualified. Large Municipalities, CA or NQF 7; smaller NQF 6. Existing employees must qualify; after 2013 it becomes a condition of employment.

Debt Collection: A comprehensive draft policy is up for public discussion – but was not discussed by the committee. **Property Rates:** Now one rate for whole country, viz. 0.00689 of the valuation of the property. Re-valuation took place in 2005, and will be repeated in 2008-9. Last valuation 18 years ago. Where the current valuation increase is higher than average, the rate increase will be much higher. Some are over 100%. **Farmers** expected to pay on the same formula, but on a land-only valuation. Noted that Port Elizabeth rural landowners had protested this, and there is a re-think. **Fingo Village Title Deeds:** This has always been a freehold area but for some 300 erven, proper transfers have not taken place for years, and ownership is unclear. KDS Project Services have been appointed to investigate and to regularise this.

5.8 Special Meeting of Community and Social Services Committee, 3 September, Mrs. Hobson for Mr. Embling: An unnecessary meeting, as there was no input from the Mayoral committee which called it. Arose out of casual workers on **Community-Based Maintenance Project** and a call to pay them at least R60 per day, not R30. Currently they are volunteers who get a small stipend. No comment from Finance, and no budget. Also on the agenda was an ambitious wish list for sporting facilities, but no budget again. The promised funds for the **Cricket Legacy Stadium** (R4m.) had not materialised and only the site was cleared. No further funding is in sight.

6. Finance: Mr. Hodgson still away. Miss Dalton has collected 5 subs.

7. Any Other Business:

7.1 Mr. van der Walt to step down from the Committee due to domestic pressures. Chairman thanked him for his long and valuable service.

7.2 Farewell for Secretary: Prof. van der Merwe leaves Grahamstown on the 15th October. Farewell function on Tuesday 18th September, at 5.30 pm at the Pitman's house, 23 Harrismith St. (cr. of Harrismith and Rivett St.). Committee members and partners invited.

8. Next Meeting: 2 October, 2007, at 5pm. The September cycle will be conducted on the new basis agreed at the Strategy Meeting. Members to note the briefer reporting format now expected.

The meeting closed at 6.30 pm.

Roux van der Merwe, Hon Secretary, tel. 046 6225687.
GRA MINS 9.07

5th September, 2007.