

KRRA

AGM 18 May 2022

Chair's report

About this time last year, uncertain of where Covid and other global challenges were sweeping us all towards, our residents' association inspired by the Scarborough experience, decided to explore a new flattened out operational model which would combine specific interests and skills with a wider range of community and village building activities. We explored the possibilities in a facilitated, workshop style AGM with a good turn-out of residents many of whom joined and stayed with one or more of the several focus groups that emerged.

I'm happy to report that so far this has worked well and that for the rest of 2021 and these first months of 2022 there has been a constant hum of activity and a growth of leadership, accountability, innovation, sustained work and co-operation across several fronts. Here follows a summary of the main activities.

- Many hectares of mountain, wetland and public open space cleared of alien invasive plants that make wildfires hotter and more destructive - potentially saving residents millions of rands of damage and helping our fynbos recover. There are several indigenous planting projects under way as well with the view to further restoration of local vegetation and helping wean residents off favoured and often invasive exotics. In acknowledgement of acute unemployment problems in the Far South the KRRA has allocated a sizeable chunk of its budget to casual labour that is hired to help with the work mentioned and take on several other small repair, trimming and cleaning tasks.
- After several decades of talking about the North South bio-corridor to link the Noordhoek and Kommetjie sections of the Table Mountain National Park the negotiation have just about been finalised with the result that SANParks will have jurisdiction over the Northern slopes of Slangkop as well as the rest of this landform. This has implications for dog-walking, alien clearing, path building and religious ceremonies. We have already begun the relevant conversations in this regard.
- On the development front the once legally contested Riverside Extension project of 100 plus houses is now underway. We have objected to the add-on applications for a security village and restricted access way across the bio-corridor. Activity can be expected in Protea ridge and Wireless one and two before long. Expect traffic intensification as these all come on line and boost Kommetjie's population by a thousand and more who will want more dogs, alcohol, groceries, cars and schooling. The proposed SPAR may answer some of these, but the development has been delayed by building plan changes. The City and developers have been less than eager to engage Kommetjie in the actual design of the building, but we have been assured that it will be legal, unobtrusive and environmentally sensitive. The matter of a TOPS bottle store irked many residents who took legal advice on how to handle the inevitable liquor licence application. The decision was to go with strong conditions on the operation of such an outlet.
- East of the proposed shopping centre on the other side of the piece of fynbos rich open space 31 town houses, long approved, are going up after Teubes road disruptions.
- The Imhoff Farm precinct has been earmarked for a very large, staged development of business premises, retirement homes, gentleman's estate and we have commented on both EIA and LUPO processes associated with this. Good news is that the public right of way to the beach has been kept in pedestrian form, next to the bio-corridor but unfortunately an area of rare and endangered plants has been sacrificed. The longer-term impacts on traffic can be anticipated but might be alleviated to some extent by the dualling of Kommetjie road to the police station, but this is not in the budget yet.
- The Swan Lodge fire removed a useful business and destroyed an historic Kommetjie landmark. Spokesman for the owning family, Pierre Oosthuizen, has sent the KRRA several updates about the fire forensics, engineering and insurance investigations and the bureaucratic delays associated with these. He accompanied KRRA exec members on a site visit prior to rubble removal so that we could see the extent of the damage and difficulties

associated with any restoration project. We concur that the parts of the building that accommodated the eight flats, superette and other small businesses excluding the surf shop and vet, are irreparable. The question is what next. The building was a key part of Kommetjie's modest little CBD and it would be a pity to lose the services offered. It has been on the market for several years but no acceptable offer has been received to date. The current thinking of the owners is that, after its sale the site, currently undergoing a Heritage assessment process, would ideally be redeveloped as line shops on the ground level with apartments above that would benefit from several view corridors. The KRRRA will continue to monitor the change process and recommends that residents support a well-designed, context sensitive redevelopment that contributes to the village ethos.

- Kommetjie is experiencing one of its popularity surges leading to a buoyant property market and many applications for building extensions to houses, sometimes pushing the latest building regulations to extremes. Mark Skelton, an engineer, has very kindly been helping us with the stream of new plans some of which include contentious departures. We urge residents to talk with neighbours before expecting them simply to sign letters of no objection so that discord and resentment can be avoided.
- A skate park for Kommetjie's children and teens was proposed last year with seven sites being considered. Predictably while the idea was welcomed few were as keen to have such a facility near them. The parent group advocating for this have also engaged with the City planners and will continue with the project.
- Toads, baboons and Milkwood trees continue to get attention official and residential, often sparking localised conflicts which this association is asked to mediate in. It is encouraging to note that the majority of residents are strong supporters of Kommetjie's natural assets and happy to be environmental custodians. The preference of whistle-blowers to stay anonymous is an indicator of the anxiety which often accompanies such commitment.
- Litter bins have been a bone of contention in the far south and the installation of rugged looking brown ones made of recycled plastic has not been met with approval. The City has acknowledged the problem of their design and capacity but says predictably there is no money to replace them. Hats off to the imaginative residents who made our wheelie bins a bit more difficult to access by baboons with simple rope ties.
- Local resident Dominic Bailey and his family spearheaded a major deep clean-up of the Bokramspruit over several months as national concerns about water quality hit the headlines. This was a sustained community volunteer effort that saw residents of Kommetjie and Ocean View tackle a common issue. A modest footbridge on the stretch near Riverside Glen added to the overall impact and appeal of the project. We thank everyone who participated with such commitment to this effort with labour, advice and money. The City has taken note and channelled resources this way too.
- Underground water resources got attention from WWF who did a well-point and borehole survey here as part of a city-wide project. We have not seen the results yet. A survey by a UCT masters student probed attitudes to baboons and fences intended to reduce conflict between them and us. We are still at a bit of an impasse.
- The emphasis on matters green is enshrined in our constitution and underlined by our close association with KEAG over more than twenty years. There was a decision more than a year ago to merge this NPO with the KRRRA a process that we are still finalising owing to delays with SARS and the Department of Social development.
- Our website, newsletter and social media platforms getting makeovers that will, we hope make our communications that much clearer and informative as well as cell phone friendly.
- There has been strong support for the social fabric group in the association. They have met at least monthly over the past year to discuss inter-community relationships, confronting racism, building trust and reducing inequities. Practical projects include the memorial benches, an inter- community bike ride, responding to requests for help with the re-formation of the Ocean View civic association, the river project and, we hope, the lobbying for a safe walkway between Ocean View and Kommetjie. The latter is part of the broader safe mobility project of the

association that includes traffic speed reduction under the banner of the “Love 30” campaign that has gained much support internationally as an effective way of reducing road fatalities.

- Human drama on our small section of a very large stage included the fire that injured Kiteman Phil and the strong community rallying around that ensued till his happy return. Cartoonist, innovative sculptor of fish and fowl, and lockdown banner hanger, Chip Snaddon also got laid low for a while. He too is back. We condoled with Mary-Anne Potts after the recent death of her long-time partner and former KRRRA committee member, the architect Rod Guzynski, a loss to the community.
- Understandably while all this activity is driven by volunteers there are costs and we thank both regular (about ten of them) and periodic donors. To make the work more visible we will be putting up little notices with QR codes embedded that will enable snapscan payments towards the projects you endorse.
- The community building work that this report covers would not have been possible without our sizeable group of portfolio leaders and executive members: Roger Bain, Steve Pike, Mary-anne Potts, Caro Smit, Duncan Duffet, Michelle De Rosnay, Sandy Dowling, Eugenie and Mark Skelton, Jenny Tanesse, Debbie Bub, Tammy Chalmers, John Cuthill, Simon Bellingham, Holle Wlokas, Dominic Bailey. Most of these are prepared to take on such roles this coming year but we always value new help and fresh blood. Assistance with financial books and secretarial tasks is particularly needed. Please contact info@kommetjie.org
- We salute the work being done by KomWatch and the security companies they liaise with to ensure the safety of Kommetjie. We know this takes up many, often harrowing hours, of volunteer time. We also acknowledge to poacher activity tracking efforts of many residents horrified by the assault on abalone and crayfish that have reached historically low numbers. Their getting a meeting with relevant city officials and politicians was an achievement. Then there are the unsung heroes of the community who quietly get on with things, picking up litter, putting out bags for dog doo, helping the poor, repairing walkways, helping baboon monitors, removing thorn growth, fire-fighting, reporting leaks and potholes, planting indigenous species and more. Well done and thankyou to them all.

Patrick Dowling

On behalf of the KRRRA executive committee