

# **FISH HOEK VALLEY RATEPAYERS & RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION**

*PO Box 22125, Fish Hoek 7974 - Tel/Fax 021 782 4279  
E-mail: aroseinn@mweb.co.za*

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE QUARTERLY GENERAL MEETING OF THIS ASSOCIATION WILL TAKE PLACE IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, FISH HOEK ON THURSDAY 23 AUGUST 2007 AT 7.30pm.**

## **AGENDA**

- 1. WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS & APOLOGIES**
- 2. MINUTES OF THE QUARTERLY GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 07.06.2007**  
The full minutes are available at the Fish Hoek Library. Micro-minutes are enclosed herewith.
- 3. MATTERS ARISING**
- 4. GUEST SPEAKERS:**  
**Ward Councillors - NICKI HOLDERNESS and FELICITY PURCHASE**  
  
The Councillors will address the issues of " Budgets - Valuations - Rates - Tariffs "
- 5. TREASURER'S REPORT**
- 6. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**
- 7. GENERAL**  
..... followed by refreshments

## **SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Subscriptions (R40 per household for 2007) were due at the beginning of 2007. Your address label/e-mail letter indicates the status of your subs. Subs can be paid to P.O. Box 22125, Fish Hoek, 7974; at Regal Cycles, Wakefords, Weavers, and Pennylane (Valyland); or at the meeting. Cheques must be made out to Fish Hoek Valley Ratepayers & Residents Association. Subscriptions for new members are R20 for the 2007 half-year.

Members unable to afford the 2007 subscription fee are kindly invited to contact the chairperson (tel 782-4279) in full confidence for a reduced fee.

**This newsletter has kindly been sponsored by your NUMBER ONE PAINT STORE**

**MIDAS EARTHCOTE PAINTS FISH HOEK**  
**28 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue Fish Hoek**  
**Phone : 021 7826340**

**VISIT OUR STORE FOR LOADS OF SEASONAL SPECIALS**

## NEWSLETTER - AUGUST 2007

### City of Cape Town - Budgets, Valuations, Rates and Tariffs

The City, in reply to our objection to the high increases of the budget, has again stressed that the Total Municipal Account (being property tax (rates), water, sanitation, refuse and electricity) **will on average increase by only 15% (!)** - so that the City can upgrade infrastructure and meet its operating budget. In our May newsletter we stressed the fact that, given the high escalation of property prices, and, depending on water usage, overall increases in our area would be more than 20%. We also noted that many ratepayers/residents in our area have incomes that are fixed or are related to the inflation index.

Although the City must, in terms of the Municipal Property Rates Act, apply market value as a reference for rates and a uniform rates tariff for all residential properties in the City, we believe that the valuation process was flawed. In our review we identified many anomalies of valuation values versus actual sales, and we could show that in a specific street increases in valuations ranged from 3.3 to 6.0 times the 2001 valuation for a cluster of properties that had not been modified since the 2001 valuation. In our comments to the City on valuations we therefore expressed the opinion that the valuation process incorporated ***elements of a lottery!***

Our concern is not with the system of market related value at the valuation date but rather to ensure its ***fair application***. Other than sales values for properties in 2005 and 2006, the City's model applies some 29 variable factors (coefficients) including, view, garage, etc., which factors were not communicated to the public. The International Property Tax Institute, which did an external audit of the process, has expressed "*concern about the reasonability and statistical relevance of the individual coefficients*".

The FHVRRA, together with a number of Associations (leader Camps Bay RRA) has been interacting with the City's Finance Department to have access to the full audit and to fully understand the application of the model, but without success. A more concerted approach is now being underwritten by the Greater Cape Town Civic Alliance of which the FHVRRA is a member.

Many thousands of ratepayers across the City have objected to their individual valuations but many did not do so, as the implications were not necessarily understood. This will be clearer on receipt of the rates' invoices. To fully evaluate your new payments you should compare the Total Municipal Account (TMA) with your previous account.

Council, in a media release dated 31 July, has advised as follows:

- *If you have objected to your new valuation, but the invoice is based on the valuation to which you objected, the account adjustment will be made as from 1 July 2007. The adjustment will be based on a review of the valuation of the property.*
- *Should you still want to object to the valuation, you should motivate this. It is important to be realistic when lodging an appeal.*
- *Residents who cannot afford the TMA increases and who lodged objections must please visit any of City Finance's contact centres (see below) to make arrangements to pay at least the rates based on the valuation suggested in their objections.*
- *Assistance is offered for Senior Citizens and for household incomes below R5 000 per month. Residential properties valued up to R300 000 qualify for a reduction in the refuse bin charges. Households purchasing on average 400 kWh or less electricity per month, will receive a further 50 kWh per month free of charge.*
- *Residents who cannot afford their TMA amount after benefiting from all the above assistance and who cannot reduce consumption of water and electricity any further, should think carefully before putting their property on the market. They should first determine how much they need to borrow to meet the year's municipal charges and by how much the selling price would increase if they delay selling their properties by one year. In most cases, it would make financial sense to hold on to the property for as long as possible as that will give the owner more capital growth than the cost of holding the property. Before taking such important decisions, please seek appropriate financial guidance.*
- *In cases where the increase in rates has caused financial hardship to property owners because of their financial constraints, the City will endeavour to assist them as follows:*
  1. *Where an objection to the valuation has been lodged and the owner is experiencing difficulty in paying the increased rates amount prior to the objection being resolved, the City will assist by allowing the payment of a lower rates amount (depending on the outcome of a financial assessment) until the objection is resolved;*
  2. *Where no objection to the valuation has been lodged and the owner is experiencing difficulty in paying the increased rates amount, the City encourages such owners to visit any of City Finance's contact centres (see below) in order to obtain assistance by way of an informal arrangement until the end of the current financial year i.e. 30 June 2008;*
  3. *Property owners who are experiencing hardship and who wish to make use of the above assistance offered by the City are encouraged to visit the contact centres and to bring with them the following documentation: proof of total household income, copies of identity documents (certified); bank statements from the last three months.*

*The contact centres for Cape Town overall and the Fish Hoek Valley area are:*

<i>Location</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Phone Number</i>
<i>Cape Town Civic</i>	<i>Ernest Plaatjies</i>	<i>021 400 3522</i>
<i>Plumstead</i>	<i>John Powell</i>	<i>021 710 8000</i>

*In the case where you cannot get hold of one of the above staff you can phone Monica Kibido on 021 400 3695 or Jan van Rooyen on 021 900 1598.*

Application Forms for Senior Citizens' and Disabled Persons' Municipal Rates Rebates are available at the Sub-council office, Fish Hoek civic centre. These must be submitted by 30 September 2007.

### **Ward Forums to go ahead**

The City of Cape Town is to go ahead with its plans to have Ward Forums. The main purpose of Ward Forums is to create a structure through which Interest Groups can contribute towards enhancing democracy in local government and influencing development in their area. Ward Forums will consist of up to 20 people representing geographical areas as well as interest groups. Interest group sectors are: Agricultural associations, Business, Community-based organisations, Community Safety forums, Education, Environment, Health and Welfare, Informal Trading associations, Organisations for the disabled, Ratepayer/Civic associations, Religious groupings, Senior citizens, Sports and Culture, Tourism, Women and Youth.

To register your association, please fill in an application form (available at the Sub-council office, Fish Hoek civic centre) by 14 August. Certified copies of the constitution and last AGM are required for associations.

### **Upgrade planned for Main Road**

For a while we have heard warnings that Main Road was in a state of collapse – no surprise as it has been running at full capacity. Now R75 million has been allocated for an upgrade of Main Road from Muizenberg to Clovelly, which will also provide for the replacement of sewer and water mains at the same time. A public participation process relating to this is to start soon. The works are planned to start early next year and will inevitably cause significant traffic disruption.

### **Emergency Control Centre - a vital service**

The Emergency Control Centre, manned by volunteers, commenced operating in October 1999 and since then has logged an average of 250 calls a month – which represents approximately 2 300 calls a year!

Only one call is necessary to the ECC (**tel 021 782 0333**), who are in touch with the police, fire services, ambulance services, medical professionals, municipal departments, trauma people, baboon monitors and snake experts. The centre can also put people in touch with locksmiths, plumbers etc. when necessary.

The ECC operates a 24/7 service but unfortunately is now running short of volunteers to carry on its essential work. The management team therefore appeals to members of the public to volunteer their services by spending a couple of hours a week in the ECC control room to receive calls from people in difficulty. If you would like to help, please contact any of the following telephone numbers for further information: 021 782 0333, 021 782 2698, 021 785 2409, or 021 785 3092.

### **Find a friend – start or join a neighbourhood watch**

More and more neighbourhoods are seeing the advantages of having neighbourhood watches. Not only does the crime rate move down as potential criminals move on to areas where there are no neighbourhood watches, but communities seem to come alive with community spirit. While before one might have been on nodding acquaintance with one or two of one's immediate neighbours, people who are part of neighbourhood watches are finding that new friendships are struck up. There is a spirit of helping each other and some of the more established neighbourhood watches move on to do helping with community matters such as business networking or clearing up bushes or litter.

In the area covered by the Fish Hoek police, there are 11 neighbourhood watches (some only a street, some covering an entire area). There is a particular need for neighbourhood watches in the Avenues, most parts of the Fish Hoek mountainside and Silverglades. To find out more about neighbourhood watches, phone Capt Riaan Bester on 021 782 6333 or Pastor Delgun Steel on 021 782 2316.

### **Police meeting regularly monitors crime**

The FHVRRRA Exco ensure that our Association is represented at the Fish Hoek Police Joint meeting each Thursday morning. Some 30 people attend this meeting, chaired by a police captain. Police from various departments and representatives from the Fish Hoek and Simon's Town Community Police Forums, Law enforcement, Fish Hoek CID, City Traffic, neighbourhood watches, security and armed response companies, Sub-council 19, SANP and military police provide their input.

Members of the FHVRRRA are invited to put any points forward via our representatives Tony Ive (021 782 3110) or Bob Lockyer (021 785 3092).

A current concern of the Police is criminal entry to houses which simple precautions could prevent - e.g. closing bathroom windows, locking garages from the inside, protecting a first floor situation as if it were a ground floor, etc..

### **The concept of ICE - 'In Case of Emergency' numbers**

We all carry our mobile phones with hundreds of names / numbers stored in the memory yet nobody, other than ourselves, know which of these numbers belong to our near and dear ones. If we are involved in an accident or other incident and the people attending to us get hold of our mobile phone, they don't know which number to call to inform our family members. For this reason, we must have one or more telephone numbers stored under the name ICE (In Case of Emergency). For more than one contact name simply enter ICE1, ICE2 and ICE3, etc.

The idea was thought up by a paramedic who found that when they went to the scenes of accidents, there were always mobile phones with patients, but they didn't know which number to call.

### **Trail along the river a step closer**

After an extremely long and protracted process in which your Association over the years has been involved, the squatters living alongside the Silvermine River (near the Clovelly Golf Club) have been relocated. Although not ideal (compared to formal housing), they agreed to go to starter homes in the Blackheath area.

This gives our community the opportunity to use this area which has the potential to become a nature trail and outdoor educational area. The Silvermine River Society at one stage had a signposted trail along the river and this trail, from Sunbird Centre to the mouth of the river, may be reinstated. The area on which the squatters were living belongs to the City of Cape Town but it will be transferred to SA National Parks. The debris in the area is being cleared and SANP has money allocated for the clearance of alien vegetation.

As it took so long to reclaim the land for the public, we ask our members to report anyone squatting as soon as possible as squatters can only be removed without a protracted legal process if they have been there for less than 48 hours. Report structures to the council by phoning Mr van Rensburg on 021 704 7247 or Gerald on 084 900 2566.

The squatters living in Brakkekloof were also recently relocated to the Blackheath area. The buildings were demolished. Law Enforcement see this as a positive sign as more people with criminal intentions had started moving in there.

### **Far South Peninsula Community Forum (FSPCF) revived**

The FSPCF, a forum for civic associations, businesses and other interest groups, which was formed a few years ago to give our area a stronger voice, has been revived. One of its priority issues is to tackle the Spatial Development Framework being drawn up by the City, which will guide development over the whole city. The FSPCF has emphasised that the area south of the Silvermine mountains has to be seen as a separate planning area. It is a unique geographical area with its own character, bounded by mountains and sea and accessed only by two roads plus a toll road. The cumulative impact of development on our infrastructure and environment is severe. The FSPCF is also lobbying for the use of the draft South Peninsula Sub-regional Plan as a base document for the Spatial Development Framework. This plan was extensively workshopped by the community and accepted as an excellent planning tool for the area. Political intervention in the past meant that it was never approved.

### **Support for Kommetjie Civic Association**

The Kommetjie Residents and Ratepayers Association is involved in fighting a battle with the provincial government, which approved development on agriculturally zoned land along Kommetjie Road, in a semi-rural area adjacent to the national park. Reasons given by province are, in the opinion of the KRRA, unsatisfactory and the KRRA has consequently asked to see province's file on the matter. No response has been received. The KRRA has taken legal advice and believes there could be reasons to go to court on the matter (at a very high potential cost). The KRRA feels it is ironical that in a democracy, a volunteer residents association has to go to such ends. Residents associations, in the face of these sort of planning decisions, are forced to know all the laws; spend endless hours of their free time on these matters; raise money for legal matters; and then potentially stand in the firing line as developers take aim as a result. In view of the potential precedent, the FHVRRRA has at this stage given the KRRA its moral support.

RETURN SLIP FOR SUBSCRIPTIONS	Tick block(s)	2006 - R40	2007 - R40
Name: .....			
Street Address: .....			
Postal Address: .....			
(if different)			
Telephone: .....	Fax: .....	E-mail: .....	