



Grappling with difficult problems

When JMPD and the Johannesburg Organisation for Services for the Homeless (JOSH), assisted by several local security companies, raided the groups of people living below the dam wall and along the Braamfontein Spruit earlier this year, what they found will surprise you. Of the 48 people that they apprehended, 33 were working locally, many of them on building sites, not all of them were homeless and not all of them were illegal immigrants.

Construction workers being paid R600 every 14 days. They chose to sleep rough for two weeks and then go home so that they had more cash to give their families. It led one of the security companies involved in the raid to warn residents – “make sure you are paying your workers a living wage”.

Felicity Lawlor, who is on the Ward 88 Committee is working with JOSH and the spruit dwellers to try and find a more permanent solution. So far only one of them, Thembisile, who has been living there for most of 2017, has agreed to move.

JOSH will help him check into the Braamfontein shelter in Kotze Street where he will stay for 30 days. He will be assisted in getting a new ID card, a copy of his matric certificate as well as getting some work. The first step in getting back on his feet and off the

streets.

Unfortunately “we are not having much success with getting the rest of our ‘campers’ to sign up or go to the shelter,” says Felicity. “In the meantime they have been supplied with Pikitup bags and instructed to keep the area clean.”

A huge problem she says is that Braamfontein is too far from the area. “If the COJ would open the shelter in Windsor, we may have more success.” However she points out that even that is only a 30-bed and will never be enough for the demand.

Emmarentia shops

More recently, shopkeepers in Emmarentia are complaining about displaced people sleeping on the pavements outside their shops, sometimes leaving the pavements in an unpleasant state.

With the unemployment rate recently reaching its highest level since 2003, the problem of the homeless, displaced people, unemployed, vagrants, whatever name we give them, is not going to go away any time soon.

ERA has put a solution proposal to the shopkeepers and is in the process of discussing this with them and the security companies. If you have any ideas, please send to us at:

security@emmarentia.co.za

House robberies shock the suburb

Three armed break-ins in June, in broad daylight, where residents were tied up and their electronic goods stolen, have stunned Emmarentia residents. Parkview police is also concerned at the recent spike.

Beware of the mental shock that can linger. Volunteers at the Parkview Victim Support Unit provide victim support for those affected by crime or violence. Phone them on 073 280 4453. One hour of free counselling is given to victims by trained counsellors.

Even if you think you are fine, take up the offer of free counselling otherwise the shock and trauma can hit you later—months down the line you may find you can't sleep or you are having panic attacks.

Preventing an attack

SAPS Parkview says that some of the recent attacks could be inside jobs. They urge residents to take full details of all their employees—their ID numbers, valid passport and work permits.

In the words of Parkview SAPS: “You are our eyes and ears, we are depending on you.”

Volunteers for Victim Support

If you have relevant skills and would like to volunteer to help the Parkview Victim Support Unit, e-mail debbiburman@gmail.com

What is ERA busy with?

- Car guards - we have offered our assistance to the business community around Greenhill, Barry Hertzog and Komatie Roads to find solutions to unacceptable behaviour and to make the area safer and more attractive for patrons. In the meantime, report abusive car guards to JMPD on 011 758 9620.
- Illegal alcohol sales - there have been reports of a shebeen in the area and we have raised this strongly with JMPD who have promised to take action. We are following up and will escalate if need be.

- Development plans in the Johannesburg Botanic Gardens (JBG)—ERA is representing residents in discussions on the proposed master plan for the JBG. ERA has stressed that ongoing maintenance of the park is essential, ie. regular cleaning of toilets and picnic areas, maintenance of the boardwalk and removal of invasive species, particularly in the wetland and along the drainage lines. ERA questioned plans to extend parking and whether additional toilets in the south of the park could be placed more sensi-

tively. JBG confirmed that additional parking will be put on hold but that new toilets would replace chemical toilets and needed to be placed on existing sewerage lines. JBG set up a new task team which includes ERA which will fully discuss all future building plans.

- Monitoring events in the Botanic Gardens, Marks Park and neighbouring areas—ERA continues to liaise with event organisers to minimise noise, parking issues and other disruptions to residents.



New children's playground

Building of the children's playground at Emmarentia dam is currently in its final stages. It's expected to be open by the end of July. Find it near the restaurant at the Oliphants Road entrance.

Some regular users of the outdoor gym that is near the Thomas Bowler entrance, had requested that the gym be moved near the new children's playground. ERA approached City Parks with the request however City Parks says it does not have a budget to move the gym.

Are you harbouring an illegal invasive?

Emmarentia parkgoers, especially in the dog walking section, will have noticed the recent clearing of alien invasive plants, like bugweed, by City Parks. Their attempt won't be successful unless we do our bit as Emmarentia residents. Some Emmarentia gardens boast trees of it. You'll find it on your verge as well, growing without any nurturing.

Don't be fooled by this South American beauty's purple flowers—on river banks it drives out indigenous species, sucks up much more water than its indigenous counterparts and hosts a fruit fly that destroys fruit crops. Its broad furry leaves have no fodder value but can cause skin irritation and asthma. Only birds



Bugweed—*Solanum mauritianum*

enjoy its ripe fruits, feasting on them and unwittingly spreading its seed far and wide.

Categorised as a 1b species of invader in terms of SA's environmental regulations, it must be 'controlled and wherever possible, removed and destroyed'.

The easiest way to remove it is when

it is still a small plant and just after rain when the ground is still soft. Worried you're targeting the wrong plant? Crush its leaves and you will smell something like squashed bugs. If you have a huge tree, cut it at ground level and treat it with a suitable herbicide to stop it re-growing.

Thanks to www.invasives.org.za for pic and info

Message from Nick Lorimer, councillor for Emmarentia

Some of the most common questions I am asked are: what is the role of a councillor and how do I log a service delivery fault without calling the call centre.

Councillors provide oversight of the delivery of services. Government is divided into the executive and the legislature. Metro cops, roads, water, power and billing for example are all directed and controlled by the executive of the city which is led by the mayor and the mayoral committee. They are responsible for carrying out service delivery.

Councillors are part of the legislature: we vote on by-laws, pass reports through council and elect the mayor. Our role is to report on the effectiveness of the executive, not to micromanage it. The councillor is not the mayor of their

ward. Councillors escalate service delivery problems to the higher ups and ask for resources to be deployed in their ward. They also connect residents with where they need to go to get their issues sorted.

Logging faults is important—it allows me to escalate the issue showing that the normal process has been followed. Log as follows:

JRA— use the JRA app or e-mail hotline@jra.org.za

City Power— log at www.citypower.mobi

Jhb Water—e-mail customer@jwater.co.za

Send your questions to me: Whatsapp or sms me on 071 901 2164

Upcoming events July—September 2017

July	
23	702 Walk the talk, Marks Park
29	Midnight Oil, Marks Park
Aug	
6	Liefde by die dam, Jhb Bot Gardens
Sep	
2	The Linden Market, JBG

Resident passes for 702 walk the talk—e-mail info@emmarentia.co.za with proof of residence. We will e-mail you the pass for you to print. Download the route map which shows which roads are open and closed on the day at <http://walkthetalk.co.za/site/design/downloads/route.pdf>

SNIPPETS

- Volunteers needed to train Parkview police on Microsoft Excel
The Parkview Community Policing Forum is calling for Excel computer whizzes who are prepared to volunteer their services to build the capacity of staff at the Parkview police station. Staff need basic skills in excel. If you are able to assist, please contact Brendon Grainger on brendong@bidvestdigital.co.za

- Clean-ups—we need ideas!
ERA has a team of three who coordinate the monthly clean-ups. Support for these has waned with each passing month and so we've put them on hold until we get feedback from you.

We're not sure what's causing the lack of interest: is it the cold weather, or because you lead very busy lives, or because you feel that it is the 'City's responsibility—we pay our rates and taxes'?

One of our neighbouring suburbs recently gave up asking for volunteers and instead asked for donations to pay unemployed people to clear the rubbish. They received the money overnight. Is this something that Emmarentia residents would be prepared to support? What ideas do you have on how we can keep Emmarentia clean and free of illegal advertising? Send to info@emmarentia.co.za

- Illegal dumping
ERA is aware that illegal dumping has taken place again in the same spot we cleared earlier this year and we are discussing with the COJ about how to take more decisive action against this. Remember to report any illegal dumping to 082 779 1361. If possible note registration numbers and details of the vehicles involved and, better still, take photographs. Prosecutions are taking place.