

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM) OF THE EMMARENTIA RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION (ERA)

Date: Wednesday, 14 March 2018

Held at: The Pavillion
Mark's Park
Judith Road
Emmarentia
Johannesburg

Quorum based on constitution and attendance register.

1. Welcome

The chair, Geraldine Connell, starts the meeting at 18.53. The late start is to accommodate Muslim members of the Emmarentia community who attend prayers until 18.30. This will be considered when fixing the time of the 2019 AGM.

The chair welcomes all present and thanks residents who are attending the AGM. A special welcome is extended to the key-note speaker, Andrew Marais, Ward 88's interim councillor following Nicholas Lorimer's resignation.

The chair advises that the past year was a busy one. The chair notes that sometimes the demands of chairing ERA are like running a business or holding down a full-time job.

During the last year, new members were co-opted onto ERA's executive committee (EXCO):

Khalid Maal who will manage the membership portfolio;
Iqbal Bham who will manage the infrastructure portfolio; and
Annette Meklis who will take on secretarial functions.

The chair urges residents of Emmarentia to volunteer on an *ad hoc* basis for projects that interest them if they feel they cannot commit fully to serving on EXCO.

The chair thanks the following Emmarentia residents who were of enormous assistance during the previous year:

- Andrew Errington, Kingsley Brown and Mikhail Shaffer (posthumously) who oversaw the illegal dumping portfolio;
- Ridwaan Bismillah who helped the clean-up subcommittee;
- Felicity Gratz-Lawlor intrepid head of the NPO, *Let's Work*, who employs unemployed / displaced people to clean up the ward. Felicity continues to make an unstintingly generous contribution to Emmarentia and its residents. The partnership between ERA and *Let's Work* will continue in the future; both organisations share a common goal to hold authorities to account and ensure that they fulfill their mandate to the residents of Emmarentia;
- Alana Dell, a behavioural economist, who gave ERA innovative ideas about increasing membership of the residents' association, especially in view of the resistance by Emmarentia residents to joining ERA. Khalid Maal will assist with this portfolio;

- Mr and Mrs Le Gassic who donated the use of their PA system for the meeting;
- Administrators of the hands-on WhatsApp groups in Emmarentia. These groups are pro-active and efficiently run. (The chair leaves the discussion of the PPP WhatsApp group, run under ERA's auspices, for later on in the evening).

The chair announces changes to the agenda to allow late-comers to listen to the key-note speaker, Councillor Marais. The Chairperson's Report will be presented first and then Councillor Marais will deliver his talk. (Therefore, item 3 on the agenda is swapped with item 5. The minutes reflect the order of items on the printed agenda).

2. **Apologies**

The following apologies tabled:

Iqbal Bham

Cassim Boorany

Claire Hoffmann

Lola R Livini

Chris Moreton

Kathleen Western

Tineke Wulffers

3. **Guest speaker: Interim Councillor, Andrew Marais**

(Before Councillor Marais delivers his key-note address, David Hensman, the Democratic Alliance's candidate for Ward 88 in the upcoming by-election wants to address the meeting. The chair refuses this as ERA does not endorse and is not affiliated to any political party).

Councillor Marais is interim councillor for Ward 88 following Nicholas Lorimer's resignation and serves until the municipal by-election on 25 April 2018.

Councillor Marais addresses two topics:

- the recent municipal evaluations
He points out that information about municipal rates and rebates is on the City of Johannesburg's website; and
- the IDP process, concentrating on the consultation stage and the context of the process.

After Councillor Marais's address, the chair takes questions from the floor.

(Questions from the floor in bold):

It is noted that municipal councillors received a substantial pay-rise without consultation from their constituents.

Municipal councillors' pay is determined by the Department of National Treasury and is not voted on by the municipal councillors themselves. The pay-rise does not affect the municipal budgets allocated for service delivery or for costs earmarked for development programmes.

Is the rate value for businesses calculated in the same way as that for residential property?

Councillor Marais confirms that the randage rate for businesses is calculated in the same way as that for residential property.

4. Adoption of minutes of ERA 2017 AGM

The chair asks if anyone present at the 2017 AGM wants to propose any changes to the minutes. There being no changes proposed, the minutes are proposed for adoption by Anne Askew and seconded by Brian Askew. Minutes adopted.

Proposer: Anne Askew

Secunder: Brian Askew

Minutes adopted.

5. Chairperson's report

The chair prepared a written report. From this report, the chair highlights the following in her presentation:

ERA had small but significant victories since the last AGM (27 March 2017), viz.

5.1 Infrastructure repair and maintenance

5.2 Service delivery

5.3 Promoting residents' concerns about development and events in the suburb

5.4 Security

Overview

Infrastructure repairs and maintenance / Service delivery

In response to a letter to Mayor Herman Mashaba, ERA met with Deon Mynhardt, Deputy Director of the Integrated Services Delivery Department (ISD), one week after the 2017 AGM on 30 March 2017. Establishing personal contact with senior CoJ staff in charge of important portfolios was one of the most important outcomes of the meeting.

Other significant breakthroughs:

Pikit-up

- assisted ERA and *Let's Work* to collect rubbish after clean-up days;
- collected excess waste generated by the shops and restaurants in the suburb; and
- barricaded the illegal dumping site at the intersection of Linden and Louw Geldenhuys roads.

City Parks

- mowed long grass more frequently than they had in the past. However, *City Parks* still needs reminding to do this; and
- cleaned up the pavement on the east bank of the Emmarentia Dam after complaints from the Askews.

JMPD

- gave out the personal cell phone number of the Superintendent of Region B (who resigned subsequently) as well as the number to report illegal car guards.
- closed the shebeen operating from the toilets outside Checkers.

Despite some assistance, *JMPD's* response continues to be disappointing.

JRA

- received a petition from ERA with 528 Emmarentia residents' signatures – a 'shopping list' of requests regarding road safety concerns, road and storm water drain maintenance and street lights.
As a result of the petition, *JRA* installed a 4-way stop at the intersection of Greenhill and Komatie roads.
- put in new and repaired storm water drains and patched damaged roads and potholes.

City Power

- agreed to put in measures to prevent cable theft. To this end, Iqbal Bham badgered *City Power* to replace the copper cables with aluminium. Thanks extended to Mr Bham for single-handedly pursuing *City Parks* about this and supervising this replacement of copper cables in 8 streets in Emmarentia; and
- has been more responsive to power outages and interrupted electricity supply.

Promoting residents' concerns about development

The development proposed by Mr Mohammed Seedat of Elderberry Investments (109) (Pty) Ltd, to which residents have objected strongly, is discussed.

Background

Mr Seedat bought seven properties behind the Sunny Shell Garage at the intersection of Barry Hertzog Avenue and Gleneagles Road. His proposed development of the properties – a high-rise, mixed-use development – requires an amendment to the precinct plan and an application to rezone the land use. There have been multiple, strong residents' objections to the development. Despite these objections, CoJ has advised that the development is supported, in principle, by CoJ's policy of increased densification.

On 9 May 2017, a workshop was held with the department of City Transformation of the CoJ. Thanks to the team who thoroughly prepared for and competently represented ERA at the meeting: Gemey Abrahams, Wolfgang Phoenix, Kathleen Western, Adrian Masson and Jenny Grice.

The City Transformation's report on the precinct plan (as amended) includes the following changes to Mr Seedat's development:

- limitation of the retail / commercial space to 50 – 100m²;
- 5 storeys and 4 storeys on the Linden side; and
- an increase in the number of units from 89 to 110 to make up for reduced commercial space.

This is considered by ERA as a victory as the commercial development will be scaled down to only sufficient to serve the residential component of the development.

On 1 August 2017, an additional public meeting was convened by ERA to discuss the proposed amendments. The outcome of that meeting was that the 75 residents who were present objected strongly. In view of this opposition, ERA sent another letter of objection to CoJ on 4 August 2017. The letter was supported by an updated traffic impact assessment completed by an engineer in the suburb. His results were different to the traffic information prepared by the developer's engineer and showed that the development would have a detrimental effect on road use in the area. CoJ did not respond to the letter.

Current Status

After seeking legal advice, a lawyer's letter was sent to City Transformation on 26 October 2017 objecting to the process in which consultations amongst stakeholders had taken place. ERA is in the process of drafting an additional lawyer's letter to the CoJ.

The rezoning application by the developer is pending awaiting the decision on precinct plan amendment.

Promoting residents' concerns about events in the suburb

Anne Askew, who oversees the events portfolio, will give an update.

Security

Protect our Public Places ('PPP') WhatsApp group

ERA's concern about security in the suburb focusses on safety in public spaces.

ERA convened a meeting with four security companies in the area. The meeting resulted in the creation of the 'Protect our Public Spaces' ('PPP') WhatsApp group. Membership of the PPP group is currently limited to residents who attended the initial meeting as well as representatives of JMPD, SAPS and security firms. Although membership is currently 'exclusive', ERA's goal is to broaden the group's membership in 2018/19; initially to include the administrators of the security WhatsApp groups in the suburb and then beyond that.

Urban Threat Management Park Rangers ('UTMPR')

The agreement between Urban Threat Management Park Rangers ('UTMPR') and ERA was terminated after ERA realised that initiatives to clean up and keep public spaces safe must be sanctioned by City Parks. Various meetings with Sandra Viljoen (Manager: Botanical Gardens and Wilds), Sizwe Mabuza (Manager: Johannesburg City Parks & Zoo Park Rangers) and Tommy Mahlobogoane (Ward 88 Urban Inspector) concluded with a meeting on 9 November 2017 between City Parks Park Rangers, SAPS, JMPD, CAP, Beagle Watch and UTMPR.

Partnership with City Parks

Louise Gordon (Senior Manager: JCP&Z) sent a letter endorsing the partnership with ERA, CAP and Beagle Watch to monitor public spaces. Registered peace officers have some (albeit limited) powers of arrest.

The partnership discussed above and the fact that SAPS has identified the Johannesburg Botanical Garden as a 'crime hotspot' has reduced the number of reported muggings at the upper dams.

Abusive Car Guards: the Greenhill Road shopkeepers' challenge

ERA tried to broker a solution to the Greenhill Road shopkeepers' challenge with abusive car guards. The solution involved the services of a security company to police the shopping precinct: the proposed solution received no traction. The Greenhill Road shopkeepers initiated their own solution by employing trusted car guards who were identified as 'legal' with appropriate bibs. However, the problem remains ongoing.

Meeting with CAP

ERA will be meeting with CAP about security in the suburb.

ERA's Security Portfolio

The chair requests help with managing the security portfolio. It is an important portfolio, but the chair feels it is too demanding and time-consuming for one person to handle, especially in combination with chairing ERA.

Website

The domain name for ERA's new website is www.era.org.za. Suggestions from residents to improve the website are most welcome. Thanks to Cassim Boorany, Jenny Grice, her daughter, Sally, and Claire Hoffmann for managing the website.

CoJ Ward Councillor

ERA received several complaints about Councillor Nicholas Lorimer's inconsistent report back to his constituency. Councillor Lorimer has resigned and a by-election for Ward 88 has been called for 25 April 2018.

ERA looks forward to meeting and liaising with the new councillor.

6. Treasurer's report

The Treasurer, Brian Askew, presents his report including a power point presentation.

At the end of February 2017, ERA's cash in hand (combined savings and current account) was R291 901,36 (an increase of R72 152 from previous financial year: R257 668)

Income from:

- Building plan assessments R49 450
Income increased by R13 250 from R36 200
30% of income allocated to the Louw Geldenhuys Family
30% to ERA
40% to Gemey Abrahams (Town Planner)
- Interest earned R 5 651
Interest earned decreased by R8 429 from R13 900 from previous financial year

- Donations R 2 200
(Donations usually project-based for environmental clean-ups)
- Other R 616
- Membership fees R68 265
There has been an increase in membership fees due to accounting for previous year's membership fee income in the current financial year
- Petty cash R 2 800

In response to a question from the floor, the Treasurer confirms that ERA's accounts are not audited. The accounts are public accounts, however, and are open for inspection at any time.

7. **Town Planning, Building Control & Heritage Report**

This report is presented before the Treasurer's report because Gemey Abrahams, who oversees this portfolio, has to leave early. (The minutes follow the order of items printed in the agenda).

Gemey Abrahams, who has been managing this portfolio for 17 years, prepared a written report. She highlights certain aspects of the portfolio in her presentation. Gemey Abrahams explains she tries to balance the interests of residents, especially those wanting to renovate their properties, with the interests of the suburb as a whole and its future, the heritage laws and the title deed conditions.

Town Planning

The nodal planning policy of CoJ

CoJ's spatial planning policy is set out in the city-wide Spatial Development Framework ('SDF'). The SDF sets the planning department's vision for the city's future. The CoJ is now working on a Nodal Review Policy as part of this SDF. It envisions a more compact, denser city with an efficient, integrated transport system developed around key nodes and have divided the city up into hexagons that indicate access to various facilities. Using this method, they have set higher densities for areas that are most accessible.

ERA has filed a submission to be considered by the planning department for Emmarentia. The Nodal Review proposed densities around 60 units per hectare in some parts of Emmarentia.

The policy for spatial development in Emmarentia is set out in our Precinct Plan which is part of the City's Regional Spatial Development Framework (RSDF) that gets updated regularly by the City. The Nodal Review, once it is approved policy, will over-ride the Precinct Plan in cases where a development application is made that is not consistent with the Precinct Plan. This is because the Nodal Review will include provisions that will make the Precinct Plans that were approved more than five years ago, invalid.

This highlights the important function of residents' associations and active residents:

- firstly, the association monitors the CoJ's proposed policies to assess their impact on the suburb;
- secondly, the association checks that any development applications are in keeping with the densities and land uses in Emmarentia. This means ensuring that the correct densification ratio is used and that the 'denser' development takes place along the 'correct' points earmarked for higher density development;
- thirdly, the association ensures that the properties have been properly rezoned;
- fourthly, that the development has heritage approval and
- fifthly, we urge all residents to be on the lookout for development notices on properties and notify us.

In keeping with the CoJ's increased density proposals and our Precinct Plan, various town house developments are being approved or planned along Barry Hertzog Avenue (for a designated area of medium density residential development).

Building plans

Gemey Abrahams asks estate agents to bring building regulations to the attention of prospective buyers.

When applying for approval to build or to renovate a property, due process must be followed, including:

- plans must be approved by the CoJ. There are unnecessary delays to the sale of properties when there have been renovations without the necessary planning permission.
- houses older than 60 years must have approval from PHRAG. This includes approval to demolish the building if it is a 'new-build'.
- the plans must be approved by the Emmarentia's original township owner – Lourend Geldenhuys and his successors in title. There are certain conditions that the LGF has included in the title deeds which should be adhered to and require approval first from the LGF, before submitting to the City's building inspectorate. ERA acts on behalf of the LGF and plans can be submitted to ERA first.
- neighbours must sign the plans for any renovation before it comes to ERA.

ERA is always pleased to see new investments by residents in their properties and urges all residents to please follow the correct procedures.

Heritage Requirements

Houses in Emmarentia older than 60 years must get heritage approval before demolition or renovation. This is a national legal requirement. The Provincial Heritage Resources Agency of Gauteng (PHRA-G) is responsible for approving heritage applications. One of its requirements is a letter of assessment and recommendation from ERA.

At the end of 2017, a Joint Planning Committee of the Johannesburg Heritage Foundation was established for the western areas of Johannesburg. The committee is chaired by Wynand Dreyer, himself a resident of Emmarentia. ERA is a member of this committee but ERA still does the heritage letters in Emmarentia, seeking the committee's guidance, where necessary.

Gemey states that Emmarentia is an old area with the original farm that was purchased by Lourens Geldenhuys in the late 1800s during the gold-mining rush. ERA has started to document Emmarentia's interesting history and is inviting residents to provide photographs and anecdotes about the suburb.

8. **Events / Green Spaces**

(This is not an item on the agenda. In her presentation, the chair advised that Anne Askew, who manages the events portfolio, will present a separate report).

Events

Anne explains that event organisers should comply with legislation, regulations and municipal by-laws before permission is granted to host an event at any of Emmarentia's public facilities. JMPD also has requirements to be met.

The most important legislation with which event organisers must comply is the Safety at Sports and Recreational Events Act No. 2 of 2010. The legislation was enacted in response to the disaster at Ellis Park Stadium where 43 people were killed and 250 injured. An example of a provision from this act designed to safeguard the public is that ticket sales should take place off-site and not at the venue itself and never on the day of the event.

The rules and regulations also make provision for things like parking and noise levels and there should always be a number to contact the event organiser – a complaints 'hot-line'.

In terms of the legislation, the event organiser presents details of the event to the Joint Operations Committee (JOC), the SAPS, JMPD, the EMS Fire and Medical Services, an Environmental Health and Safety Co-ordinator, the Ward 88 Councillor and a representative from the suburb (usually an ERA member).

Most event organisers comply with the requirements. The problem is that there is no sanction or penalty for non-compliance enforced by the venue operations centre (VOC) and other bodies like SAPS and JMPD. ERA is addressing the question of more stringent penalties for event organisers' future non-compliance.

The main problem at events is sound – keeping sound within acceptable levels – and parking – operation of 'illegal' car guards. Once again, some event organisers are better at keeping the sound down and managing parking than others. Anne advises that she raises the issues of sound and parking at all pre-event meetings. As a result of ERA's constant reminders, some event organisers address these issues to residents' satisfaction and others do not.

Anne is also working to reduce the number of events held in the suburb. Many residents feel that they endure all the inconvenience of events with little benefit to the suburb. Some event organisers, like *Walk the Talk* ('WTT'), do contribute e.g. a donation was made to finance the 'ClearVu' fencing and palisade fencing around the parks. Previously, WTT financed the walkway over the dams in the botanical gardens.

Green Spaces

Anne reports that the Green Spaces Master Plan for the Johannesburg Botanical Gardens is still a draft and has not been finalised. At the moment, no money is available for the priorities on the draft master plan, which include:

- alien vegetation blocking the dams and waterways;
- overgrown trees; and
- erosion.

Anne advises that there is a meeting about Jozi Trails taking place at the same time as the AGM that night. Sandra Viljoen, the curator of the Johannesburg Botanical Gardens states that the bike trails in the gardens are already being used by cyclists. The proposal is that these trails will be upgraded and with the safety of walkers and bikes as a priority.

9. Newsletter report and input from residents

Jenny Grice delivers her report about the newsletter and the need for residents to engage with ERA.

She emphasises that residents' associations are formed for 2 reasons:

- to look after residents' interests; and
- to find out residents' views.

ERA is unable to look after residents' interests without knowing their views. It is important to establish what residents expect from their residents' association.

One of ERA's priorities is to increase membership. Currently, ERA has 75 paid-up members. This means there are 1500 residents in the suburb who are unrepresented. To this end, ERA has included a link on its website for residents to air their views. It is hoped that this will lead to a forum for residents to share their views and concerns.

The chair takes a comment from the floor **(in bold)**.

It is suggested that ERA emphasise the positive aspects of the suburb, particularly the fact that young people with young children are moving into the suburb. Perhaps, ERA should look at innovative marketing strategies e.g. a school like Emmarentia Primary School could get involved in their projects. ERA must aim to embrace the diversity in the suburb and be more inclusive.

10. Nominations for new ERA committee

Jenny advises that ERA needs residents to volunteer on an *ad hoc* basis for projects organised by the various portfolios. Volunteers do not have to commit to regular EXCO meetings. She emphasises that Geraldine Connell, who is ERA's chair and manages the security portfolio, needs volunteers. It is an important portfolio as reducing the scourge of crime is in the interest of all residents.

If one cannot join EXCO because of time commitments (monthly meetings, usually on the third Wednesday of the month at the offices of Cassim Boorany) there is scope for volunteering on committees of interest.

The executive committee as constituted on 14 March 2108 is re-elected unanimously without alteration.

Anne persuasively calls for residents to join ERA's EXCO and to volunteer on an *ad hoc* basis. Ayanda Mjekula offers to join EXCO and Feroza Kara volunteers for the environmental committee.

11. General & Questions

From the floor, a vote of thanks is tabled to thank Geraldine Connell for her hard work at the helm of ERA as well as her tireless work on the demanding security portfolio.

The chair takes the floor to thank everyone present for coming to the AGM. The meeting is adjourned at approximately 21.00.