

Kalk Bay and St James SRA NPC

Directors' Report

Special General Meeting: 1 December 2014

This first report to members of our company is intended to explain the activities, achievements and constraints experienced since the SRA was approved at the end of May 2014.

The starting point is to explain that the financial year of all approved SRAs has to align with the City Council's financial year which commences on 1 July. It is from this date that SRA rates commence being payable. It is also important to understand that the non-profit SRA company must first be registered and also for tax purposes before any SRA funds collected by the City Council can be paid over to the company.

For reasons beyond anyone's control, our SRA was only approved at the end of May. It was therefore clearly not possible to register the company and become fully operational by the beginning of our financial year in July.

In view of these circumstances, the Steering Committee made two key decisions in June:

The first key decision was that the implementation of the SRA's approved business plan had to be sustainable in the longer term and this depended on more community involvement in managing the SRA. An appeal was therefore made for more volunteers to join the management team. It was very encouraging that about a dozen property owners volunteered and the Management Team was expanded to 10 people, all of whom took or shared responsibility for a range of portfolios. This community response confirmed the viability of the SRA.

The second key decision was that it was important commence the provision of some services as soon as possible, even before registration of the company and receipt of SRA funds, because SRA rates would commence to be payable in July and property owners were entitled to expect the implementation of services without delay.

A contract was therefore entered into with Mountain Men for the provision of public safety services on an interim basis of three months commencing on 15 August. Also, a blitz operation to clean and tidy streets and pavements not normally maintained by the City Council was also conducted in August and September.

Regular newsletters have been sent to property owners advising them of progress.

The costs involved in setting up and operating the SRA has until recently been met by property owners on behalf of the company which costs have been reimbursed by the company.

The following is a summary of the activities of the various portfolios of the SRA, under the headings as they appear in our Implementation Plan:

Management/Corporate issues

The Management Team, and more recently the directors, have held 15 meetings since June, at least twice every month, to plan and agree on steps to implement the SRA's approved business plan. This is evidence of the commitment displayed by members of our community to ensure the success of the SRA. Minutes of these minutes are available on our website.

In addition to the directors mentioned below, the current members of the Management Team are Joanne McGilvray, Su Birch, and Tim Conibear. Other residents who have served on the Steering Committee or Management Team include Zahida Stanley, Don Yeowell, Chris Giffard and Judy Herbert.

Application for registration of the SRA non-profit company was lodged in July. The Memorandum of Incorporation submitted for registration is a standard approved by the City Council and used by all SRAs in Cape Town.

The subscribers to the MOI and the current directors are Eric Stephen (St James), Karl Leinberger (St James), Andy Paige (St James), Bert Stafford (St James), Tony Trimmel (Kalk Bay), Kenneth McClarty (Kalk Bay) and Jim Russell (Kalk Bay).

Councillor David D'alton has been nominated by the City Council to represent it at our directors' meetings. He has attended most meetings and we thank him for his assistance on a number of issues, for example exerting pressure for the removal of the boat and trailer, which were the source of criminal activity, from the harbour parking area.

Unfortunately, there was an unexplained delay in registering the company, which only occurred on 22 September.

As soon as the registration certificate was received, steps were taken to register the company for tax and VAT and to open a bank account. Also, a Finance Agreement was signed with the City Council. This key document governs the reporting relationship between the company and the Council and provides for the collection and paying over of SRA rates to the company.

All necessary registrations have been effected and the company received its first payment from the City Council during November.

The SRA secured the use of an office in the Community Centre from 1 October for a nominal rent. This has contributed greatly to the effectiveness of the SRA management and our ability to interact with property owners and we thank the hall committee sincerely for accommodating us.

It was decided by the Management Team that preference would be given to local residents when appointing the Manager and Social Worker, provided, of course, that the local candidate met the criteria of relevant experience and suitability. After a process of selection interviews, Gail Daniels, a local resident, was appointed Manager with effect from 1 October and Ester Uys, a Muizenberg resident, was appointed as Social Worker on a contract basis with effect from 1 November.

Application forms for membership of the company were sent to property owners on 24 October by e-mail and delivery by the Post Office to every street address in St James and Kalk Bay. A reminder newsletter was also sent out on 14 November by e-mail. We have thus far registered 137 members, which is a good result in the short time since the application forms were first sent out. No doubt the new board will make a concerted effort to increase these numbers substantially over the next few months.

Public Safety

This issue has been identified by residents as the most important issue of community concern and therefore accounts for about 65% of our annual budget (R800,000 in 2014/2015 and R860,000 in 2015/2016).

As mentioned, a contract was concluded with Mountain Men to provide public safety services from 15 August on an interim basis. This contract has been extended for an indefinite period subject to termination one month's notice and Mountain Men have also agreed that no annual contract price increase will exceed the CPI rate of inflation. This arrangement will enable the new board periodically to review their performance and/or cost effectiveness and/or to call for competitive proposals.

It should again be emphasized that Mountain Men have been engaged by the SRA to provide public safety services only in respect of the public areas of the SRA (i.e. streets, parks, pavements etc.). Property owners always remain responsible for the security of their own private property.

In terms of the contract, Mountain Men are committed to provide the following core services:

- Three trained patrol officers to patrol the SRA on foot by day and four to patrol at night (using bicycles in Kalk Bay at night) operating 24 hours on every day of the year.
- These patrollers to be backed by a dedicated patrol vehicle and a special response team, as well as a mountain observation unit.
- Patrollers to be equipped with two way radios and cell phones linked to the MM operation centre
- Every property to be passed at least 4 times per day
- Route tracking monitors to be installed and operated

Successes in public safety operations since mid-August include the following:

- Eighteen arrests have thus far been made, in respect of a range of offences, including theft from or damage to motor vehicles.
- Mountain Men have also been responsible for the arrests of an individual with live ammunition on St James beach, as well as the arrest of an ATM gang operating in the City, tracked from Kalk Bay, and the arrest of a gang of jewelry thieves operating in the Province also tracked from Kalk Bay. Information from residents helped in the ATM and jewelry cases, which underlines the crucial role we all must play in combating crime.
- Improved shared intelligence and combined operations with SAPS, Muizenberg recently resulted in five arrests by SAPS of suspects on drug charges, and a further arrest for possession of a firearm. It should again be mentioned that information provided by local residents played a key role in securing these arrests.

There have also been some problem areas which are receiving urgent attention:

- The first two patrol monitoring and reporting systems used by Mountain Men failed but we are receiving positive results from the latest system.
- Patrols were not covering all areas regularly but with experience and training, this problem is being eliminated.

We believe that, despite these problems, and with the assistance of Mountain Men and SAPS, our community is taking real and effective steps to combat crime in the SRA. We are determined to work on a number of initiatives to further combat crime. Initiatives currently being considered include:

- Installation of security cameras at positions as advised by security consultants.
- The linking of private security cameras already installed at various positions in the SRA to a central monitoring and command centre. Security cameras are proven to be very effective in combating crime, and we are confident that the linking of a wide network of cameras will be of considerable benefit.
- The provision of business to business radios, which have proved very successful in Muizenberg.
- Regulating informal car guards to reduce or eliminate the influx of criminals posing as car guards particularly at weekends and other busy periods.

Cleansing Services and Environmental Upgrading

The combined budget of these activities is R80,000 in 2014/15 and R84,800 in 2015/2016.

This portfolio concentrates on areas not normally maintained by the City Council (e.g. all streets other than the main road) and is intended to complement the many private initiatives regarding the maintenance and upgrading of public spaces which contribute so much to the quality of our environment. A successful blitz clean-up of weeding and sweeping of gutters and pavements was conducted in August/September and further operation was conducted in November.

Maintenance cleaning is conducted by a full time cleaner on each day of the week covering four designated zones covering the whole Kalk Bay and St James area, and on the fifth day those coastline areas not normally cleaned by the City Council are covered. We are exploring improved means of keeping our streets clean and thank the many residents who have come forward with suggestions in this regard.

In October an arrangement was reached with the Haven Night Shelter for them to clean up the harbor beach on Saturdays, Sundays and Monday mornings until such time as the City Council concludes an agreement with the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and PRASA for the City Council to take over control of the beach, including the provision of cleaning services and law enforcement. We are pleased to say that signature of this agreement is imminent and hopefully after many years of delay the harbor beach will be much cleaner and safer place to visit in the future.

In addition to the direct work reported on above, the SRA is also liaising with the various departments of the City of Cape Town to facilitate efficient action on particular issues, and to ensure that the services to which the City has committed are indeed delivered.

We have benefitted from improved responses and service delivery by the City Council and other public services. This increases our confidence that the SRA is able to obtain greater leverage in ensuring a sustained improvement in these public services.

Social Upliftment

The budget allocation for this portfolio is R66,000 in 2015/2016.

This is one of the most challenging portfolios that probably does not receive the attention it merits. Kalk Bay and St James has always been a live and let live community and has always included poor and/or homeless people, and those suffering from social ills. It is our responsibility to include them in our plans and programmes.

For this reason, the current business plan approved by our community recognizes the importance of addressing social issues in conjunction with public safety and other activities in order to try to build a safer and more functional community.

It is therefore the aim of the SRA management to address community issues as holistically as possible. For this reason, we have tried, for example, to employ and obtain the help of local residents as far as possible.

Ester Uys, a registered and experienced social worker with contacts in our community, has been engaged to assist address social issues. Her specialty is working with street children.

Ester has spent the past month “mapping” social issues in the SRA for attention and has had discussions with the social worker at the Haven night shelter in order to co-ordinate their activities.

Ester has filed her first report and it is clear from this that she is already being of practical assistance to our community. Based on her experiences, she will also report to the directors soon on our draft social upliftment policy and will propose a more specific plan of activities.

Marketing/Communication

Regular newsletters and news flashes have been sent out by e-mail and by delivery by the Post Office. We now have a data base of e-mail addresses of about 450 property owners, which we intend to add to over time in order to improve communication further and also to eliminate as far as possible the cost of paper delivery. It is intended that in future the normal mode of communication will be by e-mail and paper copies for those who do not have computers will be made available at our office and by other means.

Our website has been updated and additional documents included, including minutes of our Management and director's meetings.

Conclusion

The SRA has been in full operation for no more than three and a half months. We have had successes and some frustrating difficulties, but are encouraged by quantitative and qualitative feedback indicating that significant progress is being made.

We also face a number of challenges. Probably the biggest of these is that our small budget, which is one of the smallest of all 31 approved SRAs, has to provide services over a large geographic area. The challenge is therefore to manage this budget effectively so that meaningful improvement to the safety of our public areas and the quality of life of our property owners and residents can be realised.

If our community continues to work together in a co-operative way, always seeking local and innovative solutions, we are confident this primary goal can be achieved.

We wish to thank:

- All members of our community for their support, offers of help and also their criticism! This SRA and its community fund belongs to you. We all need to work together to find the best and most cost effective means of addressing our communal concerns.
- Councilor Dave D'alton for his regular attendance at our meetings and the clear value his assistance and advice has already added.
- Members of the City Council, particularly the Inter Services Liaison team, for their help and guidance
- Members of our Management Team who have given up so much of their time and have worked so hard to bring us to this point.