



October 2011
Issue 6

BHRA Newsletter

PO Box 607, Botha's Hill, 3660

Botha's Hill Residents Association

*"To Promote the
Interests of
Ratepayers and
Residents of
Botha's Hill."*



Greetings! Inside This Issue

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- **Committee meeting 24th September 2011**

Botha's Hill Residents Association Meeting
27th August 2011 Chef School, Botha's Hill: 10h00



The meeting was convened under chairperson Carol Friedman (CF) at 10h00 with a turnout of +- 22 people

1. Welcome and Apologies

- Clr Themba Shelembe
- Peter Davies
- Erasmus family
- Susan White
- Harris family
- Tino Stefano

Carol Friedman welcomed the residents.

2. Minutes of last AGM

- Minutes of the AGM of 2010 were available for inspection
- Minutes of the AGM of 2010 proposed as correct by Lynette Dorkin and seconded by Dee Altenburger.

3. Treasurer's Report

- The financial report was prepared and presented by Patrick Chetty. There was very little movement in the bank account, as all the money collected in subs at the AGM 2010 was paid over to Conomirra, except for the expenses incurred in securing a speaker for the previous AGM.
- Acceptance of the report was proposed by Carol Friedman and seconded by Lynette Dorkin.
- Carol would arrange to have the finances signed off by a person of good standing in the community.

4. Chairman's Report

Carol Friedman presented her report, and while there were questions and discussion from the floor during the presentation, these will be recorded under Matters Arising.

During the twelve months under discussion the committee met 7 times and there were no cancellations of meetings for lack of a quorum.



Issues raised at the AGM in July 2010 were dealt with as follows:

1. The tavern on the corner of Old Main and Assagay Road continues to operate illegally, but pending the appeal they have lodged, the situation remains in limbo.
2. Informal settlements below Benares and Patna Roads continue to be a problem. On one occasion during this year members of the committee called the Land Invasion Unit to investigate new signs of building. The committee was impressed with the responsiveness of the team. (According to the law the squad can only take action within 48 hours of the structure going up and before it has a roof, making the structure a dwelling.)
3. The squatting situation in Nquma Road received a lot of attention from Crimestop and the Association, and has actually been sorted out. This is a good example of the working of community to keep their area clean. Neighbours and residents phoned the absentee owner on numerous occasions to alert them to their responsibilities.
4. Rezoning for the new wedding venue development on Old Main Road was not opposed by the association. However, when queries were raised about building operations starting without building plans, and about the water treatment being planned, the association was informed that if they had not opposed the application for rezoning, then we had excluded ourselves from the process and now had no voice. So this is important for residents to remember in the future. Thanks as always to Allan Childs for his vigilance and willingness to use his expertise in the interests of the community.
5. The post office alcove which is used as a drinking area and toilet and is often in a disgusting state when residents arrive in the morning, occupied so much of our attention again during the past year. Members of the committee have engaged with the postmaster on many occasions to find a solution that would be acceptable to the post office and the residents, particularly residents who collect post after hours. Nothing has succeeded in rectifying a design fault. It is recommended that every resident who is angered by the mess in the alcove go into the post office and complain on a regular basis. With enough complaints they might be pushed to find a solution.



New Issues

- i. The committee has been engaged with complaints of waste water being discharged straight down the mountain from a restaurant. Cllr Crouch was assisting with this matter which has yet to be resolved.
- ii. Members of the committee have also engaged frequently with the Thousand Hills Spar on the unkempt appearance of the grounds, and the state of the floor on the inside. The owners are clearly upgrading, at a slow pace. We will be monitoring.
- iii. Complaints were received about the second hand car sales occurring at the Fainting Goat. Upon investigation it was found that according to the current bylaws, establishments zoned for general commercial are allowed to sell any merchandise, from cameras to cars.
- iv. The paintball enterprise below Wootton Ave has caused distress to the immediate neighbours. The enterprise has applied for special consent to conduct this business. It is always a delicate balance between the wishes of a neighbour for the quiet of the countryside and need for enterprise in the area, especially on the edges of Botha's Hill where informal settlers are attracted by vacant land.
- v. Illegal dumping around the bins outside Falcon Crest has received attention. A member of the committee offered a reward to the security at Falcon Crest to note vehicle registrations of people dumping at this bins. These were forwarded to the unit in the council for action. This has helped somewhat, but people continue to dump around the bins. Residents are requested to keep an eye out for dumpers, take down numbers, and snap photos with the handy cell phone.
- vi. Some small successes to report. We have been successful in removing the shipping container in Kearsney College Road; a broken down truck was removed from Ridge Road; the dangerous gaping hole had its cover restored in Kearsney College Road; the street sign in this same road was restored. The plethora of illegal signage that appeared on Botha's Hill was removed. The parked heavy vehicles on the verges of Botha's Hill were removed. These are small successes that should be celebrated because it is often the small things that indicate that an area is owned by its residents and is being cared for.
- vii. In general the committee would like to be more proactive. But mostly no one knows what is coming into the area until someone happens to notice unusual activity and wonders if the owner has followed correct procedures. So most of the work ends up being reactive, in an attempt to undo something that has already taken root.

- viii. The committee requests that all residents peruse the classifieds in the local and daily newspapers, to see the applications that are being advertised. These are indicators of the changes that are coming to the area. Classified ads are particularly difficult to read, and then to understand. Often only the erf number is given. This is all that is required by law, but makes it very difficult to actually locate the address and comprehend the import of the application for the area. In this regard we have been helped enormously by Conomirra, the confederation of mist belt residents associations, our regional body. Lilian Develing will spot classifieds that pertain to Botha's Hill and alert the committee.
- ix. We have tried harder as a committee to keep residents informed with our Association Newsletter and our website, which is kept updated thanks to Dee. We invite residents who wish to attend a committee meeting to contact the chair.

General

Carol Friedman concluded by thanking Clr Rick Crouch who attended many of our meetings until he was elected councillor for Kloof. The committee is extremely grateful to the councillors who have attended our meetings, given us guidance, and taken up issues on our behalf.

At the same time the chair welcomed back Clr Gill Noyce who is returning as PR Councilor to Botha's Hill; and a warm welcome to Clr Michael Shelembe, with whom we would like to work.

Carol Friedman thanked committee member, John Little, for hosting so generously all the meetings of Bothas's Hill CrimeStop and this association, and especially for hosting the AGM.



Members of 2010 will remain on the Committee:

Carol Friedman, Pat Chetty, Gerhard Terblanche, Peter Davies, Lynette Dorkin, John Little, Dee Altenburger.

George Moodley has resigned as he is leaving the area. Carol Friedman thanked George for the many years of service he had given to the area.

New Members elected:

Grant Salomon, Chris Collingwood, Matt Trinder.

Matters arising from the floor



- Mr Collingwood addressed the issue of actual value vs council value. Clr Noyce indicated that residents had to pay the council value until the next valuation roll which had to be done within 5 years.
- Mr Hughes addressed the issue of late rate bills. Clr Noyce indicated that the council's responsibility was to send out the bills in a reasonable time, thereafter it became a post office issue.
- Waste water discharge from the restaurant will be revisited by the new committee.
- Waste water treatment packages were discussed by Mr Childs. Clr Noyce said that if residents and/or the association wanted to have Waste Water come round to test water at the restaurant or the new wedding venue, then that would be arranged.
- Dumping of black bags along the Valley along Zulu Reserve Road was mentioned.
- Dee was congratulated for the website.
- A resident mentioned that the notice board at Chapel/Botha Road was a good idea, especially when residents were warned of suspicious cars.
- Water pressure in Botha's Hill was questioned

- The use made by council of rates was questioned.
- The use of metro police was questioned. Their first priority is traffic, but they can assist SAPS.
- Dee requested that repeated electricity failure in Kearsney College Road, due to circuit failure, be taken up at a future meeting.
- Carol was thanked for being chair.

Clr Gill Noyce addressed the meeting



- Council had to spend on previously disadvantaged areas. A large amount was being spent on Riverhorse Valley, the new airport and salaries.
- Water pressure was a bit lower than it used to be. This is because supply was becoming problematical now that water had to be given to all communities. A lot of pipes have been put down, and money spent, to bring water from Midmar.
- An incentive to put water tanks in all new housing developments ought to exist. Clr Noyce has tried to get this passed, but it is scuttled by political rivalry. She will keep trying.
- Clr Noyce reported that at the relevant committee which she sits, an item called 'Botha's Hill Functional Plan' was passed on 11/08/2011. Her input was to make sure a public participation meeting would be held. It would be good for the committee to identify concerns and matters which the community feels should be addressed. Some money would be made available "for urban upgrade projects".

This would be ratified by a full sitting of Council on Sept 5th after which it becomes an imperative that it happens. It has been a long time coming but at least it is here and it is as good as we could have hoped for. Clr Noyce will

be monitoring its progress and keep everyone informed. She thought it would be good to get Roy Alderdice involved - he has a developer's capacity to think adventurously.

- Clr Noyce indicated that residents had to look to one another for the future. Previously advantaged areas will not get more money in the future. She was impressed by the email to Alan Smaldon from a resident about a suspicious car to look out for. This was proof of community working together. Clr then talked about special rating areas which was a demonstration of democracy in action. A community that votes with a 66% majority for a special rating area can decide what specific needs it wishes to address. Thereafter all ratepayers have to pay the increased rate. This additional money is ring-fenced and paid over to the community for it to manage and monitor. Clr is happy to talk further on this idea at BHRA committee meetings and at public meetings.

Thanks



Vote of thanks proposed by Patrick Chetty.

Lucky Draw



Lucky draw for a gourmet gift basket from the Chef School won by Mr Mark Hughes.

The meeting ended at 11h45.
Minutes taken by Gerhard Terblanche

Office Bearers:

Grant Salomon has been appointed our new chairman and heartily welcomed; Carol Friedman our new deputy chair who will take minutes of the meetings, Peter Davies remains the Secretary and will continue to be responsible for letters written on behalf of the committee and Patrick Chetty remains our Treasurer.

Portfolios:

Web mistress: Dee Altenburger
Area Intelligence: Lynette Dorkin
Building Bridges: Nick Swan
Hospitality: John Little
Special Rating Area: Matt Trinder

Dee Altenburger will continue to compile the newsletters, which should be sent to Grant Salomon, who would check/edit or delegate to Peter Davies. If neither of these members could respond within a few days, then the task would be delegated to Carol Friedman. When the newsletter was ready for distribution, it was decided that Dee Altenburger should inform members that the new newsletter was available on the website, with a link, and post the newsletter on the website.

Lynette Dorkin was also expressly authorized at the meeting to be the official rep of BHRA at the Conomirra meetings.

Nick Swan mentioned some ideas he had concerning joint contact of BHRA with committees in the valley; inviting a public speaker that would appeal to both communities; ideas of working with job placement etc. Clr Gill Noyce then mentioned that these ideas fell in well with projects she was working on to protect environmental hotspots on the east coast. There was money available for this work, which had to include upliftment of local communities.

Patrick Chetty explained work being done by his church to uplift the local community and to work in the informal settlement. He indicated that he was concerned about vacant land, as it brings crime. GN felt that land could be used for local vegetable growing for food security.

John Little mentioned that Thousand Hills Tourism was setting up an NPO to sponsor children at local orphanages.

The idea of 'building bridges' found resonance within the committee. NS was thus formally co-opted as a full member of the committee.

Capital Expenditure:

John Little indicated that the Council require more details and structured proposals, for the money to be given.

Clr Gill Noyce said that the Council did their tour of the area without her. It is now clear that ratepayers will not be driving the R3 million budget. She suggested instead that the committee become involved in the local area plan that Council is drawing up for Bothas Hill. She suggested the involvement of Roy Alderdyce. GN mentioned that an SRA would be ideal for Bothas Hill. It is a way of getting back ownership. Depending upon what people wanted for the area, a small increase in rates would make a big difference. The good thing was that once 66% of the area agreed, then the increase would

affect all residents equally. MT agreed to assist by getting a GISS map and counting the plots. There had to be at least 200 plots in a designated area. MT would be assisted by GT, and if need be, by LD.

John Little felt that we could use the opportunity of SRA to bring people into awareness of local matters and the work of BHRA. It was disappointing how few people had attended the AGM. GN said we could give our own ethos to Bothas Hill – it could be quaint, arty, touristy, multi-cultural etc. PC offered to drive the committee around the area in his combi, to obtain a full sense of what the area had to offer. MT offered to sponsor drinks (soft!). GS said this could take place approx. 2 weeks after the next meeting.

Gill Noyce said she would be asking for money to work on private and public land, for the protection of DMOSS areas and valuable grassland. Public land in the hands of the Dept of Transport and Education was not being protected; similarly private owners who were now designated DMOSS needed help to protect the conservation areas. A presentation by Dr Kloppers would be held on 12/3 October, and GN offered a place to someone from the committee to hear about the fund and the application process. GN will email the date and details to LD, NS and PC.

Finance:

The financial report from the AGM still needs to be completed by PC and signed off by Clr Noyce.

PC reported that after the AGM his car was broken into and the box in which he had stored the money from the AGM had been stolen. Fortunately the money for Conomirra subs had already been given to LD.

Website domain:

Committee decided not to take up the purchase of a 'dot com' domain. Peter Davies will pursue this matter through his daughter who is a professional in this field. Peter Davies has also started a facebook site which comes to the top of searches on google. He has also put a link there to the BHRA website.

BHRA Committee Members



(Photo to be updated asap)

Contacts:

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Newsletter compiled by D. Altenburger, edited by G. Salomon/ P. Davies/ C. Friedman. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the committee



2011/2012 Committee

Grant Salomon (Chairman) - Carol Friedman (Deputy Chair) - Peter Davies (Secretary) - Patrick Chetty (Treasurer) - John Little (Hospitality) - Gerhard Terblanche – Lynette Dorkin (Area Intelligence) - Deirdre Altenburger (Web mistress) – Chris Collingwood – Matthew Trinder (Special Rating Area)- Nick Swan (Building Bridges)