

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Wilderness Ratepayers & Residents Association held on Monday 10th December 2012 at 18h00 at the Pearl of Wilderness Hotel

Welcome and Apologies:

The Chairman, Graham Sell, welcomed all present to the 42nd AGM. Previous chairmen of the WRRRA, Pat Walsh, Bob McIntyre, and Dick Smit were also welcomed.

The following apologies were received:

Peter Joubert, Sue and Richard Ledger, Trevor Fish, Jan Heyneke, Maureen Mansfield, Liz Howard, Anneke Harper, Paddy Bomford, Mary Jones, Helen and Hugo Leggatt, Dr Acquisto, Inez Jamieson, Tony and Evie Bowen, Geoff and Val Pallister, Case Rijdsijk, Herb and Lorna Farrow, Chris Woodcock, Sheila and Stuart McAllister, Lorraine Campbell, Erna van Wijk, Eugene Schoombie, Mr Getz, André & Sineke Knoetze.

The Chairman indicated the empty seat beside him and explained that Paul Nicholas, who is responsible for the Tourism portfolio, was absent due to illness. He wished Paul a speedy recovery.

Adoption of the minutes:

Adoption of the minutes of the AGM held on Monday 19th December 2011 was proposed by Pat Walsh and seconded by Bob McIntyre

Matters arising therefrom:

Upgrading and repairing of roads. The chairman said that the municipality are doing as much as they can within the budget available to them. Members of the WRRRA are requested to assist the municipality by reporting roads that need attention and must be given priority, to the WRRRA.

Chairman's report:

The Chairman's report was taken as read. The Chairman then explained that a mandate was sought from the membership for WRRRA to pursue discussions with the Municipality to become a Special Ratings area. Municipalities throughout the country are under financial strain, and George is no exception. Special rates are a portion of rates and taxes that get spent on a specific area. Wilderness used to get a rates rebate which has now been taken away. The proposal is to negotiate with council to reinstate the rebate as a Special Rating. This money would be used specifically for areas in Wilderness such as law enforcement, fixing potholes etc. The negotiation must benefit both council and residents. A section 21 company could be established, and have various local stakeholders and councillors as the directors. Legislation for special rates already exists and is in place in other areas of the country. The chairman asked for a vote to determine if residents would be in favour of this proposal. The majority of those present voted in favour of the Special Rating and the establishment of a section 21 company for this purpose. The Chairman's report was adopted as

proposed by Pieter Naudé.

Treasurer's Report:

Niel Viljoen reported that the Association is financially strong. The auditor's fees, as always, was waived in favour of a R600 donation to the SPCA. Mr Viljoen reported that the donation has been made.

Don Cameron questioned the expense incurred by fighting the Liquor Board. The chairman explained that a 15:1 ratio majority of WRRRA members who were polled about their opinion on a liquor store opening, were not in favour of the liquor store. Objections were made and the WRRRA also put in an objection. However, the Liquor Board granted the license but would not give any explanations for their decision, even after money was paid by the WRRRA to receive the said explanation. A settlement was eventually negotiated with the State's Attorney that required the Liquor Board to provide us with comprehensive reasons for granting the liquor license, and to pay R20 000 towards our legal costs. The money was duly received. Deputy Chairman, Pieter Naudé explained that the WRRRA has not taken issue with the owners of the liquor store, but rather the Liquor Board for their lack of transparency and refusal to follow their own legal procedures. The Treasurer's Report was duly adopted, as proposed by Peter Sowerby, and seconded by Dick Smit.

The Chairman gave a brief overview of how the Blue Flag status beach was achieved and the advantages to the Wilderness area. Unfortunately, the R40 000 promised for the lifeguards salaries has not been forthcoming from the municipality. As the Association's finances are sound, it was proposed that a donation of R10 000 be made by WRRRA for this purpose. The money will be taken from funds generated from the advertising on the wall behind the Caltex garage in the village, and is therefore regenerative. Members voted in favour of the proposal.

The Chairman then introduced each of the committee members and their respective portfolios.

Pieter Naude, vice chairman, thanked Graham and Sylvia Sell, who are retiring from the WRRRA committee, for their contribution and dedication to the WRRRA over the past years.

Ratification of the Annual subscription:

Approval to retain the annual subscription of R100 was proposed by Emile Rautenbach and seconded by Dick Smit.

Election of the Executive Committee:

Graham and Sylvia Sell are retiring from the committee. Retiring by rotation but offering themselves for re-election are Pearce Johnston, Neville Ewing and Hugh Pharoah. Pieter Naudé, Phillip Parsons, Niel Viljoen, John Callanan, Paul Nicholas, and Vanessa Hau Yoon continue for a further year. A duly signed nomination for Trevor White, proposed by Sylvia Sell and seconded by Neville Ewing, was received prior to the meeting.

There being no further nominations, in terms of clause 11a of the Constitution, the

Chairman declared the committee duly elected.

General:

Emile Rautenbach wanted feedback on the status of local tourism. Pieter Naude said that the idea was to start a new form of Weta and to get George tourism office in the village incorporated, but this has not been possible. The re-launching of Wilderness tourism must be presented to council. The question, however, is whether WRRRA should be responsible for tourism. Mr Naude said that tourism in Wilderness must be driven by business and this is not happening. Council is also not driving it because it requires co-operation from business.

Don Cameron said the perception is that the tourism office in Wilderness is not functional and that the staff do not care. Councillor van Wyk answered by advising that he has attended meetings in this regard, but the problem is that the stakeholders are not involved. Council will be looking at a new way of dealing with tourism in the new year. However, it must be a joint effort with local business and stakeholders.

Henk van Gerven suggested that a tourism office is not really needed, as people are using electronic means of finding accommodation and making their bookings etc.

Rudi Rippe raised the issue of the lack of allocated areas where dogs are allowed off their leads. Without specific areas where owners can take their dogs, people will continue to break the law by taking their dogs to the beaches and other areas where they can run free. Mr Williams suggested that plastic bag dispensers could be placed in strategic places for dog owners to be able to pick up after their dogs. Councillor van Wyk said he would support that approach.

Rob Burford asked about the property valuations. He asked what the timeframe is for the objections to be heard. Councillor van Wyk said that the municipality has to set up an Appeal Board to look at the objections. There have been unnecessary delays in constituting the Board. Once the decisions have been made on the objections, owners will be required to complete a form requesting a refund from council.

Desiree Zwahlen said that she has heard that where a property is sold under the municipality valuation, the new owner will pay the transfer duties on the higher municipal valuation amount.

The chairman reminded everyone that home owners are responsible for their own objections and follow up. Mr Cameron recommended that the home owner should be present when the objection is reviewed by the board. Council will have to advise the home owner on the date and time.

A reduction in the speed limit from 60km to 40km p/h in the residential areas was suggested by Jan Stouthammer.

Don Cameron said that while WRRRA is non-political, it is still important for the Association to make sure that political parties propose acceptable candidates to represent our interests. With 2014 elections not too far off, he suggested that an umbrella organisation, representative of all ratepayer organisations in Ward 4, be established to ensure that residents have a voice in candidate selection.

Close:

The chairman closed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.