

## 2012 May Newsletter

Our thanks to Salinas Restaurant for hosting our meeting held on the 7<sup>th</sup> May 2012, at which we successfully launched the conceptual phase of the Wilderness Improvement Program. The 57 attendees included the majority of business owners in the area, our local councillor Leon van Wyk, and officials from Sanparks and the SA Post Office. We are also delighted that the Municipality's Head of Economic Development, Carli Bunding-Venter, and Jacques Quinot from the Municipality's Civil & Technical Department were able to attend.

Deputy Chairman, Pieter Naudé, gave a detailed one-hour presentation that highlighted where we are now in terms of infrastructure, where we need to be if we are to regenerate the village atmosphere into the heart of the community, and some initial ideas on how we might get there. It was also recognized that it is in our own best interests to ensure that no further degradation occurs, as it affects all aspects of the area, including the investment value of our residential properties. Chairman, Graham Sell, emphasized that the Association had undertaken the project to fill the void that would normally be occupied by a formal Business Chamber, but said it was now time for the business community to take the reins in order to move WIP forwards.

Many of you will have seen the letters in the 27<sup>th</sup> April edition of Wild News regarding the liquor store, and our role in pursuing the objection process. Unfortunately, in our opinion the letters not only contain factual errors, but also misleading information and insinuations against the Committee that lack foundation.

To set the record straight, our objection to the liquor store came as a result of an overwhelming number of objections received from our membership in response to our October survey. The results of the survey were published in our November newsletter - both the electronic and postal version - showing that 96% of respondents were against the opening of a liquor store in the village. In addition, as the strongest community organization in the area, we were approached by the Hoekwil Ratepayers & Residents Association, the Kleinkrantz Community Forum, the Wilderness Christian Fellowship, and community leaders from Touwsrante, who all supported our efforts to persuade the Liquor Board that such a store was not in the interests of the village of Wilderness. It was therefore a strong mandate, and not merely a whim of the Committee.

As far as pursuing the matter through the courts is concerned, when the license was granted we were told that we would receive "comprehensive reasons" from the Chairman of the Liquor Board on payment of a statutory fee. We duly paid the fee on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2011, received confirmation from the Liquor Board that it had indeed been paid and, as at the time of writing we are still waiting to receive one reason, let alone all the "comprehensive reasons" that the Liquor Board are obligated to provide. Therefore, at this stage, we are only approaching the authorities to compel the Liquor Board to fulfill their statutory obligations. That is, to provide us with information that we are constitutionally entitled to, and have actually paid for.

Regarding the potential costs of the case, the membership of WRRRA democratically elected the Executive Committee to manage the affairs of the Association responsibly, and to safeguard the interests of our members. So while no more really needs to be said, we are happy to disclose that, by using resources within our membership, the costs so far are nil. We anticipate that there will be some future costs, that we can mostly recover as a result of a successful outcome to the case, but which will in any event be a fraction of the R100,000 mooted in the press.

On a more pleasant note, we are pleased to report that some progress is being made relating to obtaining Blue Flag status for a section of our beach at NSRI. The water quality tests have shown good results for the swimming beach, the signage is up and the building has been painted. It is

hoped that funding will be found for payment of the necessary lifeguards, and we will keep you updated on this important exercise.

Our comments relating to dogs last month has resulted in a huge response. One member had the following to say, which sums up the general gist of other correspondence. *“Every day that I walk on the beach between NSRI and Leentjies Klip, I see dog-owners with their dogs running freely and defecating along the beach. I have never seen any owner make any attempt to clear up after the dogs, which leaves a huge health hazard for toddlers and young children playing in the sand. The same applies to the rest of Wilderness as well.*

*Also, according to the by-laws, dogs, joggers and cyclists are not supposed to be on the board walk, but few people take any notice of this. I fully understand that this is very difficult to enforce but I still feel sad that so many people (locals included) do not feel responsible to help preserve Wilderness in the way we all wish it to be.”*

Coincidentally, on behalf of the SPCA, Chris Burlock gave a presentation to the committee showing startling figures of the thousands of dogs and cats produced within a decade from one unsterilized animal and its offspring. The SPCA is struggling to obtain sufficient funding from the municipality for an effective sterilization programme to be implemented. WRRRA fully supports the introduction of a by-law enforcing sterilization to prevent random breeding of unwanted animals.

Following the cancellation of last month’s scheduled maintenance power outage due to poor weather conditions, Eskom has announced this will now take place on **Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> June** from 05:00 to 19:30, weather permitting. The alternative date is 10<sup>th</sup> June. Our thanks to Eskom for remembering Mother’s Day – they had originally planned the outage for this coming Sunday, but, as we all know, it’s not a good idea to upset your Mom! May we also take this opportunity to wish all our Moms a loving day.