

**JUNE 2014**

### **Budget Feedback**

- No doubt most members will have read the announcement in the George Herald regarding the scrapping of the R25 monthly special levy, and the increase in the service rates to provide for this income. As you will remember, WRRRA expressed its opposition to the special levy but welcomed the additional, dedicated funding of infrastructure maintenance and replacement.
- We are also pleased that after numerous objections, the Municipality agreed to remove the R500 000 allocation for a new car for the Speaker; she will use the deputy mayor's vehicle when on official business. WRRRA reflected members' sentiments in regard to these two issues, and we are pleased that the necessary changes have been made.
- Neville Ewing reports that after a long debate at the Ward 4 Committee meeting to decide how the R100 000 Ward Allocation should be utilized it was agreed to fund two speed bumps in Touwsrante, one in Hoekwil between the school and the old-age home, and **one on Waterside Road** (for which residents have been fighting for a very long time!). This is in line with the municipality's efforts to curb speeding in areas such as outside schools, old aged homes, places where there is high pedestrian traffic but no pavements. There will also be an allocation to street lights in Touwsrante and Die Duin, as well as funding for the building of ramps at homes in the old section of Touwsrante where the occupants are in wheel chairs.

### **GIPTN**

- As I am sure most of you will have seen, the road and pedestrian infrastructure upgrades as part of GIPTN are progressing well. The landscaping sub-contract has been awarded to Corinne Roff and she will start work soon. The lane opposite the intersection of George Road and Leila's Lane will be completely repaved as part of the project. There has been some obvious disruptions, but these appear to have been well managed by the Contractors in consultation with local businesses.
- **A reminder** that in order to facilitate the reconstruction of the intersection in the center of the CBD the Contractors are proposing to close that short section of George Road **from Monday 9 to Saturday 14 June**, weather permitting. A detour will be created via the parking area behind the MiniMarket, although residents and businesses will still be able to access the area via the new circle or the top section of Leila's Lane. After consultation with the affected business community it was felt that a week's disruption is preferable to a longer period with a problematic stop-go system which would be required if the work was undertaken in two sections.
- The Municipality has received a letter from SANParks approving consent use for the western half of the SANParks N2 parking area, as well as giving permission for this parking area to be connected to the existing lane from George Road. The Municipality is busy investigating the legal implications of utilizing this area; if approved this development will form part of the current GIPTN project. Of considerable significance is the statement in SANParks letter: *"It is envisaged that the agreement entered into above will form part of the longer-term proposal to site the permanent bus terminus for Wilderness at the western half of the N2 parking area, and all parties agree to work towards this end."*

### **WIP – Ambassador Project**

Because of the pressurized nature of their consultancy and training organization, Veronica and Les Stephens (4Front Consultants) have reluctantly stepped down from the administration of the Wilderness Improvement Program and the supervision of the Ambassadors. We are very pleased to have found able

replacements in the form of **Fran Anderson**, a local resident at Wilderness Heights, and **Rudy Bosch**, who is the Maintenance Manager at the Wilderness Resort Hotel. The Hotel have also identified a storeroom that can be used for the Ambassadors' equipment. Fran and Rudy will be taking over their responsibilities early in June.

We wish to express our appreciation to the Wilderness Resort Hotel who hosted and sponsored a breakfast for the WIP Ambassadors and the Caltex Garage attendants. Pieter Naude reports how proud he was of their behaviour and the way they conducted themselves, under such unfamiliar conditions. Jonel Ackerman was their host and showed them around the hotel to familiarize them with the facilities, should someone visiting the Village enquire.

### **Wilderness Heights update**

The issue of the future of the informal settlement at Wilderness Heights is one that is being actively pursued by WRRRA. Pieter Naude received the following response to his query, from Mr Shane Hindley, Director: Operational Property Management, Western Cape Government, Transport and Public Works:

*“Dear Mr Naude*

*As per previous e-mail correspondence from Steven Erasmus of the George Municipality it is, at this stage, not the intention of the Western Cape Government: Department of Transport and Public Works to evict the residents of the informal settlement situated on Erf 329 in Wilderness Heights.*

*The Provincial Department of Human Settlements is assisting with the feasibility study, as referred to in Steven's e-mail. The George Municipality will be an important partner in this process, in light of the fact that the property is located in its municipal boundary.”*

WRRRA recently attended a presentation by Jonathan Stanton-Humphreys, the CEO of “Realstart”, an organization that is working among the youth of the informal community at Wilderness Heights. They recently combined forces with Tanda Jesu to better coordinate their collective upliftment and development initiatives among the impoverished people of Wilderness Heights. Since most of WRRRA's Ambassador Project staff have been recruited from this community, we are keen to work with and through existing entities imbedded in the community. If we are to be effective in helping to deal with the issues of Wilderness Heights, we need to better understand the dynamics of the total landscape, including, ratepayers, residents and the informal community.

### **Tourism**

Following numerous complaints regarding illegal signage in the Village, WRRRA will be working with the Municipality to upgrade and regularize signage in the Village. This has become increasingly necessary in the light of the GIPTN changes to road and pedestrian walkways. We will keep you all informed of how this “Project Facelift” is progressing.

### **Other news**

- Chris Leggatt let us know that **Eden Adventures** will be operating from the Faerie Knowe Hotel as from 1 June after their license to operate from within the Wilderness National Park was not renewed. WRRRA supported Chris in his unsuccessful negotiations with SANParks, and we are very pleased that he has managed to secure an alternative venue, as Eden Adventures is definitely one of the significant tourism attractions for Wilderness.
- We have added another 4 single bins to ensure that all areas of the Village have adequate refuse facilities. These bins have been made by local resident Hugo Leggatt, and the quality of workmanship is immediately evident. If you would like to sponsor one or more of these bins (with a suitable acknowledgement on the bin), please contact Paul Nicholas ([wildnic@telkomsa.net](mailto:wildnic@telkomsa.net)).
- The Committee is planning another working breakfast with Municipal officials in August and follows the very productive events we held in 2013. This will be hosted at the newly-reopened Wilderness Resort Hotel, and will provide an opportunity to discuss various

issues affecting Wilderness.

- The Municipality has acknowledged the need for road reserve clearing, as well as the reserves under power and telephone lines. They are aware that they have a massive backlog and lack the capacity to deal with it. As a result they are intending to implement a “SWAT team” approach to clear the backlog.