

Somerset West Ratepayers Association

Inaugural Meeting Minutes

11th July 2024 @ 19h00 – 20h00

(Registration from 18h30 - 19h00)

De Hoop Primary School, Old Stellenbosch Road, Somerset West

<u>Attendance</u>	
Andrew Jansen Van Vuuren	Chairman
Leon Lourens	Deputy Chairman
Heidi Weeks	Secretary
Jacobus Swart	Treasurer
Alice Edmunds	Administrative
Counteractive Accounting	Finance
Bill Maycock	Stormwater & Roads Infrastructure
Johan West	Environmental
Angelika Herdade	Marketing/Fundraising
Lyal McLachlan	Community Safety
<u>Apologies</u>	
Michele Engelbrecht	Vagrants & Social Development
JJ De Kock	Legal

1. Formalities

The Secretary (Heidi Weeks) introduced herself and thanked everyone for attending and advised they'd be voting for a few items. Briefly introduced Andrew would be up next with the background of how the association was started and how we would now hold the municipality accountable for their actions. Lika was introduced re social media, website, newsletters, etc and the website will form a big part of how members could communicate. Also created a Somerset West Complaint and Municipal Services Group which will be moved onto the website where members can log issues like drains & potholes as well.

The Chairman (Andrew Jansen Van Vuuren), also asked members for a show of hands as to who uses the municipal complaint Whatsapp group (before officially commencing meeting). A number of people use it and problems are solved faster.

2. Welcome & Introductions

Chairman introduced himself briefly on where he comes from and when he was asked to assist in municipal matters, particularly as he noticed the disconnect between the municipal powers and the people on the ground.

3. Background to Establishment

Chairman explained how SWRPA came into being and how it should be legal and based on selections and nominations. Contacted Johan West, constituted a meeting consisting of about 20 people facilitated by an official and laid down the rules and by-laws of operation which were accepted, but also additional matters important to SW. Portfolios can be added, and some can be taken away in future. All mandates come from members and should be communicated via website as an official communications platform where complaints lodged will be dealt with within hours and recommendations taken seriously.

Positions were determined, nominated and seconded via online digital process which was published with a link where people could nominate themselves or others or they could join as a member without paying or as a member and pay. Many people reacted and said they'd come on the night to see for themselves. Voting took place via digital voting process.

4. Announcement of Committee

Positions introduced to members, including community safety where Lyal would be coordinating with all Somerset West neighbourhood watches without interfering. Asked members who paid for security and mentions that we pay taxes for the police services too and taxes to the City for municipal and including 28% for the central government. SWRPA are here to see that the commercial angle of neighbourhood watches to not dominate marketing platforms.

5. Vagrants and Social Development

Member expressed emergency concern over vagrants. Chairman mentioned that when river was in full flood, no vagrants could be seen but when river was low, out came washing to get dry. Nobody knows where they came from. Clearly it is a security issue but will come to the point and will become a project because after tonight the portfolio managers, will ask that members volunteer for certain portfolios.

Mentioned Michelle who deals with a lot of upliftment projects for the CIB and we will support her because if we can create jobs, we can also help these people to stay out of trouble.

6. Community Development & Education

Introduced Leonie [surname?] who is a teacher and taught many in SW including the mayor and notes she is in charge of Community Development and Education programs that we're going to create and how to educate children that are on the street. She will be working closely with Michelle to help put them in foster care.

7. Community Development

Introduces Pieter (co-owner of Chas Everett). We're not against development for our town. We're apolitical but invite political parties to work with us. We've got two endorsements, one is [...] and Cape Independence Party for the establishment of SWRPA, but we will formulate a strategy to get a solution from them. Certain protocols and processes that the community must accept before a development should take place. They should buy in; it should not be taxed on their own property values – lots of rules that must be accepted by the community and community must benefit. Members expressed concerns that there is not enough property left for development.

8. Environmental

Chairperson called on Johan regarding various projects including Lourens River. We've worked with some organizations and whistleblowers [at Stillbaai?] and is now with the new Minister's office. (Deon) and that is the CoCT is staring down criminal charges. The glory goes to this committee because the whistleblowers are in this committee.

Ecoli count of . 80k was found out of the pipes of the Lourens River. The ocean was higher. A count of 1 to 10 is the maximum amount the human body can deal with and a count of 10 per 100 ml is deadly. They blamed apartheid, but was sent to Department of Water & Sanitation, later escalated by Scorpions and then Minister Bredell. Then it was escalated by Minister Barbara Creecy who did an investigation and found evidence and put them on terms. They've defaulted and now we're hoping to take them to court.

Chairperson introduced deputy chair, Leon Lourens, who was also one of the senior official environmentalists around Hottentots Holland. He is a nature conservationist working together with Johan on environmental issues. We've all been nominated, and we've all accepted and have been seconded.

Johan spoke mentioning there are very competent people on the different committees. Johan is environmental but called out to get in touch with him via email (via the website) if there are any issues. Johan said I'm not against any development, but as per brochures of CoCT, we must be sustainable development.

Projects Objected:

- 1) Geelsloot;
- 2) Bradlow Park;

3) Lourens River;

9. Membership fee Resolution passed

Following resolution (re in terms of current membership fees (R20 per person and R50 for a company) to be voted on for the following increase:

R50 per Household;
R100 per Company.

Resolution supported by majority by show of hands.

There are 2 administrative functions, (Media & Admin) that money will be used for.

Donations will also be asked for projects that come in.

We do not pay any salary. Stipends are paid for work that people do (ie. media and admin).

Currently busy with registration for NPC and Articles of Incorporation. Once NPC is registered we'll couple our NPO to issue an Article 18A for people who make donations who can claim back.

We will post yearly financial because we're an NPC.

Member asked about extended reach. We will extend reach when time is right to include Macassar, [Third row?], Ward 15, Ward 84 (Somerset West) and Sir Lowry's Pass. Next is Gordon's Bay and Strand. (Strand has got their own Ratepayers Association).

10. Mission

We want to serve as the single, collective voice for all residents and ratepayers in the Somerset area and will directly engage with all spheres of government for the inclusion of service delivery and future sustainable development.

How? Engage with CoCT to promote services that are efficient, affordable, reliable and cost effective to ensure the transparent revenue of justifiable and reasonable rates that are not inflated.

11. Launch Committee

This Committee voted as follows:

- a) Regain municipality status in Somerset West.
- b) Assist community in issues surrounding environment and make gains with disconnect between authorities and community.
- c) To extend our reach to whole of Helderberg region and to unify all civic organisations.

Secondary goals:

- a) Watch over interest of members regarding activities of local government and in respect of each property owned by or occupied by them within areas of operation of association and in doing so, favourably influence to the benefit of its members the registration, administrative and general activities;
- b) To protect, maintain and improve the needs of Somerset West Ratepayers Association and its environment for the benefit of all residents and visitors to the area.

Thanked members for coming.

12. Grievances Aired

Members aired general grievances with regard to the river, potholes and roads as well as the casino. Chairman mentioned that municipality spent nothing on infrastructure in the past 12 years. Skelm sloote, Lourens River (pipes). Our contribution is 28% of city's budget. Referred Knysna where ratepayers had no say, and Chairman says we can't allow the same thing to happen here. With the new elections and ward councilors, although they are accountable, we must show that they can't do their work. This NPC must be the piggy bank of the community to fix the problem and then hold the councilors accountable. If we can show they are incompetent, it shows that the community are willing and able to solve it themselves. We must all have the mindset of getting something done! We work from the bottom up. National government has nothing to say on local level. We are the government. Start privatizing business and create jobs.

13. Closure

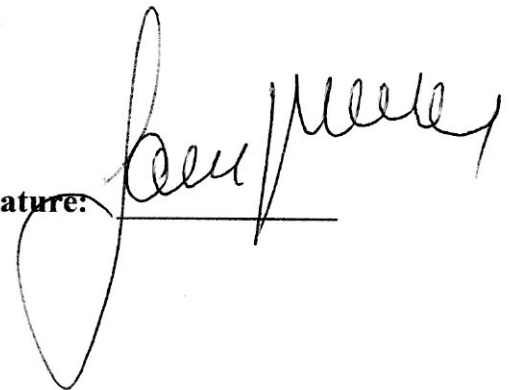
Chairman thanked members for their membership and adjourned the meeting.

Approved by: Chairperson (Andrew Jansen Van Vuuren) and/or Secretary (Heidi Weeks).

Date:

11 July 2024

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Heidi Weeks', written over a horizontal line.