



**MINUTES OF THORNTON RATEPAYERS & RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION PUBLIC MEETING  
6 NOVEMBER 2018 – 19h00 GRACE CHURCH, SIPRES ROAD, THORNTON**

**1. Attendance:**

- An attendance register was circulated and signed by 150 people.

**2. Conradie - Riad Davids (Vice Chairman Pinelands Ratepayers)**

**Background:**

We are not opposing the development, we have been working with the residents for 2 years looking at what would be the ideal situation for Conradie and we put in a proposal when the City went through a process of public participation.

We had a long consultative process with the City in providing an alternative which is within the City's own structure. Some of our recommendations being:

1. One parking bay per unit instead of the proposed 0.5 parking bay per unit
2. Schools to be provided
3. 4 storey flats as opposed to 8 stories

The City only made two changes:

1. Stopped Odin Drive being an access road
2. The provision of schools was put back on the table

The City say they went through a public participation process, we say they didn't, it was a rubber stamping process as they took no cognisance of everything that we commented on via public participation.

After going to the Municipal Planning Tribunal, we then went to the Mayoral Advisory Committee. Amidst all the trouble with Mayor Patricia De Lille, she managed to sign off on the development when she had a small window period of being reinstated.

**Current situation:**

- Our only option is to go to court as we have exhausted all the processes. While this costs money, if we don't Council can do as they please.
- We are in the process of appointing a lawyer
- We asked Ald Brian Watkyns to inform the Premier that we going to court
- We had a meeting scheduled with the Premier for 17 October but was rescheduled for 30 October
- On 30 Oct, the Premier cancelled the meeting because we were bringing a lawyer
- We are waiting for another date to meet with the Premier without a lawyer. The intention is to avoid litigation
- In the meantime we continue to prepare for court, it could cost about R450,000. While it's a lot of money, we are a lot of people. Thornton has approx 2000 households, if each donated R150 we would have the finances to go to court.
- We are also raising funds by selling tickets for the Baxter, Marc Lottering's Aunty Merle
- It's a huge legal process but it's the only way we can have a say. The City lost 15 of the last 16 court cases where communities have taken the City to court.

**3. Pinelands SAPS – Captain van der Bergh**

- A comparison of the crime stats of 2008/2009 to 2017 for Thornton and Pinelands was provided indicating the crime has actually reduced over the last 10 years
- The stats indicate that Thornton and Pinelands are relatively safe but you need to take precautions like putting up boundary walls, CCTV cameras, LPR system is very useful in giving early warning of suspicious cars entering the area.
- The Neighbourhood watch was commended for going out every night without getting paid, the community was encouraged to work together

- The area they serve is Thornton, Pinelands, part of Ndabeni industrial area and the whole of Epping 1
- Conradie will fall under their area but no additional police can be allocated as there are no resources
- Service delivery issues - refrain from posting service delivery issues on Face Book as it will not be addressed, it needs to be reported either via email or a telephone call. For contact details go to [www.thorntonrandr.org](http://www.thorntonrandr.org)
- They can only respond to reported crime and look at trends from the crimes reported
- Murders
  1. Double murder in Pinelands at McDonalds (underworld involvement, could have happened in any area)
  2. One at Old Mutual Railway station, hawker was robbed and stabbed
  3. Youth that killed his grandmother in an old age home in Pinelands then took his own life
- October stats
  1. Matopo & Rifle Range is problem areas for burglaries during the day
  2. Forest Drive Ext & Heldersig Road, to and from the station had robberies
  3. Matopo / Heldersig / Rifle Range had night time burglaries
  4. Redgum and Albatros – 2 motor vehicles stolen
  5. Albatros - a car was hijacked
  6. Concern that more burglaries are happening at night

#### **4. Law Enforcement**

- The biggest issue at the moment is vagrants
- Thornton is reasonably quiet compared to other areas
- They are able to cover the area on a daily basis
- They work well with Pinelands SAPS and do joint operations with them and Traffic and Metro Police
- Their major task in the area is with Social Development trying to sort out the vagrants
- They cannot force people to move, they offer help to get them off the street
- There jobs are made difficult because of residents who feed and offer clothing to the vagrants. If they are getting handouts, they don't want to leave. This is a major issue.

#### **5. Social Services**

- The primary purpose of this department is to reduce the number of vagrants by trying to relocate them back to their communities of origin or back to their families
- They have rules and limitation, if the homeless reject their services, they have to respect that as they cannot force them to move, they can only try to motivate them to move
- Most of the complaints received is for the area under the bridge on Forest Drive Ext opposite the station
- Services have been rendered there but they have refused social assistance. They do not want to move out of Thornton because they get enough stuff from the community
- They have also refused temporary job offers because they make more money from begging
- CoCT appeals to the community not to give handouts to vagrants but to rather give responsibly by supporting shelters and encouraging vagrants to go to shelters where they can get professional help
- They encourage the communities not to put things of value in their dirt bins. The vagrants earn money from these items which also keeps them on the street and it encourages them to occupy Thornton. Rather donate things of value to the shelters
- They encourage the community to not give to the vagrants even if they look hungry, refer them to shelters. By giving we keeping them on the streets and end up with a recurrence of the same problems and complaints.
- They need the community to log calls on 107 so they can assist. If it is not logged they will not be aware of the problem

- The less the vagrants get from the community, the more willing they will be to accept the help of Social Services.

## **6. Thornton Neighbourhood Watch**

- Law Enforcement, Shaun Smith will do operations in conjunction with TNHW and our two auxiliary law enforcement
- Court interdict will proceed and they have identified alternative placement for the people in the informal settlement
- Negotiations are ongoing with the market to re-integrate the informal market
- The caravan is back at the informal market because they demanded an intervention and crime is escalating. If it wasn't for the NHW we would have been in a very unfortunate situation
- In their partnership with SAPS, over the past three weeks they were able to avert three crowbar hits in Thornton
- About four weeks ago there was an attempted hi-jacking, the rest of the NHW and SAPS was alerted, within an hour the suspects were apprehended in Athlone
- We are well organized in terms of how we mobilise and combat crime
- Crime prevention is a shared responsibility, we all need to work together and look out for each other
- The appeal of Social services was reinforced to not feed the vagrants, we try to be compassionate but we just encouraging them to further their criminal activity
- An appeal to support the institutions that can rehabilitate these people and to adhere to structures and processes that have been put in place

## **7. Alderman Watkyns**

- Dan Plato was elected as the new Mayor. Alderman Watkyns has worked with him before and was able to have a short time with him after his election to brief him on some of the issues in Thornton and Pinelands
- He introduced his two assistants Catherine Boks and Yolanda Sheldon
- There is no answer on the court case regarding the buitemark at Epping
- Regarding vagrants, there are two types, those who loiter and those who sleep in the area
- Social Development is in the process of printing posters and pamphlets asking residents not to give to the vagrants but to give responsibly by giving to an organisation that works to uplift vagrants
- Law Enforcement has been out weekly wrt the vagrants under the bridge. There has been a recommendation to fence under the bridge to prevent access. Storm Water Dept who look after the flow of water refuse to do that as dirt will accumulate against the fence and cause flooding
- Two other options are to either cement the sides to prevent access or cement large boulders making it impossible to lay and sleep.
- Leasing of Council land – there is an application to purchase the Bowling Clubhouse and a lease for the soccer fields. Alderman and TRRA have met with the previous Mayco team regarding this. The process needs to run its course and if its declined then the process will start all over again and relook at these facilities being made available for Thornton residents as there are no facilities for the community at present
- Recycling – a motion has been put in for it to be brought to Thornton
- Thornton residents were encouraged to get involved with the Renew the Elsieskraal River project. Thornton needs a representative on this project.
- Working on bring the decision making closer to the communities by giving delegations to the sub-council, eg street names, speed bumps
- Conradie - a reminder that our objection was heard and the plan to make Odin Drive a thoroughfare was taken off the table

## 8. Questions / Concerns from the floor

- Fence opposite Albatross flats continuously being broken, people from the market access Thornton via the broken fence
- Fence along the Jewish cemetery is broken
- Fence along the railway line is broken
- No ablution facilities at the informal market, un
- Part of the canal collapsed and needs to be repaired
- Viking Road traffic from Thornton to Pinelands, cars and trucks cutting in, consider plastic barriers
- Lack of maintenance at the Scouts hall, it's an eyesore and a crime hazard
- Traffic violations of the taxis at Old Mutual station
- Close Redgum/ Denneboom to stop the rat race through the area
- Loitering at 711, Communicare can afford a security
- People are forming a double lane going out Thornton from Denneboom Rd
- A suggestion that the community organize a security guard at the entrance to Thornton at Sipres Rd and get the garage involved as well
- A suggestion for a taxi rank to be created on Kensington side of the railway line as the taxis have migrated from Kensington. PRASSA has land next to the station that can be converted into a taxi rank.

## 9. Response from Ald Watkyns

- The fence at Albatross has been fixed so many times the Dept feels it's wasting money by repairing it while the market is still there
- A request has been put in for the repair of the cemetery fence on the other side of the railway line
- A request has been put in to repair the part of the canal that has collapsed
- They have agreed to put up the barriers it just needs to be done
- No ablution facilities, water or any form of sanitation is supplied at the market because it would create the impression that they are there legally which would hamper the application to court for an eviction notice
- The Scouts hall is being leased to a church which is not from Thornton. The lack of maintenance is due to the delay in finalizing the new lease. Whoever the lease will be awarded to will have to do the maintenance.
- Community Police Forum is dealing with the taxis at Old Mutual, they aware of the problem but don't have a solution as yet. There is an increase in taxis is due to the lack of trains.
- A note has been made of the double lane in Denneboom Rd
- To block off Redgum/ Denneboom, an email must be sent requesting it but all the residents living in the area must agree. Council will only do it with 100% buy in from the residents in the area.

## 10. Closing remarks

- As not all questions may have been raised, people were advised to email their concerns / questions to TRRA or report via the C3 form with Council.
- People were also encouraged to join the security WhatsApp and Telegram groups. The NHW usually responds quickly and they work closely with SAPS.
- The TRRA progress can be viewed on their website, all the history of all the processes that has been followed since 2016 is available in chronological order
- An encouragement to keep in touch with NHW and TRRA as not all issues can be fixed overnight but as a combined community we keep working on it.

The meeting closed at 20h45