

Constantia Ratepayers' and Residents' Association

74th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - Monday 11th November 2024 at (5:30 for) 6:00pm
at Alphen Centre, Main Road, Constantia.

Minutes

1. Welcome, Notice Convening the Meeting, apologies, proxies and thanks.

Shortly after 18.00 Chairman John McPetrie (John) welcomed those present and thanked them for attending the meeting. He confirmed that the notice convening the meeting had been appropriately and timeously distributed.

2. Quorum

John noted that for a quorum, we had to have at least 10 percent of the number of members who have paid for last year and the coming year – of which there are 480 at most recent count. Five proxies had been received and three apologies. As there were over 50 members present as well as the proxies, he declared the meeting quorate. He thanked Nick and Lynne Huppert whose attention to detail and immaculate records permitted us to establish this happy state of affairs.

John thanked Pick n Pay for their generous donation of snacks and Groot Constantia, Constantia Glen, Beau Constantia, Constantia Uitsig and Wade Bales for equally generous donations of wine, which he invited attendees to stay and enjoy after the meeting - and to interact with members of Exco. He also thanked new CRRA Manager, Robbie Fortune and Exco member Gordon Chunnnett, for their assistance in setting up the arrangements and providing the sound system; and Exco Member Mike Eayrs, for making arrangements with the various wine contributors for the meeting.

While speaking, John noted the attendance of Janice Matthews of the Constantiaberg Bulletin, whom he welcomed.

3. Confirmation of Minutes of the 73rd AGM held in October, 2023

John asked for an indication from voting members whether we could approve the minutes of the last AGM. There were no objections to the Minutes as they stood, they were proposed for acceptance, seconded by Jenny Mc Donald, and signed by the Chairman.

4. Chairman's Report

In his address, John stressed that the purpose of the present Exco, while clearly broader, was *focused* on **combating the voracious densification plans of the City**, as it had been since July 2023. Whatever courses of action facilitated this specific mandate – such as emergence of the CRRA initiated Cape Town Collective Ratepayers Association (CRA) under the guidance of CRRA member Ant Saunders - were of primary importance to this Exco. He noted that our keynote speaker, the CRRA's Land Use head, Tracey Davies, would explore for us the various threats to the valley, the manner in which these threats were emerging and the courses of action which seemed most effective in combating them, as the focus of her address.

Meanwhile, John noted, we are drawn into a host of other issues, some of which he highlighted – not least and by way of a pressing example, the rising threat of baboon mismanagement. Finally, John called on members to understand that serving on Exco required hard work and urged volunteers to come forward to assist in the effort. He reiterated that defence of the valley is going to take both effort *and* funding. Thus **growing membership had to be a priority** as doing so ‘spread the financial load’ and permitted us to develop a small balance sheet surplus which would permit a degree of funding when we had to take legal action – or support the CRA. Bigger issues would require special fund raising efforts.

5. Introduction of Executive Committee Members

John provided a brief introduction to the current members of ExCo –

Tracey Davies, Land Use;

Nick Huppert, Finance, IT, Membership Records and Servitude;

Mike Eayrs, Marketing and Communication;

Gordon Chunnett, Environmental issues including Baboon Management, Fire Control and Security;

Mike Madden, Servitude (with Nick);

Neville Frost and **Isabel Franzen**, Heritage;

and complimented our ‘new’ **CRRA manager Robbie Fortune**, officially our Secretary, whose remit includes involvement in all areas to a greater or lesser extent, as well as running the office.

6. Tracey Davies our Head of Land Use then took us through her presentation: “Understanding Cape Town's development vision and its impact on Constantia”

Tracey’s comprehensive description of the issues facing the Constantia Valley – and indeed much of Cape Town – in consequence of the City’s efforts to hasten definition - is available. Suffice to record that her presentation demonstrated graphically the changes that continue to escalate across Constantia as a result of building facilitated by the City’s determination to pursue its policies spelled out in its Integrated Development Programme even to the extent of disregarding its own bylaws - and indeed changing them - to make it expressly as easy as possible for developers to take advantage of the lucrative building model – usually but not exclusively – involving the three sectionalised houses on a plot approach – and huge developments like Great Oaks. The disregard of the impact on neighbours and indeed for the views of Residents Associations such as ours, epitomises the City’s approach and Tracey explained the emergence of the City wide Collective Ratepayers Association (CRA) - instigated by the CRRA - to bring together a broad range of impacted areas in opposition to the City’s latest efforts in its MPBL amendment proposals. Amongst other issues, she emphasized the impact on service provision and infrastructure, already a great concern to local residents.

Tracey noted the odds are stacked heavily against residents who face a well-oiled and resourced City Administration led by a Deputy Mayor who is little interested in opposing views. In consequence – besides the creation of the CRA - our efforts include seeking legal advice and indeed a very important case challenging the use of sectionalising as a form of underhand subdivision, is in the process of a High Court hearing. But irrespective of the Law, ‘the City’ wants densification and unless we are prepared to see our valley change ‘under our watch’, the City leadership must be opposed.

7. Treasurer’s Report

7.1 Tabling and Approval of the Annual Financial Statements.

Treasurer Nick Huppert's report which had been circulated with the Agenda. Despite an unanticipated IT glitch which impacted the presentation of his figures, Nick was able to confirm that the Association which had been desperately short of funds in the quite recent past, was on a far firmer financial footing and as matters stood, was now able to meet its commitment to running a viable office and Office manager. He noted that our funds include donations intended for specific interventions which had been acquired from donors by Yvonne Leibman during her tenure as a member of the Exco and which would not be accessed without Yvonne's specific authority. He mentioned however that if we are to meet the cost of legal challenges which had been mentioned by both John and Tracey, specific fundraising would be necessary. He also pointed out that our balance sheet included funds which we are holding for the Collective Ratepayers Association, for whom Nick is acting effectively as Treasurer.

7.2 Presentation of the Budget for 2024/2025.

Nick then noted that our budget for the 2024/2025 financial year would show us to be creating some savings which could be directed at membership growth. He noted that whilst Exco had agreed to a small increase in annual membership fees, ratification of this decision meant that he required the formal approval of this meeting. By a show of hands, the fee of R900 was supported.

7.3 Appointment of Auditors.

Nick recommended that we retain our present Auditors with whom we have some years of experience and with whom he has developed a good working relationship. This proposal; was accepted without opposition.

8. Election of Executive Committee.

8.1 John explained that our Constitution permitted up to 12 Exco members and noted that with the departure of Isabel Franzen, on the one hand, and two members – Anna Engelhardt and Sue Horak - making themselves available to serve on the Committee, we had 9 candidates.

8.2 He proposed that unless anyone specifically did not want any one of the candidates serving on the Exco, it would save time simply to accept the 9 nominations *en bloc*.

8.3 There were no objections to this proposal and so he, Tracey Davies, Nick Huppert, Mike Madden, Gordon Chunnnett, Mike Eayrs, Neville Frost, Anna Engelhardt and Sue Horak were elected to Exco for the coming year. Robbie Fortune John pointed out, was a non voting *ex officio* member of Exco in light of his position as Office Manager.

8.4 He also noted that this group would meet within two weeks to elect a Chair, a vice Chair and Treasurer as required by the Constitution.

8.5 John thanked the nine candidates for making themselves available and noted that as this small group had a great deal of work to do, anyone who was prepared to volunteer to assist in any way, should make themselves available. John added that should anyone feel that they would like to serve on the Exco, we certainly had capacity for more members and as there was such a wide variety of issues to be addressed, he urged members to consider 'stepping forward' in this manner, especially if they had issues which they might want to pursue through the Exco.

9. Amendments to CRRA Constitution.

John noted that no changes to our Constitution were tabled or proposed.

10. General - Questions and Answers:

10.1 Dave Collins observed that at a meeting about 6 months ago at the Alphen the Mayor spoke about Water and related issues. He wondered what the mayor would have said if he'd been present to hear Tracey's presentation. Tracey responded that he probably would have said what he said on that night - "I am not interested in talking about densification because it's happening and we are going there." Tracey Davies then outlined the MPT process and some of the difficulties we experience.

10.2 Graham Ellis asked why, if there was not yet any outcome to the Bannerman Close affair, building has continued. Tracey asked Lisa Roeland, one of the involved residents of the area to respond and she indicated that it was decided not to obtain a cease work order, as the City has opposed these in the past. Instead, they decided to bring a review application on an urgent basis, which had resulted in the Court hearing in November.

10.3 Donna Scott asked if CRRA had looked at the Spacial Development Plan where the high-resolution option provides much more information. Tracey responded that we did not know of this, but that taking advantage would be almost a full-time job and we have only part-time resources. She agreed to speak afterwards to get more information.

10.4 Brian Holdridge noted a parallel here with the Australian Government and a local Act. We seem to have the same issue. Tracey agreed that politicians seem to ignore the impact on constitutional rights, people's lives and expectations.

10.5 A questioner asked if there are any positives for property owners in the MPBL, to which Tracey responded that there are many useful restrictions in the by-laws on issues such as height, boundary lines etc but the MPT decisions and City by-law amendments diminish and erode these rights.

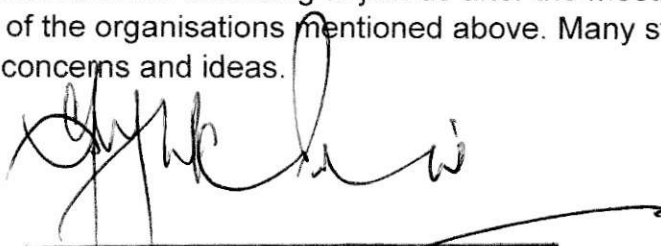
10.6 Another noted that this 'situation' could effectively be called a 'deep state'. Surely the people that we voted for are not doing what we wanted of them. Tracey responded that probably the only thing that would change their approach is for folk to withdraw their political support. She referred to correspondence received from members who intend resigning their party membership and not voting, in future. Evidently if you annoy enough people, it will impact your support base.

10.7 Christiana Soderberg noted that only a handful of people care about the Greenbelts and felt that this should be a bigger issue and 'people should be given a chance to care via multi-media'. Tracey explained that this is exactly the purpose of the CRA and there has been an effort to publicize multiple media statements in this regard. The impact has seen the City respond to certain requests by the CRA. Tracey agreed that it should be taken more seriously because the impact of changes only become apparent two to three years later, as we are now seeing from the 2019 changes.

11. Close

The meeting closed at 8.30.

John reminded those attending to join us after the meeting for a snack and a glass of wine courtesy of the organisations mentioned above. Many stayed, creating a good opportunity to share concerns and ideas.



Dated: 17 November 2025