

**Waenhuiskrans Arniston Ratepayers Association
Waenhuiskrans Arniston Belastingbetalersvereniging**

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

THE YEAR 2007

Dear Member

The past year has been another that saw your Association in opposition to those apparently intent on exploiting what we hold dear about Arniston.

The records show that, most unfortunately, the Municipality itself is unable or unwilling to co-operate in that opposition and I have the sad duty to advise you that your Committee has had no option but to enter into litigation with them on certain crucial issues, one of which concerns the development of Erf 599 opposite the main camp site. We hope that our body of members will generously support this move.

In reviewing the newsletter sent out recently I have concluded that it serves adequately as my annual report. I have therefore enclosed a copy for those who may not have seen it.

I wish to again thank you the members and supporters of the Association for what it stands for. Namely:

" ... - to devote itself to the enhancement and preservation of the untouched and unique character and natural beauty of the township;

- to bring the attention of the local authorities the needs and ideas of the land owners and others and any lack of services;

- to do all such things which, in the opinion of THE ASSOCIATION, ought to be done to protect and further the interests of Waenhuiskrans/Arniston and its inhabitants;

- to periodically consider and evaluate the policy and general activities in respect of the local township of Waenhuiskrans/Arniston and, if necessary, to advise in this regard and make representations to the Cape Agulhas Municipality and/or the applicable department of the offices of the Premier of the Western Cape."

Yours sincerely

Colin Bird
Chairman

NEWSLETTER
October 2007

Dear Member

I would like to report on some of the issues that your Committee is in the process of addressing:

1. Cape Agulhas Municipality

Communication with the Municipality remains difficult. In correspondence starting on 30 November 2005, for example, we have raised queries in regard to no less than 10 major issues of importance to the community of Arniston. Notwithstanding four reminders to the Municipal Manager and notwithstanding an appeal directly to the Mayor at a meeting with her on 17 November 2006 (during which we were assured of co-operation by the Municipality) we have, to date, received no reply. My comments under a number of the headings below are in some cases therefore, of necessity, based on assumption as we do not as yet have a definitive response from the Municipal officials.

2. Ward Committee

Responses from CAM and members of the Ward Committee indicate that they consider the Ward Committee as the only forum of communication between municipality and ratepayers. We were not advised, as in the past, of elections for the Ward Committee and therefore did not nominate a representative and your Association, as a consequence, has no representation on the Ward Committee.

The constitution of the Ward Committee, however, grants The Municipality the discretion to make appointments if the committee is not sufficiently representative and also specifically requires the Municipality to identify representative organisations including Ratepayers Associations. We therefore are of the opinion that the Municipality is amiss in not appointing a representative from your Association. In the meantime and in response to our request for co-option the Chairman has invited us to attend meetings as observers only. We still await a schedule of meetings and will certainly ensure that we make the best of this opportunity that has been granted us.

3. Security

You may be aware of some recent burglaries in Arniston. The fact that in two instances the perpetrators were armed (although, apparently, one carried a plastic replica firearm) is cause for concern about the security situation in the village.

We have responded by establishing a subcommittee under Keith Higgins (contact: 083 265 6254 / keith@waltetx.co.za) with a view to focussing on:

- Establishing a internet based crime forum with the assistance of Brent Hill (one of the victims)
- Resuscitation of the Community Policing Forum
- Considering the establishment of a neighbourhood watch
- Construction and operating of a local police station

The Municipality has now made land available for the purposes of constructing a police station. The site is opposite the library in Camp Street and your Association, through its security subcommittee member Dawie Maritz, is spearheading the process of having the building constructed.

4. The Trust

The Waenhuiskrans Arniston Community Development Trust (WACDT) continues to do good work in the community. The Trust can now point to many successes – not the least of which are two graduates from the tourism school and a sponsored third year medical student! A major project is the construction of a tourism and resource centre in Kassiesbaai, the planning for which is far advanced. Members will be interested to know that a book "Arniston-Waenhuiskrans" - a photographic memoir – has been published by Martine Aubin. Martine has donated all profits from the sale of the book to the Trust. Members are therefore encouraged to buy this magnificent work. It is available through www.martineaubin.co.za. Members wishing to donate to the Trust should contact Hannes van Zyl at hannesvanzyl@mweb.co.za or 083 303 8544. All donations are now tax deductible.

5. Water quality

A drinking water sample independently tested in mid April 2007 showed an unacceptably high level faecal coliforms with a risk of illness. It is reported that samples taken on 1 October 2007 also showed unacceptably high levels. This indicates inadequate chlorination. An informal enquiry revealed that the water supply system is equipped with chlorination equipment but the CAM apparently does not have the expertise to operate it. To date we have been unable to get a formal response to our query about this matter notwithstanding an urgent request in April and subsequent reminders.

6. Streets in Kassiesbaai

The Mayor has indicated that notwithstanding the fact that Kassiesbaai is private land there is a possibility that special funds for the completion of the streets would be available from the Municipality. We have indicated strong support for that initiative.

7. Illegal Construction

We have expressed concern about the fact that the Municipality has taken no action against land owners proceeding with construction without complying with either the town planning scheme or conditions imposed by the Municipality.

8. Paving of Parking at Roman Beach

We have raised concern about the Municipality considering paving the parking areas without any consideration for the parking area at the beach north of Kassiesbaai. We have also indicated concern about the aesthetic and have offered the assistance of members of the Association who are architects and planners.

9. Nature Reserve

Notwithstanding numerous public meetings in this regard the Municipality has persisted to object to the proposed deproclamation of the road and the formalisation of vehicle access to the area. We are given to understand, however, that the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Marthinus van Schalkwyk, has offered his assistance to Cape Nature in securing co-operation of all parties. It is his intention to follow up progress in the matter in March 2008.

10. Approval of Integrated Development Plan (IDP)

Your committee has objected to the fact that amendments to the IDP were made by the Municipality and approved by them notwithstanding the fact that your Association and many other interested and affected parties were not given the opportunity of commenting thereon.

11. Blue Plastic Advertising Dust Bin

Following on complaints from your members we requested that the blue bins containing adverts be removed from Arniston. The Mayor has declared that they will be removed as soon as funds are available. Our subsequent queries about why funds are required for the removal revealed that the difficulty actually relates to advertising leases. We trust that they will be removed as and when the leases expire.

12. Access to Roman Beach

Following on our complaint that it was not possible for people who were even mildly incapacitated to access the beach the Mayor advised that the matter was receiving attention.

13. Aesthetic Committee

The Mayor did not wish to support our proposal for the establishment of a heritage/aesthetic committee specifically for Waenhuiskrans Arniston on the grounds that the Municipality already had such a committee. The Mayor accepted, in principle, however, that it would be possible to co-opt to that committee well intentioned experts who were members of your Association.

Our observation is that the Municipal committee to which the Mayor referred does not presently comprise people who have appropriate expertise. Further, we are not aware of any intervention by that committee in the maintenance, upgrading and development of our village.

14. Development Behind Harbour Street

Queries in this regard going back to June 2006, notwithstanding numerous reminders, remains unanswered by the Municipality. It appears, for the moment, that the matter is no longer the focus of Municipal attention.

15. Development of Harbour

The redevelopment of the harbour area including a new community resource centre is being spearheaded by the Waenhuiskrans Arniston Community Development Trust. The intention is to create a commercial/tourist focus for the village in the vicinity providing a range of facilities for tourists and commercial opportunities for the community. Support for this initiative has been given by Community representatives, the Municipality, SAHRA, and the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Marthinus van Schalkwyk who visited Waenhuiskrans Arniston recently and expressed personal interest in the project.

16. Bob's Shop

Notwithstanding much opposition the Municipality has approved the rezoning and subdivision of erf 592 into three pieces of a little under 600m² each. Two of the three will be mainly for business use and the third mainly for residential use.

17. Business Site Opposite Camp Site (Erf 599)

Notwithstanding numerous objections, the Municipality sold Erf 599 in February 2004 for an amount of R426 000. Amongst the objections were those based on the fact that the price was too low and that proposals for direct community benefit were being overlooked. Subsequently we and others, on numerous occasions, queried why development was not taking place as it is our understanding that the Municipality had imposed certain deadlines in that regard.

We have received from the Municipality no response to our many enquiries since February 2004 but discover that in May 2006 the Municipality agreed to change the original deed of sale conditions in favour of the original successful tenderer. Essentially the terms were amended to make it easier for the owner to secure finance for development of the property. It is our view that due to the extended period of inaction by the purchaser and more importantly, because of a change in the conditions of sale, the sale should have been cancelled and new tenders called for.

The selected tenderer – a company – has until the end of 2008 to complete the development according to plans which were approved by the Municipality in 2006. The company has now taken transfer of the property and we understand that its shareholders have sold their shares thus realising a speculative profit which otherwise could have been ploughed back into the community.

18. Bulk Sewerage Scheme

The Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning (DEA&DP) of the Western Cape has approved an application by the CAM to upgrade the present waste water (sewage) treatment works – the pond at the old refuse dump – and the installation of associated reticulation. The system selected by the CAM (at an estimated cost of close to R14 million) was preferred over less expensive options. The scheme is to be implemented over 3 phases – the first of which is aimed at relieving the present conservancy tank problem at the hotel and caravan parks. Subsequent phases will be dependent on available funding.

We have raised the concern that Ratepayers who will not fall into the first phase will nevertheless be required to contribute to the funding thereof in addition to the fees they presently pay to have their conservancy tanks emptied. We have also asked the Municipality to confirm to what extent the proposed scheme will result in an increase in costs for those falling within the first phase, which includes Kassiesbaai.

19. Mayorship

The latest news on this front is that Ms Eve Marthinus is no longer the Mayor. The new Mayor is Richard Mitchell who was appointed as an apparent quid pro quo for having crossed the floor from the DA to the ANC.