

CHAIRMANS REPORT

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 23 DECEMBER 2024 AND POSTPONED AGM 6 FEBRUARY 2025

INTRODUCTION

The past year has been a busy one for the MRRA (Association). The current committee, now just over a year old, has proven beyond their enthusiasm and capability to progress the association into a professional and successful organisation.

THE COMMITTEE

I would like to thank the members of the committee, Tony Davison, Rene White, Ken Wentzel, and co-opted members, Eric von Oppell and Oliver Sedgewick.

Deon Joubert resigned in February.

Our appreciation is also extended to the persons who have supported the Committee as Area Representatives.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

A massive amount of work has been put into some necessary amendments to the Constitution. Some general wording and phrases were changed to make for a more professional and better reading document. Other major changes proposed and to be approved/now approved by members include:

- In general, is clearer than the previous Constitution and eliminates/tidies up some weak/conflicting wording.
- Changes year end to November, which makes preparing the year end AFS cleaner/easier.
- And inter alia, restricts a member at a General Meeting to only represent 1 proxy.

MALAGAS PUBLIC LAUNCH SITE

Erf 422 has been expropriated by Swellendam Municipality and has been transferred to Swellendam Municipality. Future meetings, as early as January 2025, has been planned with role players, including Swellendam, Hessequa,

Cape Nature, LBRCT and DEA&EP and us to discuss the way forward for the implementation of the Malagas PLS.

FERRY

The Ferry operations have yet again been a topic of discussion and much more so after the floods of last year and again in June of this year. Ongoing embankment issues, affecting the landing and docking of the ferry and that ultimately influences the integrity of the structure has been identified.

With the support of surrounding Farmer Associations, including Dipka, Ruggens and Heidelberg Farmer Associations, as well as IRRA and Witsand/Port Beaufort Ratepayers, we have written to Western Cape Provincial Government to bring to their attention the downtime the Ferry and the serious negative impact on the Agriculture and Tourism Sectors in the Overberg Area and Western Cape.

We have, as yet not received any confirmation of receipt of the email but be assured we will continue to follow up.

The ferry falls under the jurisdiction of ODM and ownership of Provincial Roads Department and from the implementation of the motorised ferry, communication from these departments have been staggered. In saying that, we have managed to implement a direct line of communication with the coordinator of daily operations at ODM to be kept informed of planned downtime of the ferry as well as out-of-schedule breakdowns. This has proven to be helpful to keep the community informed on the social media channels.

DISASTER PLANNING

Thanks to Renee White and her team consisting of a representative in Area 1, Malagas Hotel – Area 2, Sijnn Winery – Area 3, Area 5, Stoffelsrivier, including coverage for Riverine, Area 6 and Area 7 (Kontiki). We want to thank her for keeping activities, updates, communications, equipment and liaison with neighbours and authorities to a high level.

Disaster Management:

Fire and flood remain one of the main concerns along the Lower Breede.

Our objective was to have maintained firefighting equipment available in all areas at specified points to be able to respond within a reasonable timeframe.

Placement of the equipment stretches from Area 1 (Nuyshoek) up to and including Area 6. Our Disaster Plan has been extended to include Area 7 (Kontiki, Infanta Park), with the support of IRRA.

Recently, the Disaster team and network has grown another leg with the addition of our very own Level 3 Medic, available on schedule at the Breede River. We hope with the addition of Dian Fourie, we will be able to assist the community further during an emergency.

Coordination, response and communication have been key factors, and the Disaster/Incident Management Plan have proven to be a success. With each incident, the plan is reviewed to ensure the team is effective at all times. Future plans involve assessment of still vulnerable areas; to identify important and accessible water points in each area and possibly procurement of more equipment should the assessment deem it necessary. Definite fundraising would be needed for the upkeep of the equipment and required license fees for the active radio network.

Communications:

Daily radio checks continue to ensure that the equipment and repeaters are in optimal working condition at all times.

Area WhatsApp groups have been established and proved invaluable in spreading information and assisting direct neighbours.

The area has various WhatsApp groups, each created with specific intent and the most important is highlighted below:

Area Groups 1-6

Disaster Management Malgas

Malgas Community Liaison – municipal affairs

Residents are encouraged to ensure they are members of their Area Group in order to be kept informed of developments specific within their area.

Security:

The LPR camera system located at the Trading Post and covering entry and exit from Swellendam, the ferry and Infanta, has received some tlc. The infrastructure is ageing, and we are continuously evaluating sustainable solutions to our security network. We have made it a priority to investigate

and with the assistance of a local installer, come to a solution to have the cameras moved and replaced. Quotations are sourced and will be funded from the Ad-Hoc Grant in Aid, to be discussed a bit later in the report.

The existing LPR and overview camera are reliant on internet connection, which cannot be controlled by MRRA due to location and sustainable solutions are investigated.

Recently, as part of our ongoing expansion of the security network, additional surveillance cameras have been installed at the entrance to Area 2 and Area 4, strategically placed to include a view of the refuse containers. Residents of the respective areas have been informed via their Whatsapp groups and invited, as members of MRRA, to gain access to the surveillance network.

Further surveillance cameras, funded from the Ad-Hoc Grant-in-Aid are planned for Area 3, Riverine and Area 6 and placement will be discussed with residents of the area early in the new year.

SWELLENDAM MUNICIPALITY AFFAIRS

We have been engaging regularly with the Swellendam Municipality with established virtual information sessions with relevant department heads and senior officials. This helps us to keep up to date with developments and decisions within Swellendam Municipality that may affect the area.

These meetings are also the platform for us to raise and address issues we feel need attention in our community. Our last meeting has taken place in September, after which SWM has been in political turmoil, with no further planned information sessions for the remainder of the year.

Refuse sites

The refuse and recycling containers, situated at Area 2 and Area 4, have now been in use for a year. The old brick refuse sites have been demolished with the help of private individuals, in collaboration with SWM.

I think we can all agree that the sites have been better managed and cleaner than the previous dilapidated brick hokkies. There is a constant frustration with the refuse sites being used for items other than household and recycling. We urge the community to please recycle and separate their waste to ensure we are constantly bettering the system.

Food and garden waste should be composted where possible. You would be surprised to see how little 'black bag' waste you really do have at the end of the day.

Refuse collection takes place on a Tuesday in the area and during peak season, refuse and recycling collection will be scheduled twice a week.

Black and clear bags are provided by SWM and delivered 3 times a year; April, August and December. Currently there are no collection points in Malgas and we are investigating a solution for residents.

Active input and involvement will be required by the community to propose, where necessary, alternative and sustainable solutions towards refuse and composting in our area.

During the last IDP session held in September, a suggestion has been put forward that in time the waste and recycle disposal containers should be done away with at separate sites, and residential waste should be taken to a central point, identified by SWM. The effective plan is to have a permanent security/caretaker/municipal officer presence, a fence with a locked gate, normal office hours and the proper sorting of recycling.

ROADS AND PRIVATE ACCESS ROADS

During October, a constructive meeting was held with the Municipal Manager and two senior officials, covering topics mainly related to property rates, planning and roads. Subsequent to this meeting a Provincial Map Indicator has been shared with the community to indicate the road network within our area and the parties responsible for the upkeep of the indicated roads.

Not long after our meeting and discussions, we were informed that the proclaimed road towards Malagas NG Church (Area 2) to just before the church has been attended to. We trust in future this road will be graded by ODM together with the other provincial roads.

The ongoing debate of private access roads and the misconception of the responsible authority has been dealt with and owners in each area must be aware of their responsibility for the upkeep of the section running through their property.

During this process and noting the many pleas from the permanent residents impacted by the poor road conditions, the Swellendam Municipality has,

through its Ad-Hoc Grant-in-Aid program made available funds, which will be discussed later in the report.

The pressure on SWM, applied from area residents, has made the MRRA available to SWM and to receive and distribute these funds for the road improvement expenses in the areas. The MRRA has only been a conduit to facilitate this process.

The Ad Hoc Grant in Aid will provide a kick start for the residents to provide further fundraising from the community for improving the roads in the specific affected areas.

Correspondence relating to the available funds has been distributed to the identified areas' representatives, being Area 3 and Area 4 and we are happy to report that the process is underway in both areas to identify the scope of work.

AD-HOC GRANT-IN-AID

The initiative supports applications in the form of health, social development, environmental, sport & recreation, solid waste (cleansing) and ad-hoc support for various community projects.

The Swellendam Municipality has, through its Ad-Hoc Grant-in-Aid program made available R 20,000 to assist the residents in their efforts to improve the road as well as R 50,000 for the expansion of the area's security network.

As with all Municipal grants, policy terms and conditions are attached, so regular expenditure reports need to be made available to SWM and the Funds need to be expensed within the current book year. Should any funds not be expended, this balance will be returned to the Municipality.

RECENT BY-LAWS PASSED

Swellendam By-Law on Coastal Access Land.

This by-law has recently been passed to provide for the procedure to designate land as coastal access land and to provide for the amendment or withdrawal of such designation; to promote, regulate and control public access to coastal public property; and to provide for matters incidental thereto.

There is still a long process involved in the by-law, whereby an audit of the area must be performed to identify existing and future access points and the

establishment of a coastal access committee, of which the notice must be public.

PLANNED PROJECTS RAISED WITH MUNICIPALITY

- Rates Rebate Proposal to be discussed further in the agenda
- Central Managed Refuse Site

BREEDER RIVER ADVISORY FORUM – BREAF

In August the Department of Environmental Affairs Development and Planning embarked on a further initiative to engage with property owners and other stakeholders on the Lower Breede River regarding the Estuary Management Plan and proposed zonation.

Since the meeting, the Department has:

- engaged with the Local municipalities, SAMSA and CapeNature with regards to the proposed zonation;
- also met with the implementor of the municipal bylaw, the LBRCT; and
- made changes to the proposed zonation plan based on these discussions and the information at hand.

The DEA&EP will therefore be releasing the Breede EMP for a further round of public engagement due to these substantial changes. It is expected that the Breede EMP will be published in February 2025, with a public participation process to follow closer to the end of February 2025.

TREASURERS REPORT

To follow the Chairman's report.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Website

During the last few months, we have been working on building an informative website for the community, with regards to our area and other important information and links. The website is a work in progress, but we are hoping to have an all-inclusive page in the next few months. Please go have a look and maybe you will find something interesting to read.

Bi-Monthly Newsletter

During 2024, we have issued regular and bi-monthly newsletters to keep the community informed of happenings as well as a summary of our activities during a period. We hope you find it an interesting read. Please feel free to give your input as to how we can improve our communications.

Membership

At 160 members, though steadily increasing, we are only at a third of our potential membership base. We are hoping, through regular communication and proven actions, to build our membership to its full potential. Please join and offer to be involved. We provide a forum to discuss concerns, be a collective voice and also provide opportunities for members to network with each other, building relationships and partnerships that can benefit the community as a whole.

CLOSURE

We will continue to build our relationship and support the very important organisations in our area, including LBRCT and IRRA. From recent meetings and communications, we have seen it is invaluable for our organisations to support each other and work towards a better-informed community. We are after all, stronger together.

M Mulder
Chairman

22 December 2024