



# Hout and About

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The publication of the Residents' Association of Hout Bay  
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## Len's Lines

### A message from the Chairperson of the Residents' Association of Hout Bay

The Residents Association of Hout Bay was established in order to preserve and enhance the unique character and environment of Hout Bay, and to ensure that development takes place in an orderly manner that is sensitive to the needs of both current and future generations.

Thus we continue to oppose the plans of unscrupulous developers who would seek to upset the delicate balance between man and nature for the sake of a quick buck, to urge the authorities to intervene in our informal settlements where unchecked expansion threatens not only the environment but the health of the residents of these settlements themselves, and to ensure that acceptable standards are applied with regard to the services provided to all our residents.

We remain concerned about the level of police protection provided in the ongoing fight against crime, about the state of our wetlands, our beach, our harbour, our roads, and a range of other issues that impact upon the daily lives of all the residents of Hout Bay.

*Hout & About* is our medium for keeping you informed about developments with regard to these issues and the role played by the Association in addressing them, where feasible. As always we ask that once you have read it you pass it on to others who may not yet be members, both in order to spread the word and to strengthen the membership of the Association itself.

While many of the topics that we cover inevitably appear to be 'negative', it is also appropriate that we acknowledge the good that the authorities do sometimes achieve in securing the rights of ordinary citizens.

We note, for example, that the Good Hope Subcouncil (which governs property planning issues in Hout Bay and other areas), chaired by Councillor Taki Amira, recently had the courage and conviction to dismiss the recommendation of the City's planning officials to approve an application for departures relating to a property in Bantry Bay – a five story block of flats built in defiance of the planning laws and without consent in a zone that permits no more than a 3 story double dwelling house on the property. Councillor Amira, supported by Alderman Belinda Walker and Councillor Hayward, are to be congratulated for taking a strong stand, despite the recommendations of the planning officials and significant political pressure brought to bear by the owner, and for providing hope to ourselves in our ongoing battles against certain developers in Hout Bay.

Equally, we commend the efforts of the Hout Bay Police Force in addressing certain safety and security issues (reported elsewhere in this issue) and for the apparent greater visibility of the police in recent months and their willingness to work together with civic bodies in addressing crime.

Regards

#### Len Swimmer

Chairperson, Residents Association of Hout Bay  
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**STOP PRESS: *Hout & About* has just been informed by Councillor Taki Amira that, after months of cajoling by the Residents' Association, the City's Health Directorate has finally made arrangements for the erection of signs on the Hout Bay beach and at the river estuary warning of the dangerously high levels of E.Coli.**

## **Imizamo Yethu and the public participation process**

**By Erik Schaug**

The saga of Imizamo Yethu goes on and has become a Reign of Error.

One of the chief reasons is that the Public Participation Process has been a failure. Behind the microphones at a typical PPP meeting sit officials and their consultants. The proceedings start with a long and boring introduction by the chairperson — often someone who, to quote David Berlinski, could paralyze an infantry battalion just by beginning a lecture.

We are then subjected to the inevitable PowerPoint presentation. Lots of bullet points, all read out slowly, as if we're all Grade 2 kiddies.

Then, the proposed development is shown. It's obvious that a tremendous amount of work has been done, and a myriad decisions taken. We all wonder why we bothered to come; they seem to have settled matters to their entire satisfaction. It soon becomes clear that there are several layers of meaning to the saying that power corrupts, and PowerPoint corrupts absolutely.

Over an hour has passed, and so far there has been zero public participation.

When questions are finally invited, they are treated as if the questioner didn't understand the presentation, so a long answer is given, which is a rehash of what was said earlier. Time runs out, and everyone rushes to the toilets and then home.

It all seems so pointless, and it's about time we, the citizens of Hout Bay, take control of the Public Participation Process.

*We should organise and run the meetings. We should table the proposals. We should take the official minutes, and circulate them. Council officials can be required to attend, and to listen.*

And then to respond promptly and in accordance with the wishes of the community. After all, we pay their salaries.

Does this sound overly radical? It's not, really. It's allowed for in our Constitution, and it's called democracy.

(Erik Schaug is a member of the Executive Committee of the Residents' Association of Hout Bay, with joint responsibility for the planning, environment and land usage portfolio.)

### **Do something about the smell!**

All Hout Bay residents who suffer from the smell emanating from the Oceana fish processing facility in Harbour Road are encouraged to address a message of concern to any (or all) of the following three persons:

- Mr P Matlare – CEO Tiger Brands and Director Oceana, fax 011 514 0084, email [info@oceana.co.za](mailto:info@oceana.co.za)
- Oceana Ltd, email : [info@ocana.co.za](mailto:info@ocana.co.za) attention: Mr Robbie Williams (Deputy Chairman)
- Tiger Brands Ltd, Lex van Vught – Chairman, Fax: 011 514 0084

## Hangberg – another IY?

The growth in the number of illegal developments on the northern slopes of the Sentinel/ Hangberg, above the previously upper limiting contours (which also serve as a fire break and storm-water drainage route and footpath), raises several questions about what is being done to control these developments and when some action will be taken.

Anthony Allen of THE AERIAL PERSPECTIVE has forwarded to interested parties a number of aerial images, which clearly show the extent of these illegal developments. Although not formally commissioned to do so, he has been good enough to supply these images at no cost, together with the following comments:

1. At a rough count, we have approximately 40 odd structures in various stages of completion and approximately 30 pre-cleared "erven" ready for structures to be erected.
2. Building materials and furniture influx are extensive and evident.
3. Plenty of "plot" clearing and levelling is taking place.
4. Sites/stands appear to have some degree of "organisation" to them in terms of varying sizes, spacing and distribution, which suggests that some or other body has informal "control" over dispersal of stands?
5. Significant spend on materials is evident (new corrugated iron, timber and concrete).
6. Build quality of some structures is very high.
7. Some homes are even fenced off, complete with razor wire perimeters.
8. Road access, emergency access, ablution and sewerage facilities do not appear to have had any planning involved.
9. There has been significant informal settlement expansion in the Hangberg and Imizamo Yethu areas when compared to historic images in our database. These are available for comparative analysis.
10. In my humble opinion, this situation has the propensity to become a major political and administrative challenge if not managed immediately and sensitively.

The Residents' Association of Hout Bay has raised these issues on several occasions with the relevant City authorities, pointing out that we are rapidly heading for another "IY" on the mountain side and that every day's delay only allows the problem to get bigger and more difficult to eventually deal with. We await further responses from them.

### **What do the residents of Hangberg and IY themselves say?**

Barry James Mitchell, Hout Bay resident and Secretary of the Ray Alexander Branch of the SACP has recently contacted the Residents Association, pointing out that in the numerous articles in *Hout & About* dealing with Imizamo Yethu and Hangberg, one fact is excluded: "the feelings and objections of the very citizens residing in these impoverished areas." In his words:

"The residents of IY and Hangberg have been for many years living in absolute deprivation and poverty. Their concerted efforts to get development processes going are constantly thwarted by unscrupulous negativity in the local newspaper, border-line racism and a complete disregard for the residents' general consensus."

The Residents Association supports the need to establish unity in Hout Bay and welcomes the input of the true representatives of the people living in Hangberg and IY. While we do work closely with SANCO and Sinethemba in IY, we do not have any similar arrangements with any organizations in Hangberg, and would be pleased to hear from anybody who can help to remedy this situation.

## **The proposed "Special Rates Area" (SRA) for Baviaans River**

Hot on the heels of significantly increased property valuations for many residents of Hout Bay, the proposed SRA levy (R75 per R million valuation) in areas like Baviaans River now poses a serious threat to pensioners and the elderly and persons on fixed incomes. We publish here extracts from a letter of a Scott Estate pensioner, which highlights the hardship that many are facing:

"My late husband and I bought our house in Scott Estate 60 years ago. I still live here - in exactly the same house. Exactly? Well not quite. The municipal valuation of my property has increased astronomically - especially in the last few years. This year, my valuation has increased by 68%. The proposers of the Baviaans River SRA want to add a further 19% making my total burden increase by 87%!

"I am told that 'experts' promise that my house's value will increase further if I support the SRA. Who is this going to help? I just want to live-out my days in my same old house. I don't want to pay even more rates to our distinctly underperforming Council. I don't want to pay for the SRA's surveillance cameras, patrollers, managers and gardeners when they can do nothing to address the root causes of crime, pollution etc. in Hout Bay which lie in IY and DY just up the road. Not only do I not want to pay, as one of many pensioners in Scott Estate, I simply cannot afford to waste money on a new, additional, tax collector who says he will cure Hout Bay's cancer with a make-believe mini ghetto of privileged security.

"Dear friends and fellow residents, please hear my appeal. Don't be fooled by the 'enhanced valuation' half-truth. Sell your house and you will pay as least as much for an alternative of equal quality. Increased value / valuations of your own dwelling simply means that you pay more and more to live in the same place. Finally, when you too are old and the costs of rates and levies may force you out of your home, your property's new "value" will delight the tax man and the Estate Agent. You will get more Rands that buy less. House "values" are, in fact, no more than a measure of property price inflation. As a mother, grandmother and great grandmother I have been forced to understand real economics in order to get by. Please try to understand the hardship that, one day, may come to us all."

### **Hout Bay SAPF complimented on a job well done**

Rod Panagos, Operations Coordinator for the Hout Bay Neighbourhood Watch has sent a letter to the Hout Bay SAPF to compliment officers on the recent pursuit and arrest of robbers in the Llandudno areas as well as a quick coordinated SAPF response to an incident which took place at Sandy Bay incident in early August. He writes as follows:

"I'd also like to add my own thanks and that of the HBNW for the commitment and dedication towards joint response efforts from the SAPF that has become more apparent in recent months. The Disa river cordon and search, the Sandy Bay arrest, the re-arrest of suspect 'E' in Tarragona, and the helicopter/ mask incident in Northshore all prove how quick communication backed by coordinated rapid response efforts produces results.

"The resident members who have followed these events on the radio network are all very impressed with SAPF's much increased on-air presence and commitment to the joint response efforts.

"Additionally please extend our thanks to the officers who have recently been deployed on foot patrols in the Disa River belt and Pipe track zones. We do appreciate their presence in these areas which historically have rarely been so policed."

## Domestic electricity tariffs explained

Cape Town Electricity services has provided the following explanation of variations in electricity tariffs implemented since 1 July 2010:

Tariffs have been formulated in accordance with the Municipal Systems Act as well as guidelines established by the National Energy Regulator of South Africa. There are three possible tariffs available for the City's domestic electricity consumers. The tariffs are applicable irrespective of whether supplies are metered by credit or prepayment meters.

**The Domestic High Tariff** consists of an energy charge and a service charge and is suitable for consumers purchasing more than 1500 kWh per month. The **energy charge** paid by these customers is 79.97 c/kWh plus VAT = 91.17 c/kWh and recovers the cost of energy which is provided to the particular consumer. The **service charge** paid by these customers is R 6.58 per day plus VAT = R 7.50 and recovers a proportion of the cost of salaries, support services, network expansion, repairs and maintenance etc which is incurred for provision of the service to them. The total service charge payable at each prepayment transaction is calculated using the number of days between the previous and present purchases. Consumers charged at this tariff will therefore find that they do not receive the same amount of energy for the same Rand value if the number of days between purchases varies.

**The Domestic Low Tariff** is a subsidized tariff which has an energy charge of 93.31 c/kWh plus VAT = 106.37 c/kWh. This tariff is suitable for consumers purchasing between 450 and 1500 kWh per month.

Consumers are free to choose between the Domestic High and Domestic Low Tariffs.

**The Lifeline Tariff** is a special, highly subsidized inclining block tariff which has 3 energy charges, or blocks, depending on the purchase level. Block one (0-50 kWh per month) is at zero cost (this is the Free Basic Electricity portion), Block 2 (50.1 to 150 kWh per month) has an energy charge of 58.11 c/kWh plus VAT = 66.25 c/kWh, and Block 3 (150.1 to 450 kWh) has an energy charge of 70.47 c/kWh plus VAT = 80.34 c/kWh. Note that these figures apply *per calendar month*, and not *per purchase*. This tariff is reserved specifically for consumers who purchase less than 400 kWh per month on average (these customers will receive up to 450 kWh, 400 kWh purchased, and 50 kWh free).

### A better option for Hout Bay's sewage works

Commercial company Agri Design & Civils has approached the Residents Association for help in bringing their proposal for a pilot/small scale plant to re-treat sewage in Hout Bay, to the attention of the relevant authorities.

According to Agri Design and Civils, the re-use and better management of effluents and urban waters/effluents, lies at the heart of our challenge going forward as a country and a region. The company has been involved in the agricultural sector for many years and has long been exposed to the processing of agricultural animal waste streams. Human waste streams are not too dissimilar to that of animals – pig waste in fact is very similar, being processed in a single stomach just as humans.

The company lays claim to 'world first technology' which all takes place in an odourless process fully contained in tanks, for the re-treatment of water and sewage. The Residents' Association has endorsed the proposed pilot plant on the basis that it could potentially make a great difference in the lives of all Hout Bay citizens, and has arranged a meeting between Agri Design & Civils and Alderman Clive Justus on 2 September to discuss the issue.

## **Horse riding on Hout Bay beach**

Julie De Nicola of the Hout Bay Riders Association has outlined the following new plan for horse riding on the Hout Bay Beach:

- New times and rules for riders on the beach are to be negotiated.  
New times suggested will be the same throughout the year to avoid the winter/summer confusion.  
7am to 9am weekends and public holidays  
7am to 10am week days
- All riders who want to use the beach must be paid-up members of the Hout Bay Riders Association. They will wear a bridle number to be clearly identifiable.  
We will have a list of riders and will be able to follow up on problems. Also this will help with identifying loose horses.
- Horse riding to take place only on the Mariners side of the river
- Safe sensible riding – no galloping

The Riders Association will be discussing this plan with the City and will request clear signage to be erected so that all beach users are clear on who can be there and when. The intention is to insist that dogs are leashed at the times riders are allowed – not just “under control” - as it is almost impossible to stop a dog chasing a horse. Riders on the beach are requested to be polite and to explain the situation if confronted.

## **Clearing alien vegetation on Chapman’s Peak Drive**

The management of Table Mountain National Park said recently that programmes have already been put into place to clear alien vegetation along Chapman’s Peak drive. But there are fears that an extended closure of the scenic Road may again be necessary.

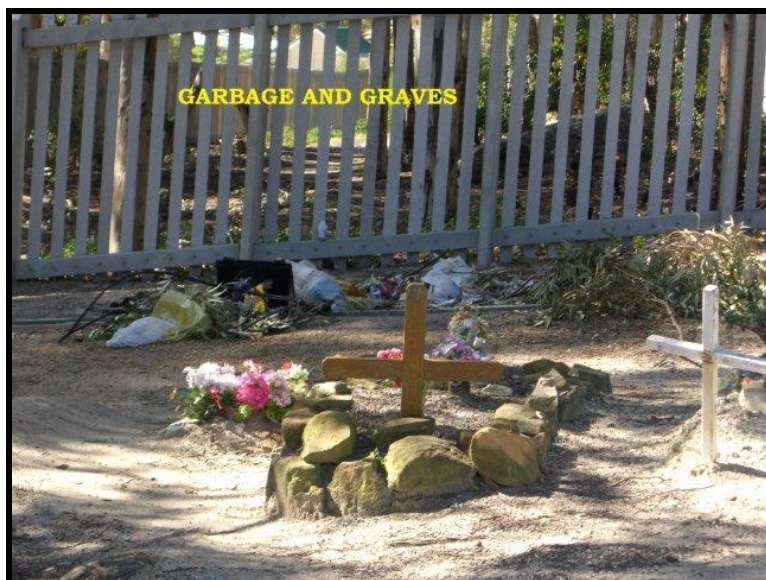
Western Cape Transport MEC Robin Carlisle said there were concerns that alien vegetation could degrade the soil, leading to dangerous rock falls. Around R70 million has been spent over the past few years to improve safety measures along the popular tourist attraction.

The park’s Gavin Bell said it was a costly and time-consuming business keeping the road safe: “It is just a matter of how do we get on to those slopes to clear because if we do they would have to shut the road down and we are talking about months and months of clearing.”

## **Progress with beach benches**

It seems that, at last, something has been done about the sad state of the benches on Hout Bay beach. Byron Kemp of the Sports, Recreation and Amenities department of the City of Cape Town advises that broken benches have been removed, slats replaced on other benches and the areas made good. Destroyed benches have not yet been replaced as the request was received after the closing dates for Supply Chain Management for the old financial year but the Residents Association is advised that they will be replaced by end October 2010. The Association has also requested that the graffiti on the toilet walls is painted out.

## Action to protect the cemetery and stop the dumping



Following the intervention of concerned Hughenden/ Meadows resident Melissa Risi, the Residents' Association has brought to the attention of the relevant authorities the issue of dumping in and around the Hout Bay cemetery and the general neglect of this area, which is frequently used as a 'short cut' by residents of the neighbouring informal settlement. As a result, Alderman Clive Justus has promised a plan of action to ensure that the cemetery is properly enclosed and that the surrounding area is cleaned up and appropriately maintained.

### **To join the Residents' Association:**

Contact us via email on [rahb@houtbay.org.za](mailto:rahb@houtbay.org.za)

Membership forms available from Chairperson (see above) or Hout Bay Library

Membership fee: R50 per couple; R30 per individual

Banking details for payment of subscriptions: FNB Hout Bay (code 204009), Account: Residents Association of Hout Bay, account number 5345 1027 173

(Payment may be made electronically or manually via our wooden box at the Library or by post at Post Office Box 27031, Hout Bay, 7872)