



The Saxonwold and Parkwood Residents Association ("SAPRA")

Annual General Meeting - 18 October 2023

Chairman's Report

I have pleasure in reporting to the SAPRA membership on the activities of the Association for the past financial year.

1. Membership

Membership continues to grow but we are still no where near the level of membership that we believe we should attract from our residents.

It is interesting to see that the number of Pensioners has reduced over the period whilst that of ordinary

	30 June 2022	30 June 2023	Increase
Members	271	303	11,8%
Pensioners	48	41	(14,6%)
Corporates	4	5	25,0%
Appointed Members *	37	42	13,5%
Complexes	1	1	-
Total Subscription Payers	324	350	8,0%

Members has increased. Whilst the numbers are small and perhaps without too much statistical significance, it may suggest that the demographic of our residents is changing from the older members of our society to younger members.

* Those members who are appointed by Subscription paying Members (e.g. family members, members of complexes, tenants or employees of corporates)

The number of visits to the SAPRA website have increased during the year by 11,1%.

2. Review

When enquiring why a resident is not a member of SAPRA, I am often told that they do not know what SAPRA does and what value would they get for the subscription. Accordingly, I have changed the format of my report to show the achievements during the past year.

3. Achievements:

Town Planning

- There have been 15 new applications during the year which have all be considered by SAPRA and most of which require objections to be lodged with the City followed by negotiations with the developers. In some instances the matters are heard in the Tribunal which is attended by SAPRA.
- There are 17 applications for which matters appear to be outstanding.
- Meetings to establish the Rosebank Metropolitan Alliance in which our two suburbs would be represented and which would have an impact on the development of our two suburbs.
- Meetings with the Executive Director of Town Planning in the City to put forward our concerns about their service delivery issues.
- Submissions made for the City's Spatial Development Framework to try and bring some sense to the City's plans that affect out two suburbs.

Heritage

- A number of requests for guidance on Heritage issues and applications have been received.
- There has been two application for buildings to be demolished (of which we are aware) and have processed these from a Heritage point of view.

Infrastructure

- Substations (see comment below)
- Submission on application for traffic control measures (cor Saxonwold & Cotswold Drives and Denbigh and Dorset Roads)

Security

- Meeting and discussions with Safe Saxonwold.
- Meeting with the management of the Rosebank Police Station.
- Discussions with the Oxford Parks and Rosebank Management District on the Rosebank Police Station.

Community Building and Communication

- Easter Egg Hunt and Halloween community events.
- Regular Blood donation drives in conjunction with the SA Blood Service.
- Discussions with SGI to arrange joint community events (see comment below)
- Support for Community Sporting Events (Rocky Road Runners etc.)



- Response and information on water and electricity outages.
- Providing information to the popular WhatsApp information groups.
- Maintaining and Providing information to our Website and Facebook page about our two suburbs.

Beautifying our Suburbs

- Regular work done by our Green Team to clean up the suburbs.
- Removal of refuse and the illegal dumping of building material.
- Support (financial and manpower) for the Zoo Lake Users Committee. (See comments below)
- Support for the ZLUC's garden committee at the Joburg Zoo.
- Cleaning and tidying up the Fearnhead Park.
- Support for the Oxford Road islands cleaning and planting.

Civil Society Action involving SAPRA (see comments below)

- Meetings with:
 - Johannesburg Community Collective.
 - JoburgCAN (OUTA).
 - City in Crises Committee (Ahmed Kathrada Foundation).
 - Gauteng Precinct Management Association.

4. SAPRA-land Substations

A while ago, City Power approached SAPRA with the request for SAPRA to sign a MOU with City Power to provide security services in the protection of our substations and where necessary, to help in the repair of the surrounding cabinet, its doors and locks. Clearly this would be to the advantage of our community inasmuch as the tampering of these substations by criminals has jeopardised the continuing availability of power. There are approximately 75 substations within our two suburbs with some of them being in poor repair.

At the time we did not have sufficient manpower or ability to discharge such an undertaking. However, with David Taylor joining the Committee, we are now able to sign such a MOU and Dave has got to work on auditing the existing substations, repairing some of the substations, providing locks where there they are broken and attendant keys. I am enormously grateful to Dave for stepping up and providing solutions to our community. He is a veritable role model of a concerned and willing volunteer. Thank you, Dave.

SAPRA is also busy negotiating with a private security company to look after the keys (in accordance with an established protocols) and residents in the local vicinity of the substation.

5. Heritage & Town Planning

We understand that as notice of a proposed demolition only requires the approval of the Provincial Heritage Resource Authority of Gauteng (PHRAG), its communication to interested residents is simply in the form of a note attached to the gate or fence and SAPRA is not automatically informed of this applications as would be the case for rezoning. Accordingly, we request all residents to be aware of any potential demolitions in their immediate neighbourhood and, indeed, anything that has to do with town planning in our area that appears to be going ahead without authority, and to bring it to our attention.

Michael Gristwood has taken over the reins of Town Planning and he is ably supported by his team of Paul Barron and Ronald Ennik. As can be seen from the workload mentioned above, they have had to work hard on trying to maintain some semblance of order that is missing from the City that should be acting as custodians of the residents' interests. They effectively stand between the residents' interests and uncontrolled and chaotic development. To the three of them, my thanks.

In particular I want to thank Michael for his unstinting support in all SAPRA matters of management and strategy - he has been such a help!

6. Discussions with SGI (the Buddhist Centre in Parkwood)

At SGI's request we met with them to consider ways in which their property (leased from the Johannesburg Property Company) could be used by the community to engender additional community spirit. This is a large property that used to be the Parkwood Bowling Club and could easily constitute the centre of our two suburbs. This has opened up a number of exciting possibilities which would be part of SAPRA's objective to engender a "get to know your neighbour" spirit amongst our residents. A start was made using their property as the venue for our most recent Blood Donation Drive.

7. Action by Civil Society

In my last year's report I mentioned the very poor state of the Johannesburg City's service delivery covering most of their activities. I did anticipate then that this would, in all likelihood continue to deteriorate and unfortunately this has come to pass. This deterioration, at the same time as a large increase in rates and taxes, has provoked an anger from all residents of Johannesburg. It is therefore not surprising that there are a number of spontaneous developments across Johannesburg to form a civil society movement to counter this.

I have personally been invited, and attended, three such initiatives and will be attending another one later this month. Whilst such developments are exciting, it is still early days and it is important that all these movement coalesce into one single organisation that will have maximum impact.

8. Subscriptions

Total levies received during the financial year amount to R229 705 (2020: R206 104) which represented an increase of 11,5%.

Your Committee has not yet finalised whether there should be a change in the subscription rates at this stage and accordingly, the subscription rates will currently remain unchanged.

9. Finances

As will be seen from the Audited Financial Statements, SAPRA is in a strong position. Thank you to Jonny Bagg for your help and guidance in running the finances of SAPRA. I am able to relax knowing that you are at the helm and keeping a watchful eye on a very important function within SAPRA.

It is not the policy of your committee to build up financial reserves purely for the sake of it and I believe that a good working committee is one that spends the money on necessary delivery. However, delivery is a function of two important requirements - the first is that you have to have the money to do the work and secondly, and importantly, one has to have the manpower to make it happen. Whenever we have a project that requires SAPRA's attention we need to ensure that we have both the financial resource and a "Champion" who will undertake to drive the process. In particular, I would like to ask for some volunteers for the following:

- Street Captains from every street in SAPRA-land, so that we can create a channel of communication that includes everybody who resides in our two suburbs (not only the members);
- Someone who will canvass the Complexes in SAPRA-land to become members;
- An attorney who can advise us from time to time on legal matters.

10. Parks - Zoo Lake

Now that the Erosion Project planting has been completed the Zoo Lake Users Committee (ZLUC) has turned its attention to pave the eroded area around the Selfi-Frame to complete the Western side of the Lake. Four phases were contemplated and three were completed during the year. At the time of writing this report, the fourth phase has also now been completed. SAPRA provided the ZLUC with funds to help complete this project. Thank you Frances Haslam, for all the work that you and your hard working team of volunteers, do driving the Zoo Lake project. I know that, not only the SAPRA community, but the broader community within Johannesburg appreciates what you do and through your tireless action and stewardship, have rehabilitated and reestablished this Johannesburg jewel.

11. Committee

Thank you to our hard working Committee. Your dedicated service to the community is noticed by all.

The membership of your Committee has been fairly stable this past year with only one resignation. Dr. Bruce Young has resigned and we thank him for his contribution in the past and wish him well for the future.

We have been very fortunate to have secured the services of Dave Taylor to our Committee. Dave is a retired Eskom engineer having worked at Eskom all his working life. He is a knowledgeable and



experienced engineer who has a great understanding of the workings of electricity reticulation and clearly a great asset to SAPRA in monitoring and negotiating with City Power.

Two heritage architects have volunteered to serve the SAPRA community - we welcome both Robyn Arnot and Mark Hansen, both of whom have good experience in Heritage matters and who are available to help advise residents on questions of Heritage. In addition they are keeping a wary eye on demolitions that could end up destroying our past heritage.

Thank you, both Robyn and Mark for your help. I, the Committee and the community are extremely grateful for your work.

Alison Levesley, you and your team - Bronwyn Crosse and Lenore Beilings- are special gems that always provide that hard work, determination and special enthusiasm for all that you do for our community, thank you. In particular, Ali for your advice that you provide - you are always the first to respond to my requests for advice. A special thank you.

Marcelle Ravid, you are the backbone of SAPRA. You make things happen and I know that I can always rely on you 24/7 to answer the cries from our community when things go wrong. Marcelle, that is so special and so, thank you so much.

12. SAPRA's Plans for the Next Year

Whilst carrying on with the usual issues that resident associations handle, I would like to concentrate on:

- Developing our Community Spirit by providing opportunities for residents to meet each other in an informal and friendly environment where they can get to 'know their neighbours'. SAPRA residents doesn't have much opportunity to do this as there is only one primary school, no places of worship or a natural high street (I don't include the Parkwood strip as it is not a place where our community can meet each other). I believe that with Community Spirit the incidence of crime is reduced and people feel safer (neighbours look after each other). They would naturally tend to volunteer for more community minded activities with advantages for all. A virtuous circle!
- Secondly, I believe that the growth in the Johannesburg Civil Society will probably involve all the Johannesburg residents association in whatever form they present. This has all the potential to develop an better and more accountable municipal administration. I think that SAPRA can play a leading role in this development.

W.J. Haslam
18 October 2023