

AGENDA - Observatory Civic Association ManComm Meeting			
Meeting Date	26 May 2020	Time	18h00
Venue	Zoom at home	Chairperson	Leslie London
MComm Attendees	Leslie London (LL), Sheila Barsel (SB), Edwin Angless (EA), Kiki Bisogno (KB), Tauriq Jenkins (TJ), Joy Robinson (JR), Marc Turok (MT), DeVos Rabie (DR)		
Invitees	Bridget Simons (BS), Peter Breitenbach (PB) (absent), Kirsti Mackenzie (KMK), Dahlia Patsika (DP), Johan Beaurain (JB)		
ADMINISTRATION			
Topic	Responsible	Timeframe	
<p>1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES</p> <p>Members were welcomed. Meeting was noted as quorate.</p> <p>Invitees were welcomed: KMK as manager of the A&H portfolio; JB and DP as observers.</p> <p>PB was absent.</p> <p>DP is a Masters student in Social Development. Her thesis focuses on the relationship between local governance and the people through civic organisations, OCA among them.</p>			
2. Adoption of previous minutes (28 April 2020)			
<p>2.1 Corrections/Adoption</p> <p>No corrections, except that SB asked for pages to be numbered.</p> <p>Adoption of minutes moved by SB, Seconded by EA</p>			
<p>2.2 Matters Arising</p> <p>MT – sent letter from TRUPA confirming two decisions:</p> <p>a. MT role as TRUPA rep on OCA;</p> <p>b. TRUPA supports provincial heritage application.</p>			
<p>2.3 Review/update of RT</p> <p>Resolution tracker for April 2020 was checked and updated.</p> <p>SB and EA will continue to address inaccuracies.</p>	SB, EA		
3 Report-back and Updates:			
<p>3.1. OCA/CAN/OBSID</p> <p>ManComm discussed the early morning raid on the Singabalapha camp in front of the demolished CPOA Arcadia building (Main Road, Obs) on 20 May 2020.</p> <p>There was an inordinate show of force: 27 law enforcement vehicles and 50-60 officials were involved in the operation. 16 fines were issued</p>			

<p>under a by-law referring to an Act of Parliament of 1977: the by-law prohibits the obstruction of pedestrian pathways and the erection of structures on CoCT property. This official action came close to contravening regulations that prohibit evictions during C-19 lockdown.</p> <p>A request for an interdict was successfully filed with a number of supporting affidavits. The matter was heard at 22h00 and the interdict to stop the eviction was published at midnight. The full matter is scheduled to be heard on 3 June.</p> <p>It was decided that OCA should support Singabalapha's cause in the lead-up to the court case by publishing a letter of protest in the Newsletter.</p> <p>In an online update, we should invite those who signed the Change.org petition against the amendment to the nuisance by-law to post three ways in which law enforcement officials could be better deployed during C-19 rather than in the harassment of the homeless.</p> <p>ManComm approved the idea.</p> <p>Many CANs feel that the Singabalpaha situation reflects a problem that CoCT does not consult with its citizens. It was suggested that Civics should appeal to CoCT to consult with communities more fully before executing this sort of drastic action because, as the people on the ground, the community is best suited to suggest more appropriate solutions to sensitive issues than the heavy-handed approach. LL pointed out that we have twice written to the City over alternative ways to engage but have had no response. Calling on the City to consult may also open the way to create divisions.</p> <p>ManComm decided to send an open letter of protest regarding the Singabalapha harrassment to the media as part of a campaign to raise public awareness of the situation leading up to the court case.</p>	<p>EA</p> <p>EA</p> <p>EA</p>	
<p>3.2. Strandfontein</p> <p>LL – the court case initiated by CoCT against SAHRC monitors (among them, TJ), has been postponed to 6 June. OCA will support TJ.</p> <p>TJ – bearing in mind that the African Charter of Human Rights is an intended recipient, the content of a letter of protest against the disregard for human rights exhibited by CoCT in handling the Strandfontein debacle, is currently being debated.</p> <p>JB – voiced concern that CoCT will continue to act as it pleases in that CoCT probably ignores letters from OCA that do not concentrate exclusively on Obs issues.</p> <p>Regarding Obs issues, JB sent a letter to ManComm last year proposing ways to approach the housing situation in Obs with a view to improving conditions for the homeless. JB feels strongly that a line item should be included on the agenda to discuss integrated housing in Obs in tandem with the problem of big developments in Obs that do not address affordable housing in some way. Man Comm agreed.</p>		

<p>SB – JB’s proposal ‘Integrated housing and transport plan for Obs’ will be shared with ManComm members.</p> <p>KMK – knows that many CoCT officials are not in favour of big developments that ignore the need for affordable housing. It may be that support for such developments is political and the politicians should be shamed into addressing the problem of affordable housing.</p> <p>MT – affordable housing is a broad issue. Right now, the problem of homelessness and the unemployed in Obs who need help should be prioritised by OCA.</p> <p>LL – in terms of the broader issue, TJ will compose (and circulate for comment) a letter regarding concerns around big developments in Obs, and the issue of integrated housing will be put back as a regular agenda item.</p>	<p>SB</p> <p>TJ EA</p>	
<p>3.3. Confirmation of new ManComm members</p> <p>LL – welcomed KMK on to the committee as manager of the portfolio Architecture and Heritage and thanked her for work completed and work in progress.</p> <p>BS was confirmed as minutes secretary.</p> <p>Remaining secretarial duties were outlined and given to various ManComm members to perform.</p> <p>The online system for signing on new OCA members will be tested by KMK: any problems in the system will be addressed and adjusted where necessary by SB and JR</p>	<p>KMK SB, JR</p>	
<p>4. Financials</p>		
<p>JR – OCA income is low due to the lack of revenue from the car park – OCA’s major source of income. In this regard, JR suggested that the Car Park should be discussed before Financials in future meetings.</p> <p>A small positive balance is reflected in the financial report for April.</p>		
<p>5. Car Park</p>		
<p>DR – since lockdown, casual parking is free. Monthly parkers are billed for parking but not all will pay: some are obstinate, while others will struggle to pay due to lack of income during lockdown.</p> <p>The income from the car park for April reflects invoices raised, not payments made: some of the reflected income may therefore have to be written off as unrecoverable debt and this shortfall may negatively affect OCA’s balance sheet.</p> <p>Car park staff may be able to return to work under level 3 and open the car park for business on 1 June. However, the demand for parking may be low as no restaurants or bars will be open.</p> <p>Concern over the longer term is that the car park income has been dropping. A new business plan must be implemented, taking into account CoCT’s favourable decision regarding costs.</p>		

<p>There may be unexpected expenses that will affect the budget, such as an immediate need to replace existing broken and faulty lighting with LED lights and the security camera system needs upgrading (estimated cost: R16-17K). These upgrades will only afford car parkers comfort: no security services are provided in the car park.</p> <p>MT – DR should be thanked for relieving OCA of CoCT debt.</p> <p>Financials were accepted – JR and DR were thanked.</p>		
<p>6. Liquor and Sound</p>		
<p>LL – nothing to report as there have been no applications for liquor licences and no liquor licences are being issued during lockdown.</p> <p>SB – there have been no complaints regarding sound levels, probably because restaurants and other public facilities in Obs continue to be closed during lockdown.</p>		
<p>7. TRUPA</p>		
<p>MT – there have been no meetings since lockdown. The date to hear the heritage report on the whole of TRUP has been postponed and may happen online.</p> <p>Apart from some testing at the River Club, nothing much has been happening. Developers seem loath to proceed with hugely expensive projects such as the one proposed for the River Club.</p> <p>The outcomes of various submissions are pending.</p> <p>LL – with regard to the River Club development, a letter was written to Jeff Bezos to protest against the possibility of Amazon agreeing to be the anchor tenant of the development, but no reply was received. LL will write again to Amazon to share the outcomes of the first tribunal appeal directive and final directive. In the meantime, OCA should begin feeding the story to the press (both locally and in USA).</p> <p>MT – agrees that Amazon should be apprised of the sensitivity of the site but cautioned that OCA media releases should be penned carefully to avoid being sued for defamation or spreading false information.</p>	<p>LL</p> <p>EA, TJ</p>	
<p>8 Subgroup reports</p>		
<p>8.1. Social Issues</p> <p>KB – weekly reports are being posted on ManComm WhatsApp regarding donations and how the money is being spent. With the available budget, the feeding scheme can continue for another three months under present conditions.</p> <p>Challenges to the smooth running of the programme have arisen:</p> <p>a. ObsID has withdrawn their help in collecting and distributing food donations;</p> <p>b. the Village Green as a distribution venue is becoming problematic.</p> <p>While volunteers are willing to assume the tasks previously performed by ObsID, they are not trained in social work or security and may</p>		

<p>struggle to handle the problems posed by the Village Green: the Village Green is conspicuous and news of the availability of free meals at the site is spreading fast. With winter coming, the needy are growing in number and the scheme is attracting people from outside Obs.</p> <p>KB feels strongly that no hungry person should be turned away: the programme is working well and should continue as is. If the changes suggested by ObsID are made, volunteer involvement will reduce – the programme will cease to be a community project and may run the risk of losing community support in both cash and kind.</p> <p>Support in terms of management and security will be vital in sustaining the programme over the coming weeks. ObsID is well positioned to help in this regard as ObsID and the homeless community are familiar with one another. If ObsID is unwilling to assist the programme in this way, perhaps help can be sourced from the CoCT.</p> <p>SB – pointed out that ObsID is an extension of the CoCT in the Obs community and should be supporting the programme.</p> <p>TJ – it was only because of the CANs and huge pressure exerted by the Obs community in view of problems engendered by C-19, that ObsID erected two water tanks and helped with transporting food to the poor in and around Obs. It is unacceptable that ObsID is refusing to help OCA at this stage. In line with the response to the C-19 crisis adopted by local government and the National Command Council, ObsID should be persuaded to relax budgetary allocations and extend financial help to the most vulnerable in the Obs community.</p> <p>EA – the ObsID board is meeting on 10 June. OCA should request a meeting with the board before this date, pointing out that Obs ratepayers contribute largely to their financial reserves: OCA has the right to suggest ways in which ObsID money should be spent to benefit the Obs community.</p> <p>To secure the help urgently needed by KB to sustain the feeding scheme, it is imperative that OCA ManComm engages with ObsID before 10 June.</p> <p>LL – in the short term, OCA would like ObsID to do either or both of two things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. to resume their support of KB’s community feeding scheme in whatever way is needed; b. to employ someone else to assist the project in this way. <p>In the longer term, OCA should approach relevant government departments to address issues related to economic and social development in the community.</p> <p>LL will draft a letter and circulate it for comment.</p> <p>KB should continue to engage with ObsID regarding assistance, while considering what government departments should be approached for additional help.</p> <p>KB – to secure a huge bread donation from Premier Milling Company, the Mill needs to be sent a letter from OCA with an NPO number.</p> <p>LL - will draft the required letter.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">LL KB</p> <p style="text-align: center;">LL</p>	
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<p>8.2. Architecture & Heritage</p> <p>KMK – a complaint is being followed up with regard to damage caused to a local property in Arnold St by builders contracted by Himmy Abader to develop a building nearby.</p> <p>LL – this particular building operation has caused damage to other properties in the vicinity. OCA complaints in this regard were never followed up with an inspection and a request for a report seems to have been overlooked – LL will follow up with the Ward Councillor.</p> <p>KMK – three very minor alterations projects have been approved. Two other proposed projects are problematic: one application is not complete and the plans of the other were drawn up by a person who is not a registered draughtsman, rendering submission of the plans illegal.</p> <p>LL – congratulated Kirsti on her contribution.</p>	<p>LL</p>	
<p>8.3. Arts Culture Sports</p> <p>TJ – anticipating an immensity of contributions from Obs artistic community following this time of introspection.</p>		
<p>8.4. Business Forum</p> <p>LL – PB is absent and no report was received.</p>		
<p>8.5. Communications</p> <p>EA – subscriptions to the newsletter have increased recently and are sure to grow with the next newsletter: aside from highlighting some very positive C-19 related developments in Obs, the newsletter will focus on gardening which has proved to be an effective tool for uniting the community: the transformation of the derelict circus grounds into productive vegetable gardens has resulted in a positive change of attitude to the circus among the residents of lower Obs. Any member of the Obs community can create a vegetable garden at the site.</p> <p>LL - an allotment? Perhaps OCA can get some good press for this.</p> <p>EA – agreed to follow-up the idea</p>	<p>EA</p>	
<p>9. AOB</p>		
<p>LL – no other business</p>		
<p>Meeting ended at 20h01</p>		
<p>Next Meeting: 30 June 2020</p>		