

WOODSTOCK RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

19 Devon St. Woodstock, Cape Town - Email: committee@woodstock.org.za

WRA activities since June 2019 AGM

WRA management committee proceedings

The outgoing office bearers are: Chairperson Bevil Lucas, Vice Chair Andrea Couvert, Communications Officer Laura Meyer, Treasurer James O'Regan, Secretary Ute Kuhlmann

The WRA management committee met monthly in 2020, and in February and March 2021. The 2020 AGM was planned for 30 May, but all meetings got derailed by covid.

WRA held meetings with the Woodstock CAN during lockdown. Committee meetings resumed in September and October and WRA held a CAN/WRA community get-together at the Peace Park on 7 November.

WRA communicated with and polled members on its FB page and the Woodstock group.

WRA tried again to organise an AGM towards the end of 2020, but decided to postpone until meeting was safe and legal under covid regulations.

WRA discussed and consulted on passing a new constitution at the next AGM as existing constitution says it cannot be amended, but changes are necessary.

Engagement with the Ward Councillors

- WRA agreed with Cllr Bryant to have 4 meetings annually. Due to Covid, only 2 meetings happened, one attended by a larger group of CPF members, plus one meeting with the new Ward 115 Cllr Ian McMahon. Cllr Chapple was repeatedly invited but could not attend any meetings but provided some email input on request.
- WRA is part of the Ward 57 Ward committee, for the portion of the Woodstock area which falls within Cllr Paddy Chapple's ward. Although most of the projects / activities of this committee concern the Salt River and Observatory area, it was useful to see the functioning of a Ward committee. With the new local elections all the Ward committees will be re-elected. WRA will try to become part of the Ward 115 Ward committee.

Public spaces, greening and service delivery

- WRA is engaged as part of Friends of the Trafalgar Park (FoTP) to revive and upgrade the park. FoTP is in the process of signing an MoU with the City to constitute a Steering Committee. The City has allocated some budget for the Park upgrade.
- WRA met with City Parks to discuss opening of the Woodstock parks on the weekend, the possibility of permaculture in public parks and the plans for the Woodstock swimming pool. WRA also engaged City Parks to get parks reopened after lockdowns.
- WRA engaged with Cllr Bryant and FoTP around security, possible local employment and extended opening hours at the Woodstock swimming pool which was reopened for summer 2019.
Outcome: City was looking into security and Bryant asked us to wait for pool admin to find its feet before bringing up suggestions again.
- WRA engaged with Cllr Bryant that green space below Goulders Green needs to be preserved as much as possible in the social housing plans.
Outcome: While not the decision maker, Subcouncil endorsed decision that the park (Erf 13137) should be exempted from social housing reservation.
- WRA engaged with Cllr Bryant who managed to get MURP funding to increase cleaning frequency from 3 times a year to every day. Also a crane for rubble removal as illegal rubble dumping is a big problem in the area.
Outcome: This project was delayed by tender issues, but started before lockdown with 36 cleaners and has been happening on and off since then. Need to confirm that that budget not used before June 2020 was rolled over and that this gets extended for 2 years as indicated by Cllr Bryant.
- WRA engaged Cllr Bryant to lobby for more green bins in the area and was promised a green bit audit
Outcome: This has not happened yet, as far as we know
- WRA engaged City and Cllr Bryant around the public toilet c/o Aberdeen and Main Rd, next to the Townhall park which was not maintained for periods of time.
Outcome: Toilet has been maintained again, although we need to keep an eye on this.
- WRA engaged with City Parks and got trees in Woodstock pruned and painted to protect them against bark stripping.
- WRA provided input for the Maintenance of Public Green Spaces as part of the Inclusive Economic Growth Strategy.
- WRA engaged Cllr Bryant around electricity substation issues and frequent blackouts in the area.
Outcome: Problem was acknowledged and City is looking into the maintenance, but apparently national load-shedding is not helping.
- WRA engaged with Cllr Bryant around the City's use of glyphosate along road side surfaces for weed removal, which is considered poisonous, when mechanical removal could create work opportunities for local. Weed removal from gutters stopped for a while because of a

tender issue.

Outcome: City says glyphosate is safe and its use is City policy, weed removal resumed.

- WRA engaged in and had a stand at the October 2020 Woodstock Open Streets, asking people for their views on the neighbourhood.
- WRA has started engaging with landscape architects, city officials and the Peace park to explore a proposal to green and pedestrianise sections of Mountain Rd to create a “green, civic axis” between the Townhall Park and the Peace Park. This is ongoing.

Community cohesion and social issues

- WRA engaged with residents and occupants of Woodstock Hospital around safety and security and noise concerns, facilitated meetings and a hospital walk through. RTC shared contact details with residents who to get hold of in case of complaints. Proposals to organise monthly community clean-ups with residents from the area and to have a street party in summer to have a meet and greet. Also how residents could get involved in e.g. a children’s library at the hospital.
- WRA engaged with Cllr Bryant around the rising property rates in Woodstock which seem disproportional compared with more affluent suburbs. The City received over 30,000 objections for the 2018 valuation roll. There is another rates evaluation due this year and WRA is encouraging rate payers to object and apply for rebates and indigent grants where applicable.
- WRA engaged with Cllr Chapple regarding the homeless community near Queens Park/The Avenue/Trim Park. Cllr Chapple informed us that there is a court case is pending.
- WRA engaged with social worker from WID and Cllr Bryant around concerns of homelessness (including public defecation) and providing shelter and got cleaning organised.
- WRA provided input into the City’s proposed Street People Policy.
- During Covid lockdown, WRA engaged in the Woodstock CAN, assisting with fund raising and distributing funds to 4 community kitchens as well as co-ordinating with Hester Bergh around DO-nation drive by and drop donation drives. All kudos go to the Woodstock CAN activists engaged in those activities.

Safety and traffic

- WRA engaged with Cllr Bryant who promised a public lighting audit for Woodstock and an upgrade street lights with LED fittings.
- The CPF, law enforcement, WID and UWatch worked with the City to get 400.000 Ward Allocation budget spent on 9 CCTV cameras which plug into the License Plate Recognition system.

- WRA engaged with UWatch to let residents know about the neighbourhood watch and supported UWatch's nomination for neighbourhood watch awards.
- WRA attends CPF meetings whenever possible and vice versa. WRA engaged with CPF around traffic and security issues in the area. Also discussed that CPF does not get notified of new liquor license applications and renewals.
Outcome: Took this up with Cllr Bryant, Liquor License Board is provincial responsibility, but agreed to establish line of communication between CPF and Subcouncil who can comment on applications. This has not happened yet.
- WRA did Facebook poll and objected to new liquor license in the area, but has not been notified of the outcome. Liquor License Board is not responsive.
- WRA provided comments on new Traffic By-law and the proposed parking policy.
- WRA was approached with query around Rainham Lane and provided feedback.
- WRA decided to engage with CPF about situation around what used to be the Nando's on Victoria Rd, where drug users are shooting up in broad daylight. This is an ongoing concern.
- WRA engaged with CPF and Cllr Bryant around security situation at Douglas Square which is bad despite the security guards and the fence installed. This is an ongoing concern.
- WRA was engaged by Rob Marshall and communicated with Eddie Thompson around bad situation at Maskani. Prasa is unresponsive.
Outcome: Decided to take this up in the Neighbourhood Development Project. This is an ongoing concern.

Problem Buildings

- There are over 95 problem buildings in Woodstock. Some eviction cases are ongoing. WRA engaged Cllr Bryant in various meetings, as well as with Matthew Kemp (Chairperson Subcouncil 16) and Wayne Aldridge (Problem Buildings Unit).
Outcome: MURP budget allocated for one additional, dedicated problem building's officer at the Problem Buildings Unit which should have started in July 2020.

Heritage and Planning

- WRA attended meeting with developers and provided 3 sets of comments to HWC and City planning for the WEX 2 development.
Outcome: HWC decision did not support the development in the planned form, saying that it did not have a sustainable economic and social benefit to the community.
- WRA attended Subcouncil meeting around City's Spatial Development Framework and engaged City planning official in the Neighbourhood Development Project to discuss Woodstock's need to inform the City's framework going forward.

Outcome: This process was interrupted by Covid and needs to be picked up before the end of the commenting period by 23 April.

- WRA provided comments on 76 Albert Rd planning application.
- WRA engaged with oral submissions to Municipal Planning Tribunal (MPT) for Woodstock Exchange Extension.
- WRA was approached to provide comment on Chamberlain planning application and provided feedback.
- WRA decided to register as a conservation body with Heritage Western Cape covering the entire Woodstock area to be able to give input “both in terms of tangible heritage resources and intangible aspects, such as cultural tradition and the holistic approach to nature, society and social relationships.”

Outcome: Registration was approved end of February 2020 and WRA has been providing comments on 16 heritage applications since, including pursuing an appeal for the planned development on Sir Lowry Square.

For many applications, WRA has taken the lead from the Woodstock Aesthetic Advisory Body (WAAB, which covers a slightly different area) and WRA does not submit further comments.

- WRA attends WAAB meetings whenever possible and vice versa.
- WRA provided input to the proposed amendments of the Municipal By-law.
- WRA engaged Cllr Bryant that WRA receives no feedback from City planning when we provide comments on planning applications. The planning decisions are not easily accessible, nor is the MPT, and the both the commenting and appeal processes are hard to figure out.
- WRA provided comments for planning application for 50 Albert Rd (WEX 5) and appealed the planning decision at the MPT.
Outcome: Appeal was turned down and planning decision stands.
- WRA provided comment for the Dillon Lane social housing planning application.
Outcome: No feedback from the City has been received.

Neighbourhood Development Project

- WRA is engaged in the Neighbourhood Development Process, which is a working group consisting of City officials (planning and human settlements) and representatives of civil society organisations in Woodstock, Walmer Estate and Saltriver, the framework of which is formally approved by Subcouncil 16.
Outcomes:
 - Decision to launch a citizen lab project in an available space at the Woodstock Town Hall to make a physical space where citizens can get advice, share information and promote the area. This was meant to launch in April 2020, but has been delayed by Covid lockdown
 - Mapping exercise to identify issues and opportunities on a street level in the area

- Meeting with city officials, consultants and residents around Dillon Lane social housing to improve communication between all interested and affected parties. This process is ongoing and somewhat rough.
- 2 Webinars during with social housing experts explaining all the ins and outs of social housing, as well as an overview from SOHCO, the Dillon Lane social housing developer.

Housing

- WRA engaged with City officials and SOHCO in the Neighbourhood Development framework, see above.
- WRA engaged with Cllr Bryant around social housing for updates on the sites identified in Woodstock.
 - Feedback:**
 - Pickwick transitional housing site was completed and the Pine Rd residents were moved there. 2 security huts and a fence were erected at Pine Rd to prevent squatting.
 - Salt River Market social housing is going ahead with 270 social housing units and 130 gap housing units.
 - A feasibility study was done for the Woodstock Hospital site.
 - The City is going to put out requests for proposals process for the other sites, but there is no timeline yet. WRA requested that the Woodstock community get involved before the RFP are issued and to engage MAYCO member Booi. Despite various follow-ups this hasn't happened.
- WRA engaged with planning officials and MPT around establishing an inclusionary housing policy for new developments.
 - Outcome:** The City say they welcome input on this and have circulated a draft policy internally, but has not published for comment or acted on this yet.

Arts and culture, history

WRA wants to be active in this area, but other than

- engaging the City around the use of the Townhall,
- discussions around Ward Allocation proposals for memory projects and plaques for historical sites

there has been no activity.