

Greater Knysna Business Chamber
Minutes of meetings held at Southern Right Financial Services, 16 Green Street

Action points in yellow

Projects subcommittee meeting
4 April 2023 @ 14h00

Members

- Denis Pule - denis@safinco.co.za
- Tarryn Edkins - tarryn@grib.co.za
- Johny Mulder - johnymulder1@gmail.com
- Orrie Fenn - orrie.fenn@outlook.com
- Babalo Ntlebi - ntlebib@gmail.com
- Tony Siddle - TSiddle@goscor.co.za

a. Homeless shelter

- Andrew King - andrew@fkarchitects.co.za
- Mark Sofianos - mark@mgprop.co.za
- Richard Thorpe - solutions@icon.co.za

b. KAWS

- Dries van Rooyen - dries@southernwealth.co.za
- Debbie Davies - kawsvicechair@gmail.com

c. Safety & security

- Declan Nurse - response@allsound.co.za

Apologies

- Tarryn Edkins
- Andrew King

The subcommittee voted for:

- **Chair - Babalo Ntlebi (marketing, fundraising, and projects officer at Loeriehof)**
- **Vice-chair - Johny Mulder**

General

- Lack of space in the industrial area identified as a prohibiting factor to business

Homeless Shelter

Richard Thorpe reported:

- Shelter can be funded privately and built on private land, or can be built on municipal land
- Land has been identified for a temporary shelter
- This requires business plans. A private individual has offered to provide this service
- The ideal place for the shelter has been identified as Heidevallei (the municipality's new development alongside the N2)
- For this winter, the committee is looking at using the town hall annexe, plus land on Clyde Street
- Richard undertook to write a one-pager on what he thinks this group can do, what pressure needs to be brought to bear
- A shelter is not a permanent home; there is no point in having a shelter without the prospect of jobs. This is where Chamber can have second significant input.

Safety & Security

Declan reported:

- Allsound is focusing on upgrading its existing camera surveillance system to fibre
- They are working with KSSI, coordinating with SAPS, the municipal working group, and about 10 business owners to strategise the upgrade
- Allsound is a central conduit for security from Tsitsikamma to beyond George

KAWS

Debbie reported

- KAWS is basically a municipal pound and does not have the same standing as an SPCA. It has been pushing for a change in by-laws so that it can do the work themselves, without having to rely on municipal law enforcement. It is operating on 2,000 m² of municipal land, but has not signed a lease with the municipality. The municipality says it cannot give KAWS its allocated finance because there is no lease.
- KAWS works from Plett to Sedgefield
- KAWS running costs are R350,000 per month; it relies on donations and estate bequests. Municipal funding is outstanding by about R1.6 million.
- In the current year, money allocated to KAWS was diverted to pay for a security sweep at the municipality
- KAWS needs
 - Changes to the by-laws
 - Grants paid
 - Larger land
 - Signed lease

General

LESTER: GKBC relies on membership; in the short term, the only influence we have is on our membership list. If we leverage messaging through our membership, we will represent enough people to be heard. Therefore, how do we use our community to achieve results? Our only voice is our community voice. We don't have financial capacity – to promise anything else would not be honest.

Job creation & business development subcommittee meeting 4 April 2023 @ 15h00

Members

- Pierre Gouws - pierreg@srfinancial.co.za
- Reana Rossouw - rossouw@nextgeneration.co.za
- Denis Pule - denis@safinco.co.za
- Lester Day - lesterday@icloud.com
- Cathy Loupis - cathy@calconsulting.co.za
- Peter van Diepen - info@gardenroutecarrental.com
- Dries van Rooyen - dries@southernwealth.co.za
- Babalo Ntlebi - ntlebib@gmail.com

Apologies

- Reana Rossouw

The subcommittee voted for:

- Chair - Dries van Rooyen
- Vice-chair - Denis Pule

Job shadowing

- Is this something we should promote?
- We have to show the younger generation what's available. This is important for keeping them in the Garden Route
- How do you identify candidates and employers
- High schools need to be consulted

What are the limitations on job development?

- The key is land as well as launch facilities for boat builders
- Audit required of available space. GKBC needs to get access to the municipal land registry
- Municipality won't put up money unless they know what's needed
- Find out who has started businesses and why they were successful
- Internet connectivity is an issue

- If we don't know what the limitations are, we should conduct a survey
- Find statistics of who is in the northern areas, what can they do workwise. Check: Municipality did a survey last year

Topics for events

- Denis – is organising a business and investments conference for Q3 of this year
- Gift of the Givers – invite Dr Sooliman again
- Cathy – meetings could be structured with slots for local businesses (as they do at BNI); legislative issues; business monitoring
- Event for Hands and Hearts - to put their case

General

- Invite Municipal LED onto this committee – Fumie Makuyekwe (Acting Manager: Economic Development)
- Dries – we have discussed a bottom-up strategy, but there needs to be a top-down strategy to attract businesses here as well. We need to know what businesses we have, and which we can attract to support them. For example industries that export their products – the marine industry, the leisure market, life rafts. We should use our connections to bring them in.

Waste management, energy & water subcommittee meeting 4 April 2023 @ 16h00

Members

- Jan van der Westhuizen - jan@experttech.com
- Alan Bell - alan.bell.za20@gmail.com
- Andries Fourie - andries@kdpj.co.za
- Cameron Ward-Able - cameron@ciconstruction.co.za
- Debbie Davies - kawsvicechair@gmail.com
- Vaughan Palmer - vaughanmobile@yahoo.co.uk

Apologies

- Jan van der Westhuizen
- Cameron Ward-Able

The subcommittee endorsed the decision taken at the last open meeting for Jan van der Westhuizen as chair.

General

- Water is added to this subcommittee's portfolio
- Knysna Municipality did issue a tender for an energy solution. Jan's firm proposed taking the rubbish and burning it to generate electricity, and also to use alien vegetation for this purpose. If Knysna Municipality agrees, will put this plant at the sewage station. It currently looks like this will save us one stage of load shedding. There will be a cost saving as refuse will not have to be transported to Mossel Bay. Jan's firm was the only bidder
- A meeting with Deloitte is planned around waste management, water and energy. The Knysna Municipality's biggest income comes from selling water and electricity. The Deloitte meeting will hopefully help mitigate challenges in this regard.
- Problem: the municipality is not spreading word as to what is recyclable in Knysna.
- How does Chamber proceed? Do we support Jan? Do we support tide turbines and other alternate sources of power (all ideas will require EIAs)
- Chamber's job is to promote business, so if promoting brings entrepreneurs, PhD and other research students in the energy environment, we have to ask how Chamber can support them.
- Chamber should talk to Rotary – they have a team of people working on energy
- One of the most cost-effective ways of reducing the water problem is to reduce leakage (also known as non-revenue water)
- Limited electricity due to load shedding = reduced income for the municipality.
- Chamber needs to find a way to work with the municipality. One way is to take the psychological approach: 'you can make more money if you do x or y.' This adds value to the municipality. **Vaughan to action this**
- Suggestion: an informal braai with the directors so that we can understand from them what issues they're facing; invite local engineers and councilors, too
- What is restricting business growth?
 - ANDRIES – It's not a lack of land: town planning department doesn't do their work. The municipality is not signing off on developments. The officials are too scared to make decisions.
 - Is it chamber's job to ask what the problems are, to take soundings from members and to communicate the results to council? We must find the way to write the story so that the politicians get the messages from their voters.
 - A survey would cover two areas: land and planning
 - Our first objective should be communicating with the right people in the municipality.

Topics for events

- Debbie – has the experience to talk about recycling, etc.
- Gill Marcus
- Mayor & municipal manager, and their vision for business in Knysna

Social media & PR subcommittee meeting 5 April 2023 @ 14h00

Members

- Penny Rice - penny.rice@seeff.com
- Jo Pieters - jo@jopietersdesign.com
- Elizabeth-Anne Vertue - training@emporiumknysna.co.za

Apologies

- Penny Rice

Elizabeth-Anne remains chair of this subcommittee

- Additional members required for this committee

Website

- We cannot spend money on the site, but all agree that it needs upgrading.
Elizabeth-Anne may have a person who could do the work pro-bono; she will follow up.
- Martin to make a list of notes of what needs to be done
- Need to know what traffic it attracts at present
- Even if no other changes made, need to change names of directors etc.

Logo

- Jo registered that she does not like the current logo

Facebook & Instagram

- Committee to be made admins
- Why do we have a tourism pillar?

Whatsapp

- Committee to take over Whatsapp group - remove old admins

Media

- Collaboration partners required
 - Approach George Chamber
 - Nurture Knysna Municipality comms department

Newsletter

- Lester asked for data for all media;
- For our last email newsletter, Mailchimp reports our audience is 1,256 addresses; 1,113 addresses received our last mail; open rate = 35.4%; clicks per unique open = 16.2%; Total opens = 880
- Watch these figures to deduce trend

General

- As a test case, circulate an appeal to members to help KAWS receive its grant from the municipality
 - Homeless shelter can be our next priority
 - Contact George Business Chamber to find out what media works

Membership & networking events subcommittee meeting 5 April 2023 @ 15h00

Members

- Catherine Booyesen - catherine@africaozone.co.za
- Candice Barnard - candice@saltandpetal.co.za
- Mike Mills - hilltop.knysna1996@gmail.com
- Alan Bell - alan.bell.za20@gmail.com
- Ilse van Staden - ilse@hot.co.za

Apologies

- Candice Barnard

Catherine Booyesen is confirmed as chair of this subcommittee

- Technically, there has been no official meeting at which new directors were elected or appointed. This must be arranged, possibly for 3 or 4 May, 2023
- Access homeowners associations: get each estate to sign up for membership. They will decide if they like our messages, and then share them with their own members.
- Ilse to approach estates
- How do we find umbrella bodies of, for example, the industrial area, to help us access businesses for membership
- What feedback have we received on our initial approach? Most commonly: 'what did Chamber accomplish in the previous year?' Pierre to compile a list
- Investigate possibility of having a table to recruit members at the Oyster Festival
- Mike to approach charities, etc.
- Committee to ignore people on our existing list and focus on new names. We will approach people on the list for payment of dues
- Alan is concentrating on industrial area and retail

- We will measure our success by the numbers of new members
 - Alan to arrange coffee with the taxi forums

 - Push the Chamber as 'The voice of the community through business.'
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Municipal affairs & finance subcommittee meeting 5 April 2023 @ 16h00

Members

- Keith Killops - keith@gkconsulting.co.za
- Johan Pretorius - johan@Kmvaluers.co.za
- Cliff Elion - cliffprop@gmail.com
- Richard Thorpe - solutions@icon.co.za

Apologies

- Keith Killops
- Johan Pretorius

Also present

- Alan Bell

Election of a chairperson: the meeting was unable to come to a conclusion.

- It was noted that the Chamber does not have regular, minuted meetings with the municipality. and that Chamber does not monitor key communications from the municipality. Alan Bell to reach out to municipality. Richard does invite municipality communications to his meetings.
- Keith is inspecting the municipality's financial reports. Cliff to contact Keith and Richard for guidance on the reports.
- Should we make input suggestions on municipal budgets? Richard reported that draft budgets were made to council last week. They have till 31 May to finalise their budget. The problem is that in the past, the municipality has tried to avoid inviting the audit committee to its budget workshops. Last year, it would not allow opposition members into the meetings.
- Keith to study the budgets and report back to the subcommittee.
- Important to get Mike Hennesey involved in this subcommittee.
- Do we have access to the audit committee?
 - Richard reported that the municipality chose to ignore the audit committee. The audit committee is supposed to be an independent body that operates without

external pressure. We will therefore have to exercise caution in this regard.

However, the audit committee should be our ally in this.

- Richard suggested examining the Treasury website <https://municipalmoney.gov.za> where users can see whether individual municipalities are improving or not.
- Are we happy with rates valuations?
 - Mike Hennesy to investigate
- There is an issue with the quality of people in the municipality: the acting CFO, for example is in her position illegally (underqualified)
- Noted that GKBC and Sedgefield sent a letter putting the municipality on notice, but there has been no response. **Cliff to send Martin a copy of this letter.**
- **Richard: We need to monitor the tender process in the municipality**

Topics for events

- Someone who can talk on municipal finances; perhaps Dr Denis Farrell from George, or Dr Andy Bruff, current chair of Sedgefield Ratepayers