

Greater Knysna Business Chamber

Management committee meeting 18 June 2024

MINUTES

JAN VAN DER WESTHUIZEN: Opens meeting

Knysna Business Chamber is the beacon of this town's business. Our Chamber is really one that people want to be part of because we are making a difference. Whether it's the smaller things that we are doing or the larger issues that we're tackling, we want to make a difference. Moving forwards, I want to encourage you to take on this opportunity of being a spirit of inclusivity, a spirit of growth, a spirit of support for our community. And when you arrive at the Chamber you ask, 'what can we do collectively to make this town a better town?'

You've probably heard this before, but there's a thing called six degrees of separation. That is, if you take 6 people that you know, and everyone of those six takes six people, eventually we will find someone who knows the president. And if that's the case, it means that with your support, and your enthusiasm we could reach a lot more people in town. It is for that reason that the town ratepayers, the Brenton Ratepayers decided to join this chamber, and there are other ratepayers associations that have said they want to join, too, and be part of it. And for that I say welcome, and urge any of you who knows a friend who knows a friend, and eventually arrive here so that we can make a difference.

Thank you for your dedication, thank you for the hard work that you're doing. Thank you for your continuous support, the journey that you're on. Let's continue being the people that make this town a better place.

GUEST SPEAKER

DAVE HARTY; THE ALTERNATIVE BOARD; What I do is work with business owners in ways that ultimately impact their lives in a positive way.

The Alternative Board is a business that's been around for over thirty years. It was established in the States, and has also grown to other areas of the world: Europe, Australasia, and South Africa and is relatively new to the Garden Route and Knysna.

Now you may ask yourselves, 'in what ways does someone help me in a manner that ultimately has a positive impact on my life as opposed to my business. We focus on 6 areas that apply to all businesses regardless of what they might be. It could be a manufacturer, a retailer, or a construction company. We have found that there are 6 main areas that business owners have across industries. The first one is time: what does time represent in our lives, do business owners have sufficient time to work on their businesses as opposed to in them, so investing time to grow their business as opposed to running around on day-to-day operational issues, which

ultimately are important to address, but also the longer-term aspect of time is often not focussed on. The other element with time is are the right employees devoting the right time to the business.

Next, we look at money, that would obviously be the financial return on their business, the ability to grow the business, the ability to manage costs, the ability to invest in the business over a period of time for growth.

Then we look at people. Are the right people in the right situations as far as business is concerned, and responsible for the right areas of the business. So we look at number 1 the management teams in businesses, and we look also at staff and people development - that's a very important facet - and making sure that there is a succession planning element to each and every business that we focus on, to allow the business owner to look to the future, and have a level of comfort that they have the right people that they can pass on the reigns to, whether it's in the business or outside of it.

The last three areas are longer-term items. That is vision - what does the business owner see the long-term future of the business to be; and then strategy - what is the strategy that needs to be adopted to achieve that vision, and then the big factor out of all of those is the exit. The exit planning to basically either pas on the business to another individual - it could be a family member or it could be dressing up the business to help ready it for a sale.

So those are the six categories that we look at, and now I would like to share how we go about that.

The focus is on small to medium sized businesses, so we're not necessarily looking at a very large corporate entity, although we would apply our methodology to a large corporate. The area of focus as far as our businesses are concerned in the sphere of targets for The Alternative Board are small to medium size businesses. You often find that small to medium sized businesses do not have a structured board of directors like the big corporates do, so the opportunity that is on offer is for a small business owner to join an advisory board. That advisory board is a forum of like-minded individual business owners. The membership of that board will consist of about 8 to 10 individuals, and what that advisory board does is it gives an opportunity to members to ultimately draw on experience and exposure of other members in the particular forum. Our advisory boards run for four hours each month. Members are required to bring a topic to the board meeting, and to share the challenge or opportunity in one of those six areas of business, so ultimately get questions and feedback from the other members, and then over and above that to receive recommendations and advice from like-minded people who have had similar experiences and have addressed them in some shape or form. So it allows the member access to expertise and experience that is readily available, and over and above that a level of comfort that they're not just getting consulting time.

When I looked at the businesses that I wanted to pursue in the Garden Route, I was very wary of selling consulting time as a management consultant. I had experience in business, but I didn't

necessarily think that I myself would value consulting time or a consultant coming into my space and offering services on what they would recommend me to do as far as my business was concerned. When I was pursuing various alternatives, it dawned on me that an advisory board is greater and an element of synergy across the membership and I attended many advisory boards, to sit in on them and to get a feel from them on how they actually take place, and the methodology. I as a facilitator and not necessarily the smartest person in the room, but I have through this methodology the ability to control the meeting in a manner that teases out recommendations and practical advice for members in a way that adds value to those members.

Outside of that, I work with business owners from the board in terms of commitments that they make at those board meetings, to ultimately allow them to focus and channel effort. So it's not just a once-off scenario where the business owner gets advice and can take it or leave it. I try to pursue and make sure the business owners commit to pursuing the recommendations made in those board meetings. Added to that, the process is guided by a suite of software tools that effectively allow the business owner to map out a path and the critical steps towards accomplishment or achieving a particular opportunity or resolving a particular issue, and generally across their business as far as the vision of the business is concerned.

Given the fact that there's quite a bit of track record and membership in The Alternative Board, the software tools also allow business owners to tap into other members who may be in equivalent businesses across the globe, or they might be complimentary businesses that can help and ultimately be engaged with to generate business opportunities. So for example, if you have an injection molding company in Knysna and you are looking to take their product internationally, given that there are 4,000 alternative board members across the globe you may be able to tap into a distributor based in New Zealand, or a service based in New Zealand that would sell your product, or could use your product. So there are 4,000 members who have access to TAB software, and access to The Alternative Board methodology, and are used to acting in a way that either provides for a degree of help from others, or the ability to ask for help. So the shared community space has a big emphasis as far as The Alternative Board is concerned.

I just wanted to introduce that concept to you and I'll leave you some literature if you'd like to make use of it.

Thank you very much for inviting me.

JAN: Thank you Dave, it is good to know that there is corporate growth in the Garden Route because that's ultimately where we're going. You might be a small company today, but you need to think on a corporate level.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Our reports are provided because it's important to understand what's happened since we last spoke, what the different subcommittees are doing, and what are the challenges that they face.

We also want to thank Issaquena Heights Boutique Hotel for hosting us this afternoon. at this magnificent hotel with its beautiful view.

INFRASTRUCTURE

DIRK: STANDING IN FOR EUGENE VERMAAK, Chairperson of the Infrastructure Committee:
This presentation is just to give you an idea of what the committee has been busy with.

The infrastructure committee has been focusing on water and sewage although roads and vehicles etc. also fall in our portfolio

The infrastructure committee started off by repairing George Rex Drive, and started working closely with the municipality and specifically the directorate that looks after water and sewage.

Our mission is to make Knysna a better place (??) in collaboration with all relevant parties. So we work with the municipality, with other committees, and with the community. In many cases the community contacts us and there's a very close liaison between Eugene and Royden at the municipality, who's primarily responsible for water and sewage. The idea is to make Knysna a better place for the tourists, and for the people of Knysna; to create more jobs, to see that the town runs better, to improve the economy, and to act for all the people of the Greater Knysna area.

Some of the projects:

Finances that have been spent thus far. It started off with three groups; the George Rex people, the people from Leisure Isle, and the people from The Heads who put money together initially to repair George Rex Drive. From that day, additional funds have then been used to spend on projects. One example was the Woodbourne Bridge, where the sewage was blocked and repaired. I must also say that up to now, B&V Contractors have been very helpful and always willing to come out, at night and over weekends if necessary. In a few cases, we've been able to get parts from them to do the repairs when the Municipality maybe didn't have parts in stock, and then the parts could be replaced later on.

Agnar Street was quite a nightmare. Repairs and breakages seemed to go on forever and ever. As soon as they fixed one another one broke, so they ended up with a number of holes in the street. This is a situation that happens often: as soon as they've done a repair, it breaks a couple of metres away. This is due to old and aging infrastructure.

The Old Cape Road was quite a serious one. There was a breakage before Simola, and then in the next week another breakage just after Simola. This was serious because it's the mainline supplying water to the whole town. What had happened was that the old line had a problem, they shut that off, and then the new line broke. The break in the new line was under concrete, so they couldn't just open it up, so they had to work on the old line first, then break up the concrete

and work on the new line. That concrete is being poured back today, and the line should be in use toward the end of the week.

Ashmean walkway, down at Costa Sarda, there was a sewage blockage that caused quite a mess.

Bokmakierie - the water pipe that burst ran under the N2. The municipality is not allowed to just go and chop up the N2 to fix it, so we had to get approval from SANRAL to work there, and then again get B&V in to open and clear everything out, slide the complete pipe out from under the N2. That was quite a major job that took a couple of days to fix at a cost of R48,000. The impact was that the private hospital, the industrial area, and the Hunter's Home area were without water.

Other projects that the committee assisted on includes a sewage leak at Welbedacht, one in the Industrial area, a water pipe burst in Fraser Street, one in Thesen Street, and then the jet truck's pump was faulty so that had to be repaired. We found in a number of cases, apart from the infrastructure that breaks, sometimes equipment is also not operational, so we have to pay attention to that as well.

We are fortunate to have a resident diver in town, who moved here late last year. He's been invaluable to the infrastructure group in doing repairs. You can imagine the delay and the cost if we had to bring someone in from outside. So we're very fortunate to have Pierre van Biljon here as our diver.

Water security. The system is that water is pumped from the Glebe Dam to Akkerkloof, and from the river to Akkerkloof, and then the two lines feed into town to the water treatment centre. There was recently a problem with the diesel generator running at Glebe, and that will only be operational again by the end of this week. There was one pump broken which was supposed to pump from the river to Akkerkloof, so our levels dropped down to dangerous levels, but fortunately we've been able to just make it, and with the rain that occurred at the beginning of last week, that saved us. Akkerkloof is our backup if the river goes low.

Then there's also the project known as Lake Howard, which is just next to the Knysna Golf Club. Every time I've been there over a long period of time, the road was under water. So there's a project under way at the moment to do a fairly large amount of work in the area, cleaning up storm water, etc. etc.

There's quite a lot of money to be spent at the wastewater treatment plant. There was some work done on it last year and in January, but not everything that needed to be repaired was repaired. They did just the most urgent and serious work, and they are now busy with quotations from specialists who will come in and do the work so that we have a plant that is fully operational. The equipment that we had there apparently is of the best available in the world, so there's no problem there: it was just the case that the management of the plant, and the maintenance of the plant weren't kept up.

All of this work is not possible without finances, so we as different committees of the Business Chamber are working on various ways of getting funding on an ongoing basis so that we have funds available for emergencies to support the Municipality. It will not be to take over the responsibility of the Municipality, but just as an emergency fund when the town is in a crisis and at risk, that we can get the problem sorted out, and get the payment sorted out thereafter.

FROM THE FLOOR: What is the Chamber going to do about making sure that the Municipality plays its role in the future.

DIRK: The Business Chamber is planning to get more businesses and also more informal businesses from all the different areas of Knysna involved. At the moment there are not enough of them involved. The business chamber is also working with the Municipality through various committees, also part of the finance committee with Mr Thorpe and we've done a lot of work on this. Unfortunately all of our suggestions for the year's budget starting on the 1st of July, I think the effort was as good as possible, but it wasn't implemented. But we kind of expected that but we still had to tell them what we think the budget should look like. We as committees, in every case that I showed you here, the technical staff have been involved with the infrastructure committee. So it's not that we're just coming in with the contractor and do all the work for them. We work with the technical people, primarily reporting to Royden, to work on those projects, we just assist them with additional work where they need equipment that the Municipality doesn't have, that's what we provide. In some places there may be certain skills – there is a shortage of skills in the technical department. There are not enough staff there so that is something that we are working on to get the municipality to put that right.

JAN: IF anyone on the room thinks you can play a role in this infrastructure committee, please be in contact with us. We as business cannot rescue the municipality we can only put plasters onto what's needed for us to have our businesses going on. I can say to you that I met with the new MM this morning who comes from a different perspective of administration. We agreed that from now on we will have an overarching memorandum of understanding between us and the municipality whereby we address these issues. Key is to understand the vision of this town, the service delivery is the aspect that we need to fix because we as businesses are not responsible for that. He is of the same opinion, so I have high hopes. His name is Mr Setloane Malepeng and he comes from Burgersfort in Mpumalanga. I look forward to seeing him in action; it is a fresh start.

FROM THE FLOOR: There is a perception that the Knysna Municipality pays the Knysna Business Chamber for work. That is not the case. The Chamber facilitates and assists to get the right contractors with the right skills, but this still goes through the normal finance processes of the Knysna Municipality.

The only way we can get this information through to all the people of Knysna is through our ward committees. We need to make sure that it gets emailed and documented in minutes through the ward meetings that happen once a term. I fall under Rheenendal: those people up

in Rheenendal do not know – I moan about my dirty water, they moan because they do not have water. So where is the middle ground. I sit on that ward committee, and all that I do is share the information with them about what's been happening.

JAN: I can confirm that there are definitely no payments from the Municipality in any chamber activities. The money that we utilise is from people around the community saying they want to contribute and fix it, But even if one invested a million rand, it will not solve this budget. So we need to fix the town by working with the municipality.

SAFETY AND SECURITY SUBCOMMITTEE

DECLAN NURSE, Allsound Security: I was asked to give you a five minute overview of the current situation with safety and security in Knysna, and potentially where we hope to go in the future.

Every Thursday we have a meeting at 8:00 o'clock with all role players, and I must say at this stage we're getting outstanding support from Knysna SAPS, both from a managerial and an operational perspective. It's one thing having the support from the managerial, but it's so important in our industry to have the operational support. Crime at the moment is relatively low and let's call it under control. Unfortunately statistics are contact crime, which is the crime that affects most of us in the most emotional manner, is on the increase.

We have found that we've created groups with a unit at SAPS called the Crime Prevention Unit - they have certain groups that are on duty at selected times, and it works well because they provide us with daily updates of who has been arrested, who is wanted, and which warrants are out so that if we see them in town, we can inform them, and we actually getting continuity and follow-through. In one case, we had two break-ins on Leisure Isle. We knew who the suspects were, with communication with SAPS on that group. They were able to go to the person's house, and they found the items in their house, which led to their arrest. Those are the kind of situations that you want to happen.

At the moment a lot of our known criminals, known housebreakers, known violent criminals, are in jail so we're actually having a very peaceful time. Crime is at an all-time low at the moment, but unfortunately this will change. As we go into the second half of the year, we'll see parolees being released and then we'll have a spike again. The reality is criminals look for easy opportunities where they're not going to get caught. So if you start breaking in in a safe suburb and you don't get caught, you're going to continue until you do get caught and you go to jail. We are in a small community, so we're really held to ransom by 20 to 30 individuals that cause the crime. We had a spike in crime a few months ago in Hunter's Home, but when that group was caught, working with the neighborhood watch, ourselves, SAPS, when the guy was caught, things have been quiet since then.

Last week we were at a safety and security expo in Joburg, and I can positively say that both Knysna and ourselves are on the right road map, there's no advance technology that we're

behind because we're in a small town. We are up to date with what needs to happen. Our challenge is finance - without finance we are always going to struggle. So what we're working on at the moment is a project called Safer Places - so Hunter's Home is on board and we're getting that sorted out, and it's working well. We try and put a vehicle in the area, we try and put cameras in the area, we try maintaining those cameras because it's one thing putting up the camera, but the next thing is making certain that every day that camera is operational and that you have response responding to the camera when an alert comes through.

It's a continual process, and we've struggled to gain traction. So what we've done in Knysna Central for the Safer Spaces Project we've tried a pilot initiative in Gray Street with Revive Knysna. We've got a dedicated, branded vehicle in the area, we've put up one camera node at the end of Gray Street near the Waterfront, and we've got a camera node in the Main Street. We all need this network feeding information back, and where we're struggling is - and it's unfair to think that businesses need to go over and above to support the initiative - it costs money to do this, and we really need the Municipality to buy. Last year R500,000 was spent on cameras at the Municipality. Those cameras aren't working because yes you've spent the money to put the cameras in, but what happens in month 2 when the camera goes down. So if there's anybody here in the Municipality, please come and talk to us. We're happy to do it on a community basis, we're putting up cameras at our own cost, we need to work together to try and get this rolled out for everybody in Knysna.

Any safety and security must be open to the Greater Knysna Area. So any discussion must be a community discussion and we can get there, but we need buy-in from everybody

I would like to end up by saying thank you for the individual support we're getting from the businesses because without the support of individuals out there we can't put the cameras up.

JAN: Declan represents the Business Chamber in the bigger Knysna Safety Forum where SAPS are, our CPF, the Municipality, our hospital doctors are there, and he's our representative in the whole area, and yes, they are doing a great job.

KNYSNA EDUCATION SKILLS HUB

VICKY ARENDS: I am representing KESH and I make apologies for Kogee Moodley who unfortunately cannot be here this afternoon.

So what is KESH? KESH lives under the theme 'Growing our own timber.' We strive to have an all-inclusive satellite organisation that is approachable to both the thinkers and the layman alike. We have 13 training providers and partnerships include the Knysna Municipality, the Skills Mecca, the Business Chamber, Knysna LED, Ithuba, and individuals that make up this organisation where we make training, learning, and development approachable to every person in our community. If every person in the community can have top of heart, and top of mind that there is an organisation that can help them to grow, to be better.

KESH was instrumental in bringing the South Cape College that is now based in Plettenberg Bay, to Knysna. So it is official, they are coming to Knysna. The municipality and other partners are looking into the right premises, and that would grow our economy. It would help that our children don't have to leave Knysna. It means that our kids can now take a taxi and go to be educated. It also means that it is approachable to anyone in Knysna for a better future for us all.

The pathway for KESH is to help the school leaver under grade 8 - we have plenty of those people, and sometimes within them they have an aspiration to grow out of that. They can then apply to Hope HQ, which is where the Youth for Christ businesses is, in Uil Street in the Industrial area. They have a programme whereby the learners are taught to work with their hands; they also have a sewing programme, and I know they have an administration and a computer programme as well. And then we grow to the grades 10 to 12, with the training colleges and the SCCs that want to help them for better prospects so that they can help them to apply to a college outside of Knysna and to go to university if that is their aim and their drive.

So what is our goal? We want to have buildings and premises and people to help better our society. We want to have standing premises so that people aren't concerned about whether they can go to college. That the educators are trained, and it's a recognised institution that helps you grow,

We also support and help the Care Bears of the Knysna Shelter Organisation, and together with the Skills Mecca, we have brought help to students in business accounting, in boat building, in millwrighting, which is very much run through the municipality - and there are also other programmes that are run through the municipality such as traffic control and education of traffic officers and that is all run through KESH.

I really believe that the municipality has come on board with regard to educating and training our people.

What has also happened with Hands and Hearts - the ladies who go for seamstress training - they have tried to raise funds so that every lady that leaves, leaves with a basic sewing machine so that she can put a garment together and then sell it.

JAN: I want to mention that KESH was born out of a need to have a college in town. And then once we'd brought South Cape College here, we realised that there are service providers in town busy with some sort of training, and yes, the municipality has taken a very industry-focussed approach to training: the boatbuilders industry that they put together was out of the league of the growing boatbuilders. There is currently a programme of a hundred people that are going to do (????) creation, which is the next phase of our town's informal economy. The informal economy in South Africa is a large one. They are also training veg farming, people that provide food for communities, they are providing training in business administration, and we as a chamber will take on five students to place them in workplaces in the chamber, and the committees that are busiest will get those people.

INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

DRIES VAN ROOYEN: Happy to be here with such a good crowd. We have made some good progress on the investment side, and we will make even more progress this year. Last year, you will recall, we had a very successful pre-conference that went down very well. We worked very closely with our partners Wesgro, the District Municipality, and the Province making sure that we can provide investment opportunities for businesses, opportunities for businesses to enlarge to create more employment – and that's really the purpose: To provide jobs which is the biggest problem in this country. Overall 43% of the population are jobless, amongst our youth it's 64% and they're very demotivated, and we need to do something about that. So from an investment point of view, we are looking at concentrating on specific industries such as agri, boatbuilding, etc. It's amazing how many opportunities there are in sleepy Knysna - it's growing all the time. Our end goal is to provide jobs specifically for our youth, who are our future. We need to create jobs here so that people don't need to go and find jobs elsewhere in the world.

For our scoreboard, it was good to have that pre-conference workshop last year, and now we are planning a follow-up investment conference later this year. Also, we have reached out beyond our country, and we recently hosted the ambassador of France at special invite, to give him a full presentation of what we are doing, what we are capable of, but also what does the future look like. They are very happy to help us with twinning with a French town, and we're also looking at twinning with cities in the USA and Brazil.

NATHI MAKUBANE: I'm the vice-chairperson of the investment committee under the leadership of Dries.

To add to what Dries has said, we've also approached the BRICS consuls because we want them to be the additional partners and stakeholders in the regional investment conference.

RIC stands for the Regional Investment Conference which will be hosted by the Greater Knysna Business Chamber in partnership with Knysna Municipality, supported by the Garden Route District Municipality, Wesgro, Western Cape, and National Government. The theme for this year is Science, Tech and Innovation. So the solutions that will be based on the regional investment conference will be science, tech, and innovation. The idea is to bring together a variety of domestic and international visitors from across the country and around the world so that we can enhance the economy of Knysna, promote Knysna as the investment destination, create jobs, and address many social and economic challenges that Knysna is facing.

Why attend the conference? The RIC is looking for solutions that will address skills deficits in Knysna, economic growth, inadequate power supply, and climate change, and promote Knysna as an investment destination.

When will the conference take place? From 1 to 25 October we will be doing the pitching competition, where we will be giving the opportunity to the SMMEs in Knysna who want to pitch for funding or investment at the event on the 14th of November. Enrolling for that

programme in October, everyone who wants to pitch will be assessed and then we will select 15 or 20 local SMMEs that will do the accreditation for funding from the investors, government and private sector. Registration and accreditation will take place on the 13th of November - we are still looking for the venue, but we are trying to find one in the centre of town. Then the next day on the 14th we'll have the Regional Investment and Skills Summit. That is going to be the day for SMMEs to pitch for funding opportunities. Then the second day will be on the 15th. when we will have the main event, where the chamber will be pitching to the investors, national government, for example what the gentleman was presenting about regarding the infrastructure because one of the areas that we are focusing on is the sustainability in investment, and also to look into funding for aging infrastructure which is one of the key challenges in Knysna. After that we will have a gala dinner where we will be engaging one-on-one with the dignitaries and investors. The purpose of that gala dinner: we want the people to make a commitment. It doesn't work to organise a big event, and then after that the people go with no commitment, no participation. So we want them in that gala dinner to pledge their support - this is how we're going to fund the infrastructure in waste management sector of Knysna, this is how we're going to assist the lady who's doing the textiles, this is the funding that we are willing to put into that. We are also looking for a venue for that one.

And then on Saturday we'll be doing the (??) and Innovation Exhibition where we will have all the schools in Knysna, the SETAs, the businesses, the private sector, all the different departments from national government will be showcasing their offerings to the SMMEs, to the students, to the people who want to further their studies.

Who should participate? The Regional Investment Conference will bring together stakeholders including private sector, business sector, tourism, SANParks, nature reserves, policymakers, young people. Those people will discuss the challenges caused by climate change and energy crisis. This will also help us as we take part in opportunities (???) by key strategies for financing, mobilising, and drafting an action plan.

FROM THE FLOOR: How is this conference going to benefit the poorest of the poor in Knysna? How are we going to make sure that all sectors of society will benefit from this conference?

NATHI: The investment conference is not only focusing on tourism. We are focusing on agriculture, skills development, energy, and social development. This is why I say to you on our next meeting we will be engaging with the BRICS because we want to bring them to Knysna so that we can hear what opportunities that are there in Brazil, in the United Emirates, in China, in Russia - how can we exchange skills, opportunities, what market is available, how can we in Knysna tap into the economy of Brazil and China. So bringing those people here is already an opportunity for Knysna's people to showcase the brand Knysna for investment,

And you are correct, technology, innovation, and science are the cornerstones of the economy in America, we need to look at what is it exactly they are doing there that is enhancing their economy and try and bring it here in Knysna - so that is the whole purpose of having this conference in Knysna.

We don't have funding for this project, we are looking at floating other stakeholders. Myself and my chairperson in the committee cannot do this alone. We need your support, we need your network, we need to be able to tap into your connections so that we can be able to talk to the people that can bring us resources or funding for this particular programme.

The budget is sitting at R1.5 - R2.5 million to be able to execute this. The venue that we have identified is the Safe Hub, where the big soccer field is as you drive up to Concordia. This will open opportunities, the market for SMMEs within the communities of that area.

JAN: I think it is vital that we attract investment to Knysna. I visited the Spanish embassy a month back, and learned that Spain is willing to come to Knysna to focus their technology and innovation because their aim - if they announce in the newspapers that they will support South Africa with R20 million doesn't mean that they will bring us the money, it means that they want to bring their technology into South Africa worth R20 million in order to start growing their businesses. The opportunity of that in South Africa and in Knysna is that we must latch onto that and to see if we can help them expand here, maybe develop it here, maybe manufacturing it here, and that is how we can latch onto their technology as well. It doesn't mean that we must grab everything that they throw at us - we are innovative, we look and learn, and we develop our better technologies.

TOURISM COMMITTEE

ELMAY BOUWER: I'm presenting this afternoon on behalf of Judiet Barnes, who is out of town.

A lot of the concerns that you have mentioned is probably our concerns as well. I think since the last Manco meeting what we have done - and when I say 'us,' really it is the industry. In tourism we all have to work together in this town, also we work very closely as a region, as the Garden Route. So we have had a meeting at Knysna Hollow with the Tourism Grading Council. Speaking about how important it is for our products and offerings in Knysna to be graded. With the grading also comes a criteria; some people feel positive about it, some not. It was a good interaction day where the people come from Cape Town and the products could engage and ask questions. Whether it was worthwhile to pay? Why must we pay? What are we getting back, but also we had a chance to tell the grading council not what they are doing wrong, but what they can do probably differently.

In March and April you will have seen that a lot of our products have gone to Cape Town and Durban for trade shows.

We don't always realise how many people are running businesses in tourism in Knysna in any of our industries, just purely because it's the same old people attending these things. At Indaba I went and took photos of all the Knysna products and there were 20 different Knysna businesses at Indaba, all scattered over three venues, with the Garden Route District Municipality in the one venue together with Visit Knysna with no overall marketing strategy.

On Facebook, Knysna Daily, one person asked, how is everyone doing this year - Air BnBs, hotels - in general, especially how are your bookings in winter? In a town where tourism is one of the bigger job creators, I found it interesting that one product owner, who is based in Knysna and takes people tiger fishing on the Zambezi as well as bringing them to Knysna, said, 'I was at Indaba, and I'm sad to say a huge Knysna opportunity was missed out on. With all our incredible offerings, Knysna should have put together an independent stand funded by all the role players. A private initiative like this would have attracted the many international and regional buyers,' and then he did mention some negative local publicity on Carte Blanche, 'but I feel that our fixed initiative has filtered back to the consumer.'

Looking back, Indaba for me was not only to sell something; quite a lot is learned, but I do agree that we were all scattered, and that is where we come back. Judiet has then decided that we should start; do we as a town actually have a marketing strategy, a destination marketing plan. I have got on file of years back - 2015, I think - till when Wesgro was here. So I phoned to ask for our marketing strategy, and I received an email back to say we don't have one at the moment because there is no budget for it, and hopefully in the new financial year.

I do want to say that the one thing where Judiet will take control now is to get hold of that because if there is not an overall destination marketing plan, not even private sector can do their planning when it comes to which trends are we going to follow, how are we going to put ourselves out there, so we won't even get to the fact that what jobs must we create.

On the skills development side, we've also gone on a different route. After the engagement with the French ambassador, we went to a hospitality school in Addo. They use the existing B&Bs and hotels as training schools. They set up a facility where they take the young people out of the community and they place them on those properties and they train there, qualify CATHSETA, very much a French flair, and then they work at those institutions and get paid. We've been there, we've had the interaction, and I can say they are here on Friday evening in Knysna looking at 3 or 4 hospitality places to see if we can do the same kind of thing.

At the moment DEDAT - the tourism industry never has any money - has put out in the Western Cape a customer care NQF Level 4 course that is paid for. It's happening over 7 days in July in Knysna. We involve our staff members - 4 days in a class and 3 days practical training where they go back to their workplace so that they don't lose out on any money.

Throughout the three months we have had operators and buyers in town and I can say that the industry is working together to entertain these people and show them everything in and around Knysna.

Garden Route and Klein Karoo Weddings Meetup - this is happening next week during the Oyster Festival where someone has taken the initiative that all the wedding vendors that we put a whole portfolio together which will go to WTM (World Travel Market) in London in November.

We have met with Nathi about the Investment Conference, just for the tourism part. All the concerns that we have got other similar towns we have gone to them and we've seen if they have had an investment conference with a tourism side to it, and I have given the number of a business owner and councilor who has run a very successful investment conference in Hermanus 2 or 3 times now, with the tourism side as well.

On the Oyster Festival: I phoned them and my message was very clear. I have spoken to the Knysna Accommodation Association that represents the smaller B&Bs, Simola, Featherbed, Blackwaters, Rex Hotel, The Lofts, Turbine, Pezula and Knysna Hollow all are on the same page with congratulations for an excellent programme, but they all felt that it's very last minute - it's a bit too late, that they are booked for the first weekend, the marathon; there are hotels that are fully booked for the first weekend, but not for the Oyster Festival, and that is because they have held as hotels different events. During the week, not many of them are filled up with domestic market. Most of those hotels during the week are filled with the UAE market, and also Brazil and India. Simola, for example, said to me that the Friday night they are booked with a whole lot of locals who are attending the wine evening and who don't want to drink and drive. And I think that is a very important lesson: they obviously gave a better rate, I'm not sure, but they are having the wine event and they filled up the hotel.

Instead of a smart function at a boutique hotel, they've opened up the opening function in the main road, and everybody is welcome.

Coming back to the ward committees, we talked about businesses and creating jobs. It's private sector's responsibility to create positions and to create jobs. Municipality must create the infrastructure, source the buildings, make sure everything works, but it is the private business owner, the entrepreneur's responsibility to think out of the box and to stimulate and to come up with creative new ideas. We source funding all over and we took young guys that can swim, and we took the money the ward pays for it coming from the municipal funds we trained those guys from Karatara and Smutsville to become lifesavers, they went through the whole course. They then have jobs only over December, and we then as private sector created new activities and these people with our safety regulations now have jobs throughout the year. So there is funding available, but we need to take the initiative.

HOMELESS SHELTER

MARVINE PEDRO: I am the chairperson for Care Bears; I will introduce Care Bears, and then cover the goals for the temporary structure.

I just want to acknowledge everybody that's supporting the homeless people.

I can say with confidence that we have moved to a space where we now can say that there is good progress when it comes to a temporary structure for the homeless people.

Care Bears is a non-profit, a community of people from the broader Knysna working together to make a difference and changes in the local community. Care Bears has lots of plans. We are also in the business of opening a safe space for people in need - victims, women - we have worked together with women in the community of Hornlee, whereby we have got land and we are in the business of building that space for victims.

We went to the municipality - it's now final, it's going to council at the end of the month, so therefore I can say that we are looking at a definite yes for the temporary homeless shelter.

ANTON GERBER: The homeless shelter is a process, and dealing with the municipality on it is a process. We started off by first identifying a site that could house the majority of the homeless people of Knysna. We identified the site, took it to the municipality, took it to a smaller group of key people who were involved with it. We went to the Municipality and said that we would approach (the old municipal testing station) as a temporary site, knowing that once we're in there, it's going to be far more difficult for them to move us.

The temporary and permanent sites went to council. Before we went to council, we had a meeting with all the interested parties that are involved - the Homeless Forum, Revive Knysna, Rotary, and other interested parties. We got together and agreed that the one thing we needed to do is to go to the municipality with just one proposal. We then took it to council and there were a lot of delays with MMs being fired and coming back, National elections, etc. But Jan and I were there often, knocking at the door saying can we see you to get this thing finalised. Now it has been passed by council they've all agreed that they are happy with our proposal. We had a site meeting with all the interested parties. As soon as a Section 80 council meeting takes place, it will be presented. There are other processes that need to take place and we already with Liezel Baadjies and all of them busy getting those things behind the scenes prepared so that once it gets approved by the Section 80 council meeting that we can then start.

Lastly, with Cathy's help we have got a meeting tomorrow to discuss the financing of this project. Money is not going to come from the municipality as we have heard from all the previous speakers. If all the previous speakers got no money there is no chance that we're going to get any money. We know that, and we meet tomorrow with the interested parties to see where the money is going to come from, where the source is going to come from for materials, and we will then begin.

JAN: The development does not require rezoning, it's for a land use application because the land is already municipal land, it's already been utilised for services, although it's not been utilised for homeless services. We've already spoken to a town planner that will help us fast track that, and the city town planners team has also been in the run-up meetings.

FROM THE FLOOR: There is huge concern from the people in Rykmanshoogte regarding the homeless coming to the old testing station. We have not been consulted about it. One of the questions that came up was if it's temporary, how long will that be.

ANTON: When we had the site meeting, the proposal that was there to change the entrance from where the houses and the businesses are behind the station, to close that completely, so that you won't be able to see it, or you won't be able to enter there, and the entrance to that will be from the bottom. The idea with the homeless shelter, with a temporary homeless shelter, is not to dump people and tell them you can build what you want - it will be very much organised and run by the NPO that's going to run it by law, and it's going to be controlled; there is education and rehabilitation taking place, there's going to be employment created for the people that are there. Instead of standing at the bottom of Vigilance Drive, you will be on a list for people that want to come and employ you. So it will be a very organised system: it won't just be we dump the people and then you never hear from us again. There is a plan that will be put forward in the participation plan that will be given to the community that lives there.

FROM THE FLOOR: People are sometimes more angry because they have not been consulted than because of the idea.

JAN: I was there during the council meeting where we presented the plan, because we had to start somewhere. The councilor definitely acknowledged and was concerned about the public participation, which we agreed that this will start immediately. Such a process was initiated by Liezel Baadjies from the municipality, and they will go ahead, while we are waiting for the Section 80 decision, they will go ahead with the public participation process. In that process we also said, that, yes, we will close off. When we start with the temporary shelter and the establishment of the inside of the building, we will also start immediately with the rezoning of application on the more permanent basis. But even on the permanent basis, the neighbours are Correctional Services and Epilepsy, and even one of them complained that they don't want the shelter there. Nobody wants the shelter on their doorstep. But this is not a dumping site: it's a place where we put people into rehabilitation to rehabilitate them into the community as soon as possible. On this particular building (the old testing station), you will notice it is a closed building and the premises is already fenced off. The present dumping site will become the new entrance, so people will not even go in the area of the houses and the businesses behind the centre. The only people that will come in through the back is Care Bears themselves - the management - and the deliveries. The rest of Industrial Street will be blocked off - not only fenced in, but visibly blocked off, and all the containers will be moved out.

The public participation is currently ongoing, and Liezel Baadjies will soon talk to everybody.

ANTON: Liezel Baadjies is the representative in the Municipality who is dealing with the homeless shelter, and she is dealing with the process that needs to take place before it can happen. The participation, the zoning, whatever that needs to take place, that's part of her responsibility within the municipality, But as Jan says, it's not going to be just used as it is. It will be fenced, closed off, made private with an entrance, and it will be controlled, and the NPO taking responsibility for running the place properly. It's not just anybody who you see out on the street that will be able to sleep there. Our previous MM said that we can't create a criminal shelter, we need to create a homeless shelter, so all the people that are on the street at the moment will most probably not be able to go there, because if you're on the street because of

criminality you are not going to be able to go to the homeless shelter; if you are on the street because you're drugged, you're not going to be able to go to the homeless shelter. So that was discussed in the meetings that we had. The people there do not have to fear that we are going to create a criminal nest in front of them, where all the criminals gather before they come and rob you at your house. It's not going to be like that at all.

FROM THE FLOOR: How many people do you expect will be helped?

ANTON: If you look at the count of homeless people in Knysna, or people sleeping on the street - not necessarily homeless people, because I actually have conversations with lots of them,, and a lot of them are not homeless, they just sleep on the street because of convenience, od for other reasons. But there's in the region of about 200 people that are sleeping on the streets, and the homeless shelter as it is would house a fair number of them already with the existing structure that is there. If you jut work within the existing building and you have massive height in that building so you can put a mezzanine floor in and you can house quite a few people. But if you look at the homeless and sleeping on the street is two different things.

JAN: I can also say that once the shelter is up, we are expecting the typical street sleeper - because they will be asked to go to the shelter at night - but if the community police are picking them up, they will soon probably go to Sedgefield, because in town they will have to be forced to sleep in - nobody wants to see that your people are sleeping in the rain. So we provide the shelter and if there is a bed, why are you not there? Maybe they don't want to, and then they will probably go to Sedgefield, so we foresee that in Sedgefield we will probably have to do something,

There is another NPO in Knysna called the Knysna Drug and Alcohol Group - KADAG - which deals with those people. the topic of the shelter has already been tabled by the Safety Committee under Declan, and because they are working with the CPF and the Police Forum and they know that this is coming because they cannot execute by-laws if you do not have a place.

ANTON: There are by-laws in place, but you can't activate them if there is no shelter.

JAN: We even have to bring a magistrate's court back into town to deal with this. So it's an all-encompassing solution

ANTON: It's not something that can happen tomorrow, because there are so many things that have to be got into place before we can physically say, there it is. And it's got to be functioning properly - you can't rush the thing and just create a place.

EVENTS & MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

ALAN BELL: We have the Investment Conference on November 16th, and between then and now we have quite a few other events going on. Pastor Jan, your event on Heritage Day needs

to go on there as well. There's also the Knysna Arts and Awareness Lifestyle Event on the 27th of October at Villa Castollini. They are meant to be showcasing local talent. I'm not sure they've done a proper reach out because they have very few people that have come forward. But I made a move and engaged with some people. When we had the French ambassador we engaged with some of the clothing people, we dressed Vicky and Tracy in locally-made clothing. Unfortunately that dress designer is moving to Somerset West because there is not enough business here for her. So if you know people who want to showcase their talents at the Lifestyle Event, please come and talk to us.

The big one coming up - starting this week - the Knysna Oyster Festival - I'm pleased that the sponsorship I got through the Chamber for the cycle tour has enabled them to be able to extend the cycle weekend so that included the road race. It's a significant sponsorship and they're getting a very good deal. Enios Grenadier will be taking out the lead vehicles.

I have another opportunity for more sponsorship from them, but they don't have contact with the local people. They want to sponsor - we have a Back of Beyond tour for SANParks into areas that you can't normally access, and they have been talking about maybe sponsoring a tour that they take their vehicles on, but they just don't have the local people to organise to take a test drive. So if you know somebody who has a bit of money, is interested in a 4x4. I want to present to them 12 people and they will spoil them and take them on a tour, and then we'll get sponsorship into the town.

We've been invited by the Oyster Festival to have a stand at the Festival, which we are putting together at the last minute. We are going to ask each subcommittee to showcase what they are doing, so you can reach out to the community and maybe attract more members. There are 27 slots, you get 3 hours. From the week of the 24th to the 30th of June. We've already allocated 7 of the slots, so we're running out to please come forwards. You can have two slots there, three slots if you want, at different times of the day. Please come and do your bit and help the chamber get the word out that we're inclusive, that we want to reachout, and that we want to do more of the kind of work we're doing in the town.

I've sent out an email to all the subcommittee chairs. Please have a look at it, and let me know when you have some time to come and stand on the exhibition and talk your story - it is a great story.

The Knysna Association for Persons with Disability makes these domino sets. We need to be able to sell these on the stand. If we can get a machine together quickly, we will be able to make the sales, and the money will go to them. This is part of the NPO initiative to raise funds for the charities. Sounds like they can only make 10 between now and the end of the week so it is going to be short.

The table talkers. The thought is to have these on all the accommodation establishments, all the restaurants a table talker where people will be able scan a QR code and donate to the Chamber's NPO committee, which will decide who is a worthy cause, etc. So an advance

warning to the establishments, please come forward and help us drive this initiative. We wanted to have this done by this Oyster Festival, but we didn't quite make it. But let's get ready for the end of the year and get these table talkers out and going. The Epilepsy centre said they would distribute them for us. It's going to cost between 2 and 8 thousand rand to print these things, and then they can assemble them. I said what we might do is for their work, they'll do it not for free, but out of the funds generated we will allocate it first to the people who incur some cost. So it'll get back to the not -for-profits, and generate some funds for them. The table talkers will be of paper, and if we can maybe get somebody to machine up some wooden bottles that look like condiment bottles, on there it'll be a label donating, and a label of the wood - we want to use the indigenous wood, so maybe we can have a competition to take a picture of the place where you saw this thing, and go to the forest and take a picture of a labeled tree of the same sort of timber.

KASI ECONOMY

JAN: The Kasi Economy is a huge economy in South Africa. It is the township economy. It is an informal economy, but yet it's where all the money is.

BJORN ORIA: I've been asked to give a quick presentation on Kasi Township Economic Development.

Just a quick update where I came from. I'm a small business owner from the township and I had a few questions when I met with the chairperson. and he introduced me to Wade (subcommittee chair) who is currently out of town.

What needs to happen is the picture of the Knysna Business Chamber needs to be drawn differently because we as black business - and by that I mean coloured, Indian, whoever, non-white businesses - see the Knysna Business Chamber as only a white entity. If you talk about a Knysna Business Chamber, it's only where the white people drink espresso in all the expensive coffee houses. Where you will find the black business forum will drink your moerkoffie, so myself and Wade are busy engaging with other black business people where we're first going to draw a better picture of what is the Knysna Business Chamber, and what is the role and the vision and the mission of this entity. What we have and what currently is happening. Wade told me we must have 100 people and I said to him, 'No,' it's a road for failure. If we can make sure that 10 black businesses are being developed from one level to the next, the thousands that have not been developed will ask, what is happening there? I want to be part of that. To create an environment where black and coloured and small and township businesses must feel that they can be part of this organisation, and to have that growth of being developed. We as black and coloured businesses when we sleep, when we stand up, we just go out and do our own in business. In the past it was been taken out of our minds by our forefathers that our businesses can't grow, we can't be having board members in our company. So we want to start changing that environment so that business is not only for white people, or the minority, but business in South Africa, in Knysna, is for everyone. The best koeksisters in Knysna is in a small house in Belvidere - that old auntie that sits there, retired, makes the best koeksisters than

Woolworths or whatever. Those koeksisters, that vetkoek, those small enterprises needs to be so (??) is Knysna. One thing that myself and Wade have said is that we need to start promoting our koeksisters, and stop importing them when we know in White Location, in Hunters Home, our old retired lady had nothing to do with herself, started a baking thing, sell those things in our Spar, in our Shoprite, in our Checkers in Knysna before it goes out to other places.

So yes, there are people who think that the Knysna Business Chamber is not for them, but we as a collective are going to change that perception, that this environment is fore each and everyone in Knysna, it's open, free, and fair, non-racial, not that you are driving a BMW and I'm driving a skorokoro, but everything is equal, and that is how we are going to take Knysna forward.

CHURCHES AND NPOS

PASTOR JAN DAVIDS: I'm representing the churches and the NPOs. In our NPOs, we are having a shortage of sponsors, especially in times like now, with the school holidays, where we don't have help feeding the children in or communities. And the same with the NGO's, some of which receive money from government, and some didn't receive anything.

What we want to do is to have a fun run before the end of the year, so that we can raise some money to do something for our communities. As Alan was saying about the QR codes, we want to do that as well, so that there can be money when we need it to help us do something for our communities. From Philip's side they are helping us a lot. On Saturday they are going to drop off some clothes and blankets because it's getting cold now. So what we will do on Saturday morning, we will receive those blankets and clothes, and distribute them at some soup kitchens, so that people who don't have warm blankets - and I think that will also help them through this winter. And I think there's a lot of need and we thank god that we open that door so that we can receive those for those children in Hornlee and so on.

What we are also doing now is having our holiday club at our church for the children, so that we can accommodate the children at the church in the morning hours till the afternoon while the parents are at work. So that the children do not sit at home and do nothing. But we also need some sponsors for that and I pray that god will also open for us a door so that we can have some sponsors to feed those children. This morning when I got to the church there were about 50 children - so tomorrow there will be more than 100, and before the end of the week, there will be more than 200.

So if you have anything to help us, we will also take that.

JAN: There are over 250 churches in town, and 198 NPOs in town. This committee is in the process of cleaning up the list to see who are they and what are their needs, because if all of them call on business for funding, you can imagine there'll be no funds. So we need to streamline that so that we can work efficiently.. But also we need to come to the point whereby we can purchase on a global scale for everybody, because everybody will need soup for this

time of the year. Marie sitting there said she can open up her purchase line so that we can buy on bulk, which will help everybody.

I think we've come to the end of the different committee reports. If we do only half of their projects in this year, we will have made a major change in this town. So congratulations and thank you for being here.

Meeting ended.