

Stellenbosch Ratepayers Association (SRA)

Annual Report 2010-2011
on
Activities where SRA
played a vital role

Integrated Development Plan (IDP) Spatial Development Framework (SDF)

- IDP, SDF and municipal budget are “master documents” governing planning, budget, everything in Stellenbosch
- Extensive commentary by SRA in 2010
- Municipal officials largely agree that current IDP is inadequate
- After 10 years, SDF still not finalised
- Planned workshop never materialised
- New 5-year cycle begins now; work will begin after local elections
- SRA continues to play vital role in development of these master documents.

Municipal Budget

- **Format and structure** of municipal budgets not up to scratch
- Was compiled without sufficient **regard for IDP**
- **Personnel costs** rose 85% 2007-2011
- Concern about **rate and tariff increases** in previous years: 20% normal inflation vs 95% in tariffs over 4 years
- **SRA offered expertise**
- Meetings with Mayor, Acting Municipal Manager, Chief Financial Officer, Portfolio Councillor
- No increase in property rates
- Separate SRA input on **debt management strategy**

The scourge of ad-hoc development

- Stellenbosch remains **attractive** and **lucrative**
- **Bad governance** has led to **developer-driven expansion**.
- **Principles and plans ignored**: urban edge, IDP, density, building codes, conditions of approval etc
- **Threat** to rural character, biodiversity, tourism, historical core
- **High-income housing** wrongly prioritised over affordable housing
- **SRA Paradyskloof, Tender 34 groups**
- **SRA “Urban development group”**
- **SRA “Rural development group”**

Paradyskloof

- 277ha forest, agricultural land, fynbos
- Huge biodiversity
- 1997 proposal: Golf course, hotel, 547 houses (later 250), agriculture, left-over nature area
- Development proposals approved against much opposition, 1998-2000
- WESSA wins court case 2001



Paradyskloof: An epic battle

- 2004: New developer-municipality agreement
- 2005: SRA brings court case
- 2005-2006: EIA process; many battles
- November 2006: Council decides to cancel the 2004 agreement
- August 2008: Court case by developer vs municipality, dismissed
- October 2008: Developer goes to Supreme Court of Appeal

Paradyskloof: The climax

- Feb 2009 to March 2010: Appeal case on ice while developer and municipality negotiate
- March 2010: Municipality decides to let appeal case proceed
- 2 July 2010: Municipality wins the appeal case
- This is the final end of the 1996 golf course proposal
- **SRA has played a critical role since 2004.**
- **Massive investments in time, money and dedication by SRA**
- **SRA will continue to work for sustainable future of Paradyskloof**
- New group launched (Friends of Stellenbosch Mountain)

Tender 34: Corruption

- Nine municipal properties advertised for tender in 2005
- Seven tenders awarded in February 2006
- Serious irregularities in the tender process alleged
- SRA agrees to get involved; **large input and commitment by SRA** members from Die Boord

Tender 34: Many years of conflict

- March 2006: Local government **elections**
- April 2006: **Call for objections** came **after** the elections
- **SRA objected**, saying that tenders did not comply with objectives
- Sept 2006: Municipality decided **not to proceed**
- Council decides on the basis of a forensic report to go to court to reverse the tender awards
- March 2008: Council taken over by **ANC/KCA coalition**
- SRA intervenes in the court case
- October 2009: **Inconclusive judgement delivered**

Tender 34: Current state of affairs

- **Situation remains unclear**, due to inconsistency and vacillation of municipality, court judgements
- Negotiations continue
- **Tender companies** remain on shaky ground
- SRA has consulted **attorneys**, obtained legal opinion
- Many meetings, letters, fundraising...
- **SRA is keeping up the pressure**

Soccer stadiums court case

- 2008-9: **Irregularities** in tender process and awarding of contracts
- **No funds** for the soccer stadiums in budget
- 2009: **SRA** took municipality to court
- Judge delivered strange **judgement**
- SRA decided to **appeal**; had to petition the court
- Funds ran out, forcing SRA to seek **settlement**
- Thanks to municipality for fair negotiations in 2010

Historic town centre

- **SRA** Cooperate with Stellenbosch Interest Group
- Borategi (Ackermans site, Plein Str): Plans were not even advertised; **SRA objected in strong terms**

- Disregard of building regulations
- Developers offer only token gestures. Traffic assessment one-sided and shallow
- Congestion in Andringa Str; new parking garage will worsen traffic
- **SRA worked very hard to minimise negative impacts, coordinate municipal and university plans**
- Municipal officials sympathetic, but claim they cannot undo earlier mistakes

Traffic and Development: Eikestad Mall



Stellenbosch NMT (Non-motorised transport) Group

- NMT is a potential better solution to traffic problems in Stellenbosch
- **Strong role played by SRA**
- Group integrates university, municipality, transport consultants (VelaVKE), National Cycling Academy
- Substantial progress in formulating goals
- Sympathetic hearing by municipality; dialogue and cooperation coming along
- Many interventions not expensive
- Continued underfunding of NMT in budget

Papegaaiberg Nature Area

- Area to be declared **nature reserve**
- Encroachment by **squatters**
- **SRA** has played a leading role over the years
- January 2011: **fire** (probably arson)
- **Management plan** promised for July 2011
- **Cemetery extension** would take up 20ha

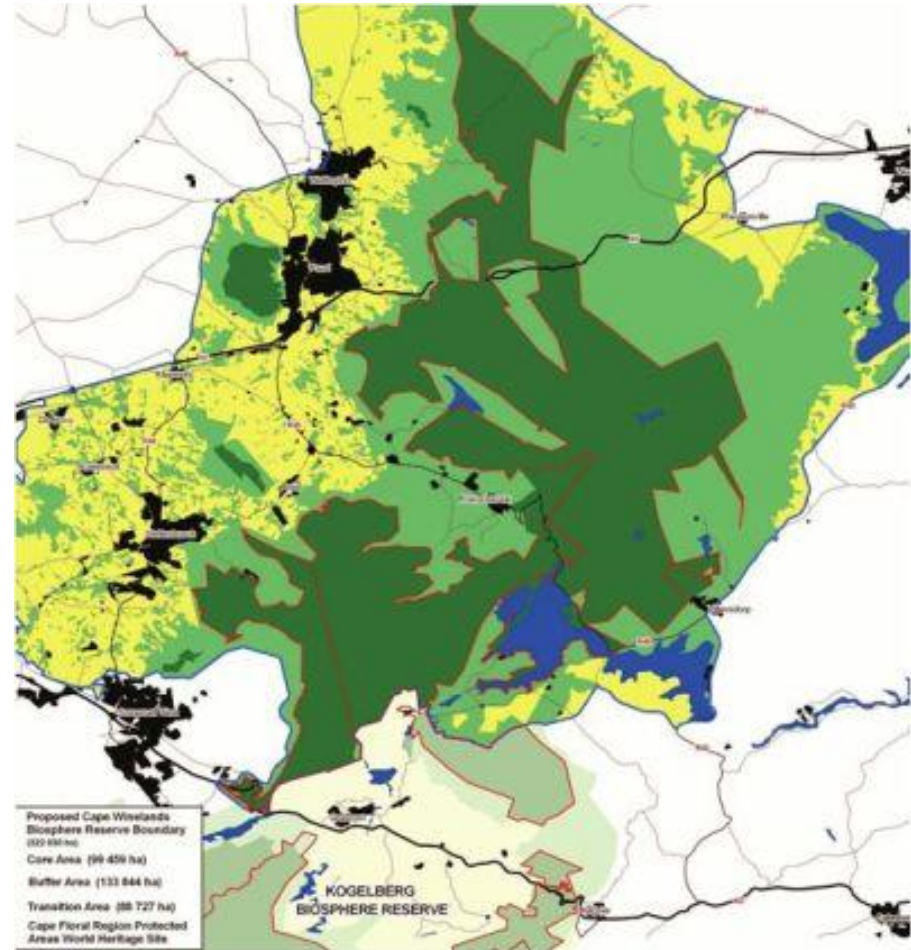


River Action Group, Adopt-a-River

- **Problems:** Bacterial contamination, rubbish, security, wastewater dumping
- **River Action Group** and **Adopt-a-River:** Cooperation between Dept Water Affairs, Municipality, Kayamandi residents, **SRA**, business et al
- Plankenbrug River and Eerste River:
- Monitoring and rehabilitation
- **Cycle paths and walkways**
- Cooperation between private sector and local government
- New **management structure** approved; committee has been elected

Winelands Biosphere Reserve

- **SRA gave detailed comments in 2009, 2011**
- Renosterveld areas should receive special protection
- Biosphere Reserve approved by UNESCO 2011



Biosphere Reserve: Stellenbosch details

- **Typical Conservation issues SRA identify and get involved in**

Papegaaiberg not marked at all!

Inadequate protection for mountain slopes: Paradyskloof

No protection for Paradyskloof renosterveld areas

Inadequate protection for mountain slopes: Jonkershoek



Integrated Waste Management

- Landfill site in Papegaaiberg is already way over allotted limit
- SRA is represented on the monitoring committee
- Municipal management has improved a lot
- Recycling is now critical: help to make it succeed
- Expect large increases in solid waste levies

Dialogue and communication

- **Top municipal management:**
 - **Get-together with top municipal officials** and SRA management committee
 - **Many meetings** held with individual officials and councillors
 - SRA acting as “**Town Memory**”: many office bearers are new in town
- **University**
 - SRA represented on **US Institutional Forum**
 - **Crozier Str**: SRA helps to integrate US and Municipal planning
- **Communication**
 - SRA Website
 - Emails to SRA members
 - Newsletters

Networking

- Letters in **Eikestadnuus**
- Meeting with **Jamestown** role players
- **Ward Committees**
- **Brandwacht Action Group**
- **Friends of Stellenbosch Mountain**
- **Franschhoek**
- **Right2know** campaign: Protest against Protection of Information Bill
- **Much more could be done**

SRA can grow further

- **SRA largest and strongest NGO in town**
 - Help others to help themselves
 - Broaden membership, overcome race barriers
- Franschhoek, Jamestown etc etc
- Our main constraint is **CAPACITY** people's time

SRA and Politics

- SRA is non-aligned to any political party
- No recommendation whom to vote for
- **Basic democracy** however requires that you vote
- **Functioning democracy** requires more than voting
- **Ask political parties specific questions:**
 - Transparency
 - Selection of candidates
 - Funding sources
 - How will specific corruption cases be handled

SRA: Present and Future

- SRA has once again made **huge contributions** to Stellenbosch
- **No one is paid**; everyone is a volunteer
- **SRA is in excellent shape**
- SRA can do more with **capacity**
- **Don't complain, get involved:** get elected to the new management committee
- You choose where you want to contribute

Stellenbosch is our home
Help to make it even better

