

October
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Bulletin

Official newsletter of the Overstrand Municipality

THE FIRST HUNDRED DAYS

COUNCILLORS THOROUGHLY PREPARED FOR GOVERNANCE

Nowadays it is quite common for political office bearers to give an overview after their first hundred days in office on what has already been achieved. However, because governance is a long process, one can say after 100 days that although the cook has gathered his ingredients, the food must still be cooked.

The 100 day-concept stems from the days when Franklin D Roosevelt became president of the United States of America during the Great Depression. Fear and panic paralysed the American nation, but armed with his confidence and optimism, Roosevelt pushed the necessary reforms through government within 100 days to lay the foundation for his "New Deal".

Some moves became legendary, for example the announcement of a banking holiday to prevent a run on the banks, and he spent a lot of energy on the immediate relief of the greatest needs. Very few if any modern day political leader will be able to step in the shoes of FDR, but he set the standard.

Circumstances in Overstrand were not nearly as bad as in FDR's United States when the new Council started its term of office, but there were challenges that needed immediate attention. **Democratic and Accountable Governance**

With an enlarged council of 25 members and only nine of them returning from the precious one, the first task was to start councillor training immediately. Within three days after the election, the first full-day orientation session was presented and since then, training was offered on five occasions on a wide range of topics, especially municipal legislation. All councillors were given comprehensive documentation to equip them to perform their tasks with success.

The official inauguration of council took place on 1 June, and at this occasion all office-bearers were confirmed in their positions. The mayoral committee was increased to five members, although legislation allowed for six. Each of the municipality's directorates



Some of the highlights during the first 100 days of the Overstrand Council's new term: acknowledgement from Productivity SA, Woman of the Year award, Mobile Thusong in Hermanus, Mayoral Soccer Cup tournament, Mandela Day activities and the election of ward committees.

now has a dedicated political head, with the exception of Finances and Economic Development which is lead by the same Mayoral Committee Member. Portfolio Committees were also established according to this guideline, and the presence of opposition party members in all of them promote the search for democracy.

Ward committee elections were held the following week, and at the end of August, Council was informed that all committees are functional. More than 2800 registered voters took part in the process, and the 130 elected members of ward committees is a good reflection of the Overstrand community and will ensure that the voice of most communities and interest groups will be heard in the decision-making processes.

The Integrated Development Plan (IDP) is a key document for progress in Overstrand, and at the end of August, Council was presented with the process plan. With the cooperation of all, the new generation of the IDP (for the period 2012 to 2017) and the Municipal Budget for 2012/13 will be adopted at the end of May next year.

In the mean time, the auditing of the municipality's financial statements and the performance management report for the 2010/11 financial year is in full swing after these documents were submitted together with the draft annual report on 31 August 2011.

Preliminary indications are that Overstrand had spent 94 percent of its capital budget and 98 percent of its operational budget, while more than 100 percent of its revenue was collected.

Several awards came the municipality's way so far, but the one that gives recognition for the improvement of productivity from Productivity SA' Western Cape branch is a huge feather in the cap.

The provisioning and maintenance of municipal services

With the 2011/12 budget already approved, council could start immediately with overseeing implementation. One of the early crises was to ensure financial sustainability of the municipality when it came to light that the ratio between available cash and short-term liabilities was not healthy because of the drastic increases in electricity tariffs over the past few years.

The solution was to bring the electricity deposits of existing clients in line with those of new clients or to encourage consumers to change over to prepaid electricity.

Although good cooperation was experienced and more than 1500 switched over to prepaid electricity, there was resistance from especially the business sector. Council fully participated in the public debate that followed, which resulted in give and take between all parties. From this experience, the notion is clear that Council should not hesitate to tackle financial challenges and that the best solutions will come forward when there is public discussion about issues.

The current rainy season is obviously not going to provide the necessary relief for the water crisis in Greater Hermanus. Delays were also experienced with the approval of the pipeline to connect two new wellfields with the Preekstoel Water Purification Plant. Recycling of waste water seems to be the best alternative solution, and the application for disaster prevention funds to develop such a plant has already been submitted to the Department of Water Affairs.

Management and conservation of the natural environment

Overstrand's natural beauty is a tremendous asset, and this is managed to the best advantage of the community. The municipality is one of few with a fully fledged environmental management department that plays an important role to manage the areas of conflict between man and nature.

Overstrand, for example, is well known for its baboon management programme, and a documentary team from National Geographic was recently in the area to film this for a television programme.

With the scientific input of this department, proper attention is given to the sand dune encroachment in areas such as Betty's Bay, the artificial breaching of the Klein River estuary and the determination of set (continued on p 2)

(from p1) back lines in terms of the Coastal Management Act.

Creating and maintaining a safe and healthy environment

With the award-winning Kleinmond Housing Project fast nearing completion, the municipality already moved on with implementing the rest of its Five-year Housing Plan, which has the potential to wipe out the backlog with housing and to serve as a role model for other local authorities. Social compacts were established in Zwelihle, Gansbaai, Eloxulweni and Hawston.

The Kleinmond project received a special merit award for innovation and design at the Award Ceremony of the SA Housing Foundation on 13 September 2011.

Sport and culture are useful instruments to bring communities together. The Mayoral Cup tournaments for rugby, soccer and cricket play a key role in this regard. The soccer tournament shortly after the inauguration of the new council was a great success and the first cricket tournament made a good start.

Festivals are another place where communities can find each other and the Kalfie Festival did not disappoint in this regard.

The role of volunteers and community organisations to create a culture of caring for each other and the environment received recognition at the annual Evening of Achievers, where Marianné Beyleveldt, widow of the for-

mer mayor Theo Beyleveldt, received the Woman of the Year Award and Grootbos Foundation walked away with the Mayor's Environment Trophy.

Promotion of Tourism and Economic Development

A new dispensation for the promotion of tourism directly under control of the municipality was announced. Although there was great appreciation for the contribution of the destination marketing organisation Cape Whale Coast, municipal financial legislation and regulations became a stumbling block. A Tourism Manager will soon be appointed and an advisory board, representative of the industry, will be put in place.

IS OVERSTRAND THE MOST EXPENSIVE?

Lately, Overstrand's municipal accounts came under fire in readers' letters. Amongst others, it is alleged that Overstrand has made an about-turn from one of the least expensive municipalities to one of the most expensive municipalities in the Western Cape.

The issue with statements such as these is that they are very difficult to refute since lots of variables are at play and, in individual cases, something like property valuations can make a huge difference.

Furthermore, a comparison cannot really be drawn between municipalities since each one is unique as far as the composition of the population, economic activities and the levels of service delivery are concerned. Places like Mossel Bay and Saldanha Bay have huge industrial areas which make a sizeable contribution towards the municipal revenue, thus lessening the pressure on owners of residential properties.

Requests by Overstrand's municipality that those who have made statements such as these should substantiate their claims yielded very few results. The municipality's own surveys indicate that our rates compare very favourably to those of five other places and that when it comes to the bottom line on the account, we are highly competitive as far as affordability is concerned.

Only Mossel Bay could beat our bill for an average household and a medium business, while some of the other places will charge an ordinary ratepayer up to R700 more, and a business up to R3500 more.

WHY A BASIC LEVY ON PRE-PAID ELECTRICITY?

Electricity rates are comprised of two parts, namely:

Part 1 - Basic levy: A fixed monthly rate which is levied to improve and maintain the electricity network.

Part 2- Unit costs: A rate which is paid for every unit of electricity consumed. A progressive block rate system applies which means the higher the number of units consumed, the more expensive the electricity becomes.

In the past, some users of pre-paid

electricity were on a one-part rate which included both components of the rate. To collect the basic levy with this rate, clients must buy a minimum number of units per month.

Adverse economic conditions and the sharp rise in Eskom rates over the past couple of years resulted in consumers no longer attaining the minimum consumption to make the one-part rate a workable option.

From 1 July 2011, the one-part rate only applies to:

- Life line' users in transit camps; and
- Businesses (three-phase electricity) that use more than 800 kWh units per month.

For pre-paid consumers, the basic levy is now indicated on the municipal bill. This amounts to R173 per month (VAT included) for single-phase users and R519 for three-phase electricity consumers.

These rates do not apply to Eskom users.

LIVE BY THE MORAL VALUE OF BEING A



GOOD CITIZEN



In its mission to promote a value-driven community, the MSI (Moral Standards Initiative of Greater Hermanus) focuses on the moral values of Reliability, Respect, Responsibility, Caring, Fairness and Good Citizenship.

Over the next six months, starting with Good Citizenship, renewed awareness of these six values and standards will be pursued. This will be done through the Overstrand Bulletin, Whale Coast FM, the Monitor, church bulletins, the display of MSI banners at the taxi ranks in town and a number of other means.

GOOD CITIZENSHIP

Good Citizenship defines the moral and ethical character of our society. At its core lie sound moral values, standards and ethics. These determine our attitudes and actions as citizens, individually and collectively.

How do we shape with regard to the moral and ethical character of our community here in Greater Hermanus?

Some of the questions we may ask ourselves in this regard are:

- Are we as citizens primarily

guided in what is right or wrong by an internal moral and ethical compass? Are we law-abiding because it is the right thing to do in a civilised society?

- Is good neighbourliness and respect for the privacy and property of others a prevailing characteristic of our society?
- Do we take shared responsibility for the wellbeing of our community and become constructively involved in matters of public interest?
- Are our business practices unashamedly ethical?
- Do we really care for the conservation of our natural environment and the neatness and cleanliness of our streets, sidewalks and public spaces?

Let us promote the value of Good Citizenship by debating these and other related issues in our family circle and other circles where we are involved!

Feel free to share your ideas with Ernst Kretschmer, MSI Project Coordinator, on 082 412 4538 or ernstes@vodamail.co.za

MUNICIPAL SHOWCASE

18-21
OCTOBER
2011

Overstrand Civic Centre

It's show-and-tell time again!

Visit the Municipal Showcase from 18 to 21 October 2011 in the Overstrand Civic Centre, Hermanus.



Peter Bruns and Annegret Kuttner

GERMANS TO COMPENSATE

With their performance in the Overstrand Civic Centre on Tuesday, 1 November, Annegret Kuttner (piano) and Peter Bruns (cello), both from Germany, will compensate for the disappointment caused by the cancellation of the performance by Jan Hugo, Unisa piano competition winner, end August. Tickets cost R80 and R40 for students. Book at Bellini or 028 312 4988. Call René du Plooy on 082 940 4238 for any other enquiries.

