



BELASTINGSBETALERSVERENIGING
HERMANUS
RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION

Notes on HRA meeting with Overstrand Municipal Manager on 25 July 2025

Ken Briggs(KB) and Tobie Louw(TL) of HRA met with Overstrand Municipal Manager (MM), Dr Dean O'Neill.

KB thanked the MM for the opportunity to engage and introduced the meeting. He highlighted the purpose of the meeting was to initiate engagement and discussion on a range of important issues and to explore establishing more formal arrangements for liaising with the OM and the MM on an ongoing basis. The key points that were discussed are briefly introduced below.

1. IDP and Budget Process

TL emphasised that the current process is suboptimal. He noted that the HRA had provided extensive comments on the 25/26 budget and IDP, but that these inputs were not properly considered and no adequate response had been received. The MM expressed surprise that the HRA had not received a comprehensive response to their budget inputs and indicated he would immediately follow this up with the finance department.

In the ensuing discussions it was noted that there are ratepayers with excellent financial and strategic planning skills that the OM could greatly benefit from, if they drew in this base of ratepayer expertise in their budget and IDP processes. It was stressed that requesting comments after the event does not add any value to the process and is viewed as a mere tick box exercise. In conclusion, it was agreed to in future explore mobilising a team of ratepayers with relevant expertise to be involved earlier in the process, prior to the finalisation the draft IDP and budget.

2. Improving efficiencies

We noted that Local Government in South Africa is experiencing increasing budgetary challenges (High levels of urbanisation, aging infrastructure, lack of appropriate skills). It was noted that one aspect to mitigate this is to increase municipal efficiencies. It was stressed that it is important that OM critically review their operational structure in order to improve efficiencies. It was noted that in the HRA opinion there are currently operational shortfalls in important areas, such as Environmental Management Services, Tourism and Local Economic Development. We briefly discussed the critical Directorate posts that had been vacant for quite some time. The MM shared these concerns and noted that despite a number of rounds of advertising of posts, unfortunately has not resulted in any suitable or available candidates for appointment. He stated that a head-hunting approach had also been considered and initiated, but unfortunately this approach was found not to comply with the appointment regulations. In conclusion, the HRA, recognize the challenges, but stressed these appointments must be addressed promptly.

3. Status of proposed new developments

We enquired about the status of key new developments. The following key points were noted:

- The legal process pertaining to the De Mond tender is still ongoing and the contract has not been cancelled.
- The proposed Life Style development of Erf 4833 (Voëlklip East) is still in the Basic Assessment Phase. Currently the consultants are in the process of making amendments to the Basic Assessment Report, which include additional specialist studies.
- The development for the OK site in Voëlklip will be reissued for tender.

4. Dog Walking Zones

KB enquired about the delay in the implementation of the dog walking and off leash zones on grotto beach and the proposed dog park, as motivated in the HRA report and previously agreed to in principle. He confirmed that as previously requested the motivating report with recommendations had been tabled and unanimously agreed to at the Ward Committee. The MM agreed to follow-up the status of the Council approval process and implementation of the dog walking and off-leash zone on Grotto beach recommendations, as motivated by the HRA.

5. Conclusion and way forward

We found this a very open, useful and pragmatic discussion. We shared our views for how we see the role of HRA in improving the liaison between OM and the ratepayers of Hermanus. TL mentioned that HRA are busy benchmarking against a few peer Ratepayers Associations in Cape Town. It was agreed that it is essential for ratepayers to have an open and cooperative relationship with the leadership of the relevant local authority.

We closed the meeting by agreeing that it had been a very useful discussion and undertook to meet on a monthly basis. KB thanked the MM for enabling open constructive discussion around key issues facing the Hermanus ratepaying community.

HRA July 2025