

Chairman's State Of Marina Speech – 22 June 2021 – MDGA AGM

Good evening gentlefolk of the Marina, and visitors. On behalf of your ExCom, we welcome you all to the 2021 Annual General Meeting of the Marina da Gama Association.

A few special welcomes. Kyran Wright as our guest speaker and tireless champion of our waterways, and Ian Mackay, our newly appointed auditor, to answer any tricky questions on our Audited Financial Statements. You are welcome!

We as Exco are really proud of our many achievements over the past many months, and to list but a few:

- Digitising Archcom meetings/approvals to electronic format (going back 20-30 years).
- Archcom is now constitutionally compliant with new chairperson and architect.
- Redesigned Standards Manual for AGM approval
- Completed the painting of Prince George Drive wall within agreed budget.

- All Asset Registers (office and computers, gardeners equipment, sound equipment, archives) fully updated and audited.
- Introduced a budget – reported monthly and published.
- Introduced monthly sets of Management Accounts that are published monthly for members to see where their money is spent. We have grown the MDGA reserves and funded the painting of the PGD Wall out of current income and finished the year with R885,000 in the bank – a slight increase on 2020. We received a clean audit report for the year.

- Enforced our subscription payment policy and collected over a R156,000 in bad debts, with ongoing strict enforcement of MDGA policy.
 - Bank accounts and signatories – removing signatories of old ExCom members as well removing them from receiving bank statements. We now only have current members ExCom as signatories.
 - We introduced a professional payroll managing service, in order to move away from multiple methods of payment and the use of private bank accounts. PAYE and related SARS requirements submitted timeously and accurately, and payslips available monthly for staff.
 - Holding virtual AGM and OGMs in new and confusing circumstances in 2020 and 2021.
 - Getting the MDGA 2018 Constitution approved by the City of Cape Town.
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- Moved offices to a new space which is more accessible to members, with updated furniture and a cleaner look and feel.
 - Updated accounting software Pastel to the latest version.
 - Distribute members subscription statements monthly.
 - Our great office staff, who are involved and passionate, and an asset to us all.
 - All office staff have new employment contracts (none in office).
 - Set up new six-man gardeners team and provided new uniforms.
 - Gardeners contracts of employment plus a contract with Staffa Gardening Services being finalised and a laundry agreement for cleaning their overalls finalised.
 - Introduced insurance for casuals and workman, covering work time accidents.
 - Formalised agreement to fund two gardeners once a week on Park Island through The Friends of Park Island.
 - Have three ladies taking gardening responsibility for their respective Islands.

- On the communication front: updating and revamping MDGA web page, Facebook, marketplace and weekly newsletter, and now blog.
 - Active and closer liaison with Councillor, Planning Department, Cape Nature, Waterway and Sewerage officials, Law Enforcement and Zandvlei Manager.
 - Regular meetings with the Station Commander and top management at Muizenberg SAPS.
 - We have successfully managed to set up meetings with all respective area-based security groups, and this will be ongoing.
 - Changed our LPR service providers and are now part of a much wider network, with access to multiple cameras outside of Marina, to better track offenders.
 - Built a stronger relationship with security service providers and simultaneously reduced monitoring costs.
 - Secured PGD Wall and canal at Uitsig, and in the process of doing the same for Public Open Space/Road Reserve at Coniston Park, as well as Battleridge.
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- Opened communications with Vrygrond representatives – Vrygrond Young Minds (VYM) and More Than Peace (MTP).
 - Initiated and successfully ran the Ubuntu and Support fund with significant donations secured. Numerous families of our neighbours were empowered with support vouchers, loaded bi weekly, to purchase their necessities. Our residents in the Marina were not spared the ravages of the virus and we supported a number of families that suffered.
 - Had to manage through a difficult time of lockdowns and the resultant disruptions and hardship that our members had to face.
 - Successfully hosted a number of events, Father Christmas, Quiz Evenings, Movie evenings, Plant and Bird walks.

Challenges – yes, we had a few.

We do fully understand the frustrations felt by committed Marinaites on varied issues such as the following:

Waterways – water level, clarity of water, water quality and bacteria levels, mouth opening and closing, pond weed, algae, bird life, dredging of mouth/channels, sewerage spills, litter pollution and fish/fishing.

We are fully aware of the issues relating to the above, and receive accurate and competent briefings on all these water related queries and complaints. We are very mindful of the fact that long after we have left the ExCom, the Marina da Gama Association will still have to deal with the various officials from the City – competent or otherwise. We are thus charged with the responsibility of raising compliance issues, but most importantly we must secure long-term co-operation between the City and the MDGA. We do not have the luxury of sounding off in all social media and publications about the state of the waterways and running down the performance of departments and officials in the City, and then tomorrow expect them to respond positively to us.

We do raise the issues forcefully and we do have the difficult discussions, but we do not publicize these as we still need these officials to work for us. Our view is that with this vocal and continuous barrage of negativity, we risk the real possibility of losing some of the highly competent officials to the private sector, where they are not subjected to these sometimes-personal attacks. No, we are not advocating censorship, but we are cautioning against the continuous, and at times personal and sustained negativity, with seldom a recognition of any achievements. We as your Association will be injecting youthful vigour in our expanded consultation the with the wider community.

Security – Uitsig in particular as well as isolated instances outside of Uitsig. As mentioned above, we are addressing these issues with local security groups and will have solved these problems very shortly.

Standards – yes, we consciously took a step back, both due to lockdown as well as the suffering that the lockdowns brought to our residents, but have, since level 2 of Covid, been ramping up compliance inspections again.

The Year ahead - has many challenges – and our focus areas will be

Budgets and cost control – We will continue to refine our budget and with our monthly reporting, we welcome commentary. Along with cost control, we have very regular meetings dealing with non-payers. Members have contacted the MDGA requesting assistance, and we are constantly attempting to assist with various types of payment plans. The members who neither contact us nor pay their outstanding dues, are actively reminded of their obligations and in many cases, we have to proceed down the collections route, with all the negatives of Summons being issued, Sheriffs trucks arriving at members' houses, bad credit records and extra costs for all these services borne by the members.

Communications – We have a much clearer picture of social media and its impact on our lives, as well as the resources required to manage it and maintain its relevance to our members. Now we need to extract maximum benefit for our members from the various platforms that we have created.

Archcom and Standards – As can be seen from the revised Standards and Building Regulations, up for adoption at the AGM, we have started on a new path of professionalising and updating our processes, to comply with the City’s Development Management Scheme. Standards compliance works hand in hand with the manual and, with these updates, we have clearer vision. We are digitising the old Archcom records, up to around 30 years old, so we have a readily accessible data base.

Parks and Gardens - We will intensify the efforts started to involve our residents and improve surroundings with dedicated staff and professional input. We are not taking over from the City but are using your funds to supplement their efforts.

Waterways – We look forward to benefitting from newly injected skills and passion to drive this portfolio forward with excellent professional input and collaboration.

Security – We are confident that our efforts regarding the securing of the perimeter of the Marina will shortly bear fruit after exhaustive investigations, supplier meetings, quotes and strategizing. Our regular and targeted communication with various security bodies within the Marina is proving very successful and insights gained are shared throughout. The groupings are very forthcoming with suggestions and input which are then consolidated into our various strategies.

ExCom – It is always sad to say farewell to long serving and dedicated members and today we say farewell to Angus Hemp and Lathif Gafoor, who have both represented the Marina internally and

externally with honour and selflessness. Thank you, Angus, and Lathif for your valued service. We are equally very happy to welcome Tharwah Davids, a qualified attorney, and Nick Bode, a water warrior. Both youthful and highly competent individuals who will keep us on our toes. Welcome to you both.

I am both honoured and proud to have led ExCom over the past months with such a skilled and committed bunch like you. You can rest easy that every day the Marina is a better place than it was the day before, due to your efforts and interventions. Thank you. As I have mentioned on numerous occasions, your work, family and social life take precedence over your voluntary efforts for the Marina and you do not have to accept abuse, cowardice and bullying from any resident. The serial negative correspondents and non-payers will not be engaged by ExCom members, and we strongly encourage ExCom members to not use their private cell phone numbers and email addresses to avoid these intrusions and distractions.

Your Chairman

Richard Midgley