

## **MARINA DA GAMA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – REPORT BY CHAIRPERSON ON BEHALF OF EXCOM**

It is normal practice to thank all the people that have been of assistance to the members of the Community at the beginning – I am going to move away from tradition.

The last number of years since I, and many of us, were elected to ExCom have been particularly difficult, and we have met, and overcome many challenges. I will not go into much detail, and am going to be very circumspect in what I say, as I realise that the majority here support our work. It is a small vocal minority of people who have caused much damage.

2015 was probably the most difficult, with so much infighting due to a single member on the Committee that very little was accomplished. I took over as chair halfway through 2016 subsequent to the resignation of Boudje Giljam from that position due to the continuous abuse he had been subjected to by a few members. Sadly, this phenomena has not stopped and ExCom, and a number of members assisting ExCom to carry out its mandate, are being verbally abused via social media, especially Facebook.

Last year saw us being taken to the Ombudsman on frivolous charges, in fact, very frivolous charges, including conflict of interest and lack of governance procedures– all these charges were found lacking either in substance, or of no merit. These cases exclude the cases with regard to Standards and Archcom.

The reports from the Ombudsman state very clearly that over the last number of years, ExCom has been acting in a very transparent fashion, and following strict rules of conduct. I am not saying that previous ExCom did not act in a similar fashion.

Over the previous years we have been battling with council on a number of matters – few are even part of our mandate, but as a committee representing our members, we complain on your behalf, but the more complaints that Council receive, the more inclined they are to act upon them. So please, don't leave it only up to ExCom, if you have a complaint, use their login system and send your complaint, not directly to somebody's private email address, but to the central complaints login system – it is the most efficient manner of getting things done.

So we continue to submit continuous complaints about the repair of Eastlake Island Bridge, noise complaints, traffic complaints, water and electricity complaints – the list goes on.

The Planning Department at CoCT does not adhere to its own building line regulations, and ExCom is not allowed to prevent the passing of a plan if it is not in line with building regulations – ExCom may only look at the aesthetics of the plan. It is for this very reason that we have included 2 resolutions for discussion, and hopefully approval, at the meeting this evening.

Members do not follow their signed off plans, and in some instances, build without plans, so we have to appeal to the department for cease work orders. I understand that nobody wants to act as a policeman in their area, but if we want to stop the illegal building, much is done over the weekend, please advise ExCom when materials have been delivered – we can, at the very least, confirm if plans have been submitted. If there are no plans in place, we can stop the work before it starts – much easier than asking a member to knock down a plastered wall.

I do need, at this point, to say a big thank you to Alan Hepple and Eduardo Nunes who are in the front-lines when it comes to building irregularities and ensure that the renovations are in line with the design manual – it is not an easy task.

Pieter Laubscher, an architect, will be joining ExCom and Eduardo and Alan on Archcom.

Boudje continues, behind the scenes, overseeing the standards portfolio.

We have continued our battle on the rezoning of one of the properties as a restaurant. Council overturned the decision on appeal, regardless that more than 255 of the residents objected to the rezoning. The court hearing is to take place on the 1 August 2018.

Parks and Gardens seem to be one department where we have had much success with Council, possibly due to great rapport between Toni and the department. Unfortunately we have to say a sad farewell to Toni after many years of relentless service to the Marina – thank you so much, I am sure that everybody here tonight joins me in singing your praises.

On that note, we still do not have anybody to replace Toni so if, after hearing my report tonight, you would like to offer your assistance, please come forward.

ExCom is neither responsible for the waterways, the weed-eater, nor the people that operate the weed-eater or the management thereof. But we get continuous complaints that spread discontent on Facebook when the water is not of a good quality.

ExCom participates on the Zandvlei Advisory Committee with other members from the Marina who represent the Zandvlei Trust and other bodies. Council has agreed, because of ExCom's intervention, to move the second weed-eater to the Marina. We have funded part of the new canal nets and the equipment used to clean the litter; we also pay labourers on an ad hoc basis to clean the litter.

Our Constitution was amended last year to include the facilitation of security to the Marina, ExCom is now providing the funds for the security infrastructure to secure the Marina as approved at the March OGM. The members also approved an increase in subscriptions to fund ongoing operating expenses.

Bearing all this in mind, and through hundreds of tireless hours of work by our resident JC de Gouveia, we have reached the point where the final service providers will be appointed and the final date of implementation will be determined. I need to point out that this subject is no longer up for debate, members have had ample opportunity to discuss the pros and cons at the guardians meetings throughout the past year, at a Town Hall meeting and then again at the OGM.

Of more concern is that, after all the work put in by JC, instead of getting a smidgeon of thanks from our community, she has also been a recipient of abuse by some members which has resulted in her withdrawal from the project. Everybody thinks they are experts, they are not, and JC and the tendering committee have done hours of research - they have waded through many tenders, legal documentation, specifications and made site visits. All this takes time and costs money, but they have not charged the Marina, all members are going to benefit from the infrastructure put in place. So, on behalf of the members present, and ExCom, JC – thank you so much for your tireless efforts – I very much doubt we would have arrived at this point with you. A thank you must be to our guardians and volunteers who have often been on the frontline with the police and our service providers during the recent rioting on Prince George Drive.

Regrettably, Robin Carlisle has also not offered himself up for re-election for the forthcoming period so the security portfolio is now vacant – possibly our most work intensive portfolio, and with the events in the area over the past couple of months, our most critical at the moment.

I could go on and on, but bottom line – we are all volunteers, we are not being paid for the work and the time we put in for the community. We should not be subjected to any abuse, and nothing we do, or don't do, as long as it is within good practices, should warrant any form of abuse. Why do these members feel it is OK to abuse ExCom and other members of society? Some of these members may simply use this form of verbal abuse as a weapon, to force ExCom to bend to their will. Whatever their reasons it is totally unacceptable and we will no longer accept this.

ExCom, to ensure its continuing functionality, has already put processes in place to mitigate some of this irresponsible behavior. We do not respond in our official capacity as an ExCom member, to answer any mails or requests by such members, in writing or verbally; Marcia, in the office, has been instructed to ignore these mails as well.

To all members that have subscriptions outstanding - ExCom cannot, and will not, assist you with any of your complaints. We have limited admin resources and these are better used to support those members that keep the MDGA afloat – they should be offered better service.

But we are not here to discuss these members – and nothing more needs to be said - we are here to look forward to another positive year in the Marina.

Therefore it is up to me, to say a very big thank you to all these people sitting beside me today, and many others in those sitting in front of me. Similarly to last year, we have presented an excellent set of financial statements, in time; we continue to monitor costs, our communications with Council is ongoing, and our security initiative, is no longer only an initiative – it is a plan of action, ready for implementation.

Our meetings this year were extremely pleasurable, we managed to wade through insurmountable amounts of documentation and accomplished many things during this period.

A special thanks to all our families who have been waiting patiently whilst we put in all the hours that this volunteer committee required of us. I know we all spent many hours of every week on ExCom matters – thank you for your patience. And an even bigger thanks to my husband for being with me, every step of the way.

Thank you