



KLIPRIVIERSBERG CONSERVANCY

SECOND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

TUESDAY 23 AUGUST 2011

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 2010/2011

INTRODUCTION

It gives me great pleasure to present the Chairman's Report for the period of 2010 to 2011 at the Second Annual General Meeting of the Klipriviersberg Conservancy.

THE YEAR THAT HAS PASSED: REFLECTION AND RESTRUCTURE

When we started the year after the inaugural AGM in April last year we were expecting to bed down and consolidate on the establishment of the Conservancy. If you remember, one of our projects was to initiate a branding and marketing exercise. The result of that has been a very exciting and interesting period of reflection and review of what we are and should be. As a result we have taken a decision not to follow through on the establishment of the Conservancy as we had initially anticipated but to recognise that our role and function encompasses a broader opportunity in the protection, promotion and enhancement of the natural assets in the southern areas of Johannesburg.

While I will be covering the restructuring and refocusing of our effort in a more detailed presentation later, it is important for this report to provide a very brief summary of what has transpired. In our discussions with the national and provincial conservancy associations - the National Association of Conservancies/Stewardship in South Africa (NACSSA), the Gauteng Conservancy and Stewardship Association (GCSA) and the provincial environmental authority, the Gauteng Department of Agricultural and Rural Development (GDARD) - it became apparent that due to the size of the area we had identified being 150 km² and encompassing over 50,000 properties it would not be possible to register a conservancy. GDARD has an objective to establish 10% of the Gauteng area as protected areas by promoting the Biodiversity Stewardship Program.

In this program single owners or smaller numbers of property owners in areas approximately 100 ha in extent enter into a signed agreement regarding the protection and management of areas which are of value in terms of their biodiversity or other characteristics. In addition, the diversity of this large urban and rural area we had identified presents many opportunities for smaller groups of properties to establish conservancies or enter into the Biodiversity Stewardship Programme which would focus on a particular characteristic and actively work towards its protection and management.

In our discussions, both internally and externally, it became apparent that our role and function needed to focus on the broader regional issues and dynamics resulting from the growth and development of the metropolitan area which threaten the irreplaceable natural assets of one of the most beautiful and unique areas of the central Gauteng province and Witwatersrand region which we are extremely fortunate to live in. We came to realise that we need to address the general sustainability of the area and its distinctive lifestyle opportunities while still promoting appropriate economic and social development which would add value to its natural assets and address recognised problems of poverty and unemployment in the general metropolitan region.

We have therefore been able to confirm that our role and function is as a facilitator and catalyst to work with other organisations and agencies in the government, private and community sectors to drive the sustainability of a matchless lifestyle which will be of benefit to local and surrounding communities. This will be realised in collaborative processes which will focus on the protection, promotion and enhancement of the biodiversity value of the southern areas of Joburg through the promotion of sustainable living, business and promoting new and appropriate social and economic development.

I would like to record our appreciation for the contribution that Thys Botha of BrandWealth Organisation made in leading our initial workshop and provoking our thinking. Also the members of the team who have participated in a number of workshops and meetings in developing our new approach, strategy and priorities for KlipSA (Klipriviersberg Sustainability Association).

PORTFOLIOS AND ACTIVITIES

The Executive Committee members of the Conservancy, assisted by a number of additional members of the community, have contributed substantial time and energy in the running of the different portfolios and activities which have included:

- **Administration and Finance**

This has addressed the financial and operational management and business of the Conservancy and ensured that our administrative and financial records are in good order.

The number of members of the Conservancy has increased from 289 in June last year to 308 at the end of July 2011. The membership is drawn from a wide range of interests and areas and it is important that we continue encouraging people to become members and be included in our database to receive information about the Conservancy and activities.

The generation of resources for the Conservancy is an ongoing process. We were very fortunate at the beginning of the year to receive a substantial donation through the KNRA for which we have been very grateful as it has provided an initial financial injection to assist in our establishment. We will continue with our quest for donations and sponsorships to fund and finance our activities and projects. However, it is also important to establish a regular income and revenue stream. In this regard preliminary discussions have been held which will hopefully result in improving income flow.

The Klipriviersberg Conservancy initiated registration with the appropriate authorities as a Non-Profit Organisation and Public Benefit Organisation. However, it was decided to hold these applications over until such time as the new organisation has been established and initiated.

- **Biodiversity**

The focus of the Conservancy is to ensure the integrity of the Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve and surrounding Klipriviersberg ridges and areas with their wide range of fauna and flora with a rich and valuable biodiversity and several "red data" species. In addition the Klip River and the unique grasslands and open areas are also of critical importance.

We have where possible supported the Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve Association and its valuable work in the Reserve. We wish to recognise and acknowledge the resulting achievements and growth in the activities, interest and visitors to the Reserve under the leadership of its Chairman, Clem Kourie.

In collaboration with national, provincial and local authorities and agencies the Conservancy has taken a lead role in the initiation of an integrated management plan for the Klip River wetland area. This has been the result of discussions over a number of months to address the many problems associated with the river and wetland area which is being abused through illegal dumping and uses and problems associated with water quality and quantity. An initial workshop has been held which identified a wide range of issues and ideas which will form the basis of a project plan and professional research and investigations to identify the best way to address the many needs and services of the wetland area.

- **Branding and marketing**

This team of people has been instrumental in developing our new strategy and priorities that I have described previously. What was initially going to be the development of a branding and marketing strategy ended up as an important strategic review. It is now essential that we develop and implement a branding and marketing strategy for the new association.

- **Business integration**

The Conservancy has established a strategic partnership with Sojo Business and Tourism. We have received the recognition and support of the Sojo ExCo and directors which will enable the Conservancy to address urban management issues through the current processes and procedures that Sojo has established in reporting and monitoring with the Johannesburg Council. In addition, we have agreed to integrate and support each others events and functions and those of the KNRA.

The Conservancy will initiate and promote green business and awareness programs for the Sojo members to improve their resource management and profitability. We will also support and encourage appropriate economic and social development of the region through the promotion of tourism, conferencing, sports and recreation activities which make use of our natural assets and associated amenities and facilities.

- **Development Integration**

The proactive integration and promotion of appropriate development is a high priority for the Conservancy. To do this a team comprising volunteers from residents, business and professionals in architecture, environmental sciences and urban planning was established from a public meeting held in September 2010. The team is kindly hosted every month at Thaba ya Batswana and is establishing a terms of reference, development policy and processes and procedures for reviewing development applications and initiatives in the area.

The essence of the mandate for the team is to proactively engage with authorities, developers and their professional teams to guide and support development which will add value to the area and will contribute to the sustainable economic and social development of local and surrounding communities. To date the team has been involved in considering, evaluating, commenting and meeting with developers and professionals in 32 different development and environmental applications and processes. It is interesting to note that our approaches have been well received and we will continue striving to find the right balance for the protection, promotion and enhancement of natural assets through integrated sustainable urban development.

A key project which the Conservancy is initiating is the establishment of an environmental resource centre for the Klipriviersberg area. While there have been interesting ideas and discussions regarding this important project, it has still to be initiated. In essence, this centre will be used to store and share knowledge and information about the area that has been gained through various research projects as well as development plans and applications. It is anticipated that it could include libraries and training and conference facilities and will be the subject and product of a process involving various interested parties and stakeholders.

- **Events and activities**

It is important that members of the Conservancy and residents in the area are provided with a program of events and activities which will inform and entertain. We have been able to arrange a number of events through the year which have proved to be popular and successful. These have included a visit to the AfriSam quarry operations, talks by Dave Collins on climate change and energy strategies and Margi Brocklehurst on the activities of the FreeMe Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre. Trees were planted on Arbour Day at the Broken Wings Home for Disabled Adults in the Alberton area. Our year-end function at Thornbirds included a presentation by Bo van der Lecq of the Urban Raptor Conservation Project. In addition we have supported and promoted the events and activities of the KNRA and Sojo Business and Tourism

- **Public relations and publicity**

The Conservancy has been in discussions with management and reporters of local community papers to provide regular features and articles on sustainability. Caxton and Tame Times have been very supportive of the Conservancy and have given us extensive coverage around our activities and events.

A database of editors, reporters and writers in various media and publications has been established and is used to promote major events and activities of the Conservancy. Through Radio 702 the Conservancy has also contributed to discussions on conservation and the environment.

Only two presentations on the Conservancy were given this year to the Mondeor Methodist Interest Group and Caxton Business Forum. Arising from the latter, the Conservancy is in discussions with Caxton about developing a business sustainability recognition award.

The Conservancy makes use of the Internet website and social media including Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn to reach members and those interested in its activities. The website will also be used to provide information and references regarding sustainability as well as urban and environmental development policies.

It is important that the Conservancy makes better use of the media and public relations opportunities to inform local and surrounding communities about its activities and in particular to increase awareness regarding sustainable urban living and business practices.

- **School projects**

The Conservancy recognises the importance of increasing awareness regarding sustainability amongst the younger generation. The approach that has been taken is to establish a strategic relationship with Miss Earth and Generation Earth. The Conservancy congratulates Catherine and Elaine Constantinides on their enthusiasm and for what has been achieved to engage and energise local schools in environmental and sustainability issues.

There are many programs and initiatives available for schoolchildren and the Conservancy will establish partnerships and relationships with the organisations offering these to introduce them into the local schools and communities.

In this regard it is important that the Conservancy establishes contact and builds relationships with the educational community to make them more aware of sustainability and to encourage them to participate in associated activities.

- **Stakeholders**

Due to the nature and diversity of the area there is a wide range of interests and stakeholders with whom the Conservancy needs to engage. In addition it is important that we develop and manage databases to be able to share information.

Rather than keeping extensive databases of individual people, the Conservancy is working on the concept of "network of networks" and will work with other organisations to be able to share information through their respective databases of members and interested people. This will apply to residents associations, schools, community and interest groups, major landowners, sports and recreational organisations, authorities and agencies in the private, community, business and government sectors.

The Conservancy has established representation and participates in the activities of NACSSA, GCSA, the Klip River Catchment Forum and Gauteng Wetland Forum.

We are pleased to note that following a number of discussions the Conservancy is in the process of developing a strategic relationship with the University of Johannesburg (UJ). The view taken by UJ in the discussions is that the area of the Conservancy offers an opportunity for the establishment of a "living laboratory" in which students and academics can undertake ongoing research and investigations regarding the complexities and dynamics of the area. The focus will be not only on the biodiversity but also the economic, social physical and human aspects of urban development, conservation and sustainability. It will involve a wide range of faculties and disciplines and will contribute to the establishment of the Klipriviersberg Resource Centre to increase and share the knowledge and wisdom about the area.

The Conservancy believes that this is a very important relationship and will look to establishing similar partnerships with other academic and research institutions and agencies to help increase the knowledge and understanding of the area.

Despite several attempts and initiatives the Conservancy has not been able to establish a strong and regular working relationship with the local authorities. Informal and infrequent discussions have occurred and we have ensured that officials and local political representatives are kept informed regarding our activities and understand that their participation and involvement in any of our committees and teams will always be welcome.

Now that the local government elections have been held and the new council structures have been established, the Conservancy needs to develop stronger working relationships with the authorities through the political representatives and officials. It is important to be able to establish working partnerships regarding the various aspects of protecting, promoting and enhancing the natural assets of the area and ensuring appropriate economic and social development to meet the needs of local and surrounding communities.

- **Sustainable urban living**

The focus of the team that has been established is to increase the awareness, interest and practice of the local residential community in sustainable living practices.

The team has identified many topics and areas where information can be gathered and shared regarding sustainable urban living including the wise use of resources, recycling, waste management and healthy lifestyles.

A comprehensive list of recycling sites has been prepared and will be made available through the web for local residents to use to drop off the different types of separated waste. A programme of discussion forums on various topics and the establishment of a relationship with The Natural Step to co-host Restorative Breakfast meetings on a quarterly basis is being investigated.

As the Chairman, I would like to note my appreciation and gratitude to all the members of the various committees and acknowledge their contribution to what has been achieved through this year. It has been very pleasing to see the growth in participation of people who are willing to volunteer their time, experience and resources in assisting the Conservancy to achieve its objective.

THE YEAR AHEAD

Subject to your approval later this evening, the year ahead will focus on establishing KlipSA as a credible organisation in its drive to establish a sustainable lifestyle for residents and businesses in the area, that will protect promote and enhance our natural assets while ensuring appropriate social and economic growth and development for the benefit of local and surrounding communities.

This will include the establishment of the proposed Advisory Board in terms of the new constitution with a focus on developing strategic relationships and partnerships with public and private agencies, organisations and institutions. A prime emphasis will be the drive to grow the involvement of the local residential and business communities and to encourage their adoption of a sustainable lifestyle and business practices.

It is important that KlipSA continues to be proactive and positive towards sharing information and knowledge regarding sustainability and the benefits that can be achieved in the short, medium and long-term for the area.

What has become apparent through the year is the critically important role that this area can play in its contribution to the long-term future growth and development of Johannesburg and surrounding municipal areas.

What we have in the southern areas of Johannesburg continues to be acknowledged and recognised as being absolutely special and unique. It is for this reason that we all need to become more knowledgeable and understanding of our environment and its sensitivities and to be able to look after and enhance what we treasure.

The Klipriviersberg Conservancy looks forward to your participation and working with everyone towards realising **SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH COLLABORATION**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Barker', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Andrew Barker
Chairman
Tuesday, 23 August 2011