



Klipriviersberg Sustainability Association

## **KLIPSA (KLIPRIVIERSBERG SUSTAINABILITY ASSOCIATION)**

### **FIFTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**TUESDAY 26 AUGUST 2014**

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 2013/2014**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

It gives me great pleasure to present the Chairman's Report for the period of 2013 to 2014 at the Fifth Annual General Meeting of KlipSA (Klipriviersberg Sustainability Association).

At the outset of this Chairman's report it is with great sadness that I have to record the passing of our founding Vice-Chairman Mr Clem Kourie on 7 April 2014. Clem was a founder member of KlipSA and brought tremendous knowledge, experience and wise guidance to the establishment and formation of the Association. His interest, passion and love for the area were tangible and manifested in his enthusiasm and participation in KlipSA and its various initiatives and projects. We wish to record our deepest sympathy to his wife Pat and their family.

As with last year, we are happy to share with you that the recognition of the importance of the Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve and the value of the biodiversity in the southern areas of Johannesburg is gaining greater attention and interest. However, while the process continues slowly and is frustrating on a number of fronts the progress has been positive as we continue to receive affirmations of what KlipSA is endeavouring to achieve.

#### **OVER VIEW OF THE PAST YEAR**

The rationalisation that the Executive Committee undertook in the previous year has certainly enabled us to focus our limited resources on a few key initiatives and projects. It is unfortunate that we have limited resources as there are so many other opportunities which could be of value and benefit to what we are trying to achieve.

The primary focus has continued to be the development and promotion of Klipriviersberg Economic and Ecosystem Development Zone (KEEDZ) to guide and realise appropriate economic and social development to protect, promote and enhance the natural biodiversity and resources. The Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve has been the prime focus of all the initiatives that have been developed for the surrounding areas.

Interaction with local, provincial and national authorities and agencies, business representatives, community organisations and residents has continued through the year. This has led to strengthening the support for what we are trying to achieve through this proactive approach to development.

Despite the positive feedback that has been received from the authorities, we continue to be frustrated by the lack of delivery and action with many months passing before we see tangible progress being made. However, KlipSA will continue to work closely with the authorities and their agencies as they are fundamental to the partnership and creating an enabling environment for the delivery of the projects and initiatives needed to address basic economic and social needs relating to food security, poverty and unemployment in the southern areas of Johannesburg.

We have received increased interest and support from the business sector with a growing interest for participation and involvement. As a result the Executive Committee has been working towards securing funding and resources to be able to implement the projects and initiatives. The growth in business recognising the importance of environmental, economic and social sustainability should see greater investment and participation by business in the KlipSA projects and initiatives.

The Executive Committee will be very happy to incorporate any business investment and participation into the Association's activities and operations wherever possible with a view to ensuring appropriate and sustainable triple bottom line returns from corporate social and entrepreneurial development investment.

In essence, the Executive Committee believes that the developmental philosophy and approach for the southern areas of Johannesburg should be driven by business in close collaboration with the authorities for the benefit of the communities in the area.

The local communities and residents in the area continue to approach KlipSA to address a variety of environmental issues and concerns. Where possible we provide support and guidance to address the issues that have been raised. If we are not able to assist we provide suggestions as to who may be able to assist.

KlipSA will continue to be a catalyst for effective and productive collaboration between the community, business and authority stakeholders with the focus on realising sustainable social and economic development led by environmental and biodiversity value adding opportunities.

## **PORTFOLIOS AND ACTIVITIES**

While the resources of the Executive Committee have been limited, we have been ably assisted by representatives from local business and community members. We wish to place on record our appreciation for the time, energy and sponsorship that people have invested in the projects and initiatives and assistance in the various portfolios and activities through the year.

The main portfolios and activities:

- **Sustainable Business**

The strategic partnership with SOJO Business and Tourism has continued to grow and develop with SOJO focusing on ensuring an appropriate environment for "business to do business" while KlipSA focuses on the sustainability dimension of business and its environment.

The Executive Committee would like to recognise and thank the SOJO executives and directors, chaired by Richard Bennet of iProp, for their continued support and interest in KlipSA and its activities. We would also like to acknowledge ongoing energy and effort of SOJO CEO Nicky Vakaloudis and her assistant Nicole Rodway.

The key projects which have been developed and initiated in partnership with SOJO include:

- Formulation of the "Klipriviersberg Agritropolis"

Through the year the two organisations have been working together to promote economic growth and development in the southern areas of Johannesburg.

The primary focus has been to grow and develop the ideas for the establishment of future natural and organic based agricultural activities serving the needs of local communities by providing business opportunities for small, medium and large corporate entities.

This has been the basis for the formulation of the "Klipriviersberg Agritropolis" where agriculture will be the core economic activity with its associated value chain providing opportunities for local economic growth and development to surrounding communities. The prime focus is to address food security, unemployment, poverty and inequality by providing economic opportunities close to where people are living.

Associated with this developmental approach is also the promotion and support for the planning and development of associated industries and services and to invest in infrastructure to attract labour oriented industrial and commercial development servicing the agricultural and tourism activities. This would include related agricultural goods and services, agro-processing and packaging, logistics for transportation, storage and warehousing.

The promotion of the concepts and ideas has continued with presentations and discussions with representatives from business, authorities and communities.

- Tourism promotion

In line with the recognition of the tourism opportunities in the region, KlipSA has incorporated and integrated the tourism value chain as an important component of the "Klipriviersberg Agritropolis". Opportunities exist to develop responsible tourism and hospitality products and services through agritourism and ecotourism.

KlipSA continues to support SOJO in promoting economic and social development through the advancement of the existing tourism, conferencing, sports and recreation opportunities. Partnerships continue to be established with national, provincial and local tourism agencies to develop projects and initiatives for the area based on the environmental and biodiversity opportunities.

A particularly interesting initiative is the N12 Treasure Route which is promoting the N12 as a destination from Middleburg through Joburg and Kimberley down to George. The KlipSA/SOJO area is seen as a key hub for this initiative.

- Green Business Platform

In a partnership with SOJO, Thaba Eco-Hotel, Caxton Community Newspapers and Water Wise of Rand Water the Green Business Platform has continued through the year.

The range of topics has been focused on improving the profitability of business by addressing sustainability initiatives relating to energy, water and waste management, strategy, measurement and reporting, governance, building development and management.

The breakfast events are held the first Friday of the month and are hosted by Thabo Eco-Hotel. KlipSA is very grateful for their support and sponsorship in hosting these events and also notes its appreciation to the other partners for their role in the promotion and development of these events.

The number of attendees continues to be disappointing, particularly in the early part of the year. However recent events have seen an increase in numbers due to efforts being made in promotion and distribution of invitations using electronic and social media. Details of the events and copies of presentations are available on the KlipSA website.

- Urban management

The establishment of the Regional Interface for focused and effective delivery of services and facilities in all parts of Joburg's Region F outside the Inner City has unfortunately not progressed any further. Despite efforts that KlipSA and SOJO have been making, the Joburg Council representatives have not responded.

This is a major concern as urban management issues relating to illegal occupation of buildings and dumping, waste disposal and management, management and maintenance of the urban environment are ongoing problems which are impacting on the business, urban and natural environments.

It was hoped that the Regional Interface would be able to address current problems regarding urban management and service delivery. However this has unfortunately not been realised. Effort will be made in the coming year to resuscitate this initiative with the Region F officials and MMC Councillor Roslynn Greeff.

- University of the Witwatersrand Rosettenville Embedded Urban Design Project

The partnership established with the School of Architecture and Planning of the University of the Witwatersrand to embed students in a city studio has continued with the students undertaking research and design projects through the year.

The outcomes of the research and design projects have also been fed into the Turffontein Strategic Area Framework which is one of the Joburg Corridors of Freedom.

- **Sustainable Urban Living**

I would like to thank the Sustainable Urban Living Team, under the leadership of Samantha Derham, who have continued to deliver monthly talks relating to sustainability in the home environment with approximately 20 to 30 people attending regularly.

The talks have been held at the Joburg City Parks and Zoo Entrance Precinct and are open to the general public and promoted through the local press and social media. Topics have included food and healthy living, sustainable garden development, worm farming, water, food and garden waste and energy management.

- **Sustainable Urban Development**

The Sustainable Urban Development Team, chaired by myself, has met on a monthly basis through the year at Thaba Eco-Hotel. The Team is working proactively to support appropriate economic and social development which will protect promote and enhance the natural assets and biodiversity value of the area. I would like to thank all the members of the Team who have regularly attended meetings and who have participated and contributed to the discussion and work that the Team has undertaken.

The focus of the work of the Team includes the following:

- Urban Development

The Team has continued to make submissions and participate in stakeholder discussions and meetings with iProp and SOJO on developmental strategies and policies for local municipalities and provincial authorities. This has included municipal integrated development plans, land-use and transportation development strategies, policies and frameworks.

The focus of the submissions and discussions has been to promote KEEDZ and the "Klipriviersberg Agritropolis" and the related projects and initiatives.

The Team has continued to review and comment on town planning and environmental authorisation applications. Two particular major development proposals have been the Mall of South, currently being constructed, and the environmental application for the proposed Stone Rivers Arch. Discussions have taken place with developers and professional teams to minimise impacts and find suitable mitigating measures for the development. Other residential town planning and environmental applications have also been reviewed. The Team continues to encourage developers to adopt and participate in the Biodiversity Stewardship programme where possible.

Generally the inputs and comments from KlipSA have aimed to add value to the future development and have been acknowledged, positively received and accommodated wherever possible.

To support the development approach being proposed the Team is eager to secure resources to expand its professional services and support base to prepare environmental, spatial and economic development frameworks and policies for the area and to provide additional professional services and support for developers and investors.

- Biodiversity Management

KlipSA's focus continues to ensure the integrity of the Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve (KNRA) and the 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 its wetlands and the unique grasslands and open areas are of critical importance and value to the biodiversity richness.

We continue to recognise and acknowledge the achievements and growth in the activities, interest and visitors to the Reserve realised by the Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve Association (KNRA) under the leadership of its past and present Chairmen Roy Harris and Morné Brits respectively.

Projects and initiatives regarding biodiversity and environmental management include:

- KUBiC - Kliprivier Drive Biodiversity Corridor

KUBiC was launched on 31 October 2012 as a “greenway” along 12 km of the Kliprivier Drive by designing, planting, managing and maintaining a biodiversity corridor of appropriate species of vegetation. In addition, the integration of public and non-motorised transport services and facilities will add further value for the many users.

The Team headed by Reuben Louw of Thaba Eco-Hotel organised a very successful event in September last year at which various methods of propagation were demonstrated. In addition nurseries have been established at Thaba Eco-Hotel and Aspen Nature Estate to grow plants for the corridor.

A management framework is being developed to coordinate the many public, private and community stakeholders in the development, management and maintenance of the corridor.

- Klip River Wetland Integrated Management Plan

A management plan is being prepared to address the water quality and quantity in the Klip River and the associated wetland areas. Following initial workshops a project plan and proposal detailing issues, ideas and opportunities for further investigation and research has been prepared by a team headed by Vanessa Vermaak.

A partnership is being established with the University of the Witwatersrand to undertake academic research. The project plan and framework proposal are being used to secure resources and financial support.

- Wetland and catchment forums

KlipSA representatives have attended the regular meetings of the Gauteng Wetland Forum and Klip River Catchment Forum at which issues relating to the administration, management and protection of these vital resources is discussed by national, provincial and local authorities and agencies, business and community organisations and representatives.

- Klipriviersberg Sustainable Education Centre (KlipSEC)

The project for the design and establishment of the Klipriviersberg Sustainable Education Centre (KlipSEC) has unfortunately not progressed much in the last year due to limited resources. The project team headed by George Flack-

Davison has prepared a project proposal which is being used to attract resources and investment and the intended centre will be an attractive opportunity for financial support and sponsorship.

- **Administration and Finance**

With the resignation of the Secretary/Treasurer last year the subcommittee activities were incorporated into the Executive Committee agenda and undertaken by different members of the committee.

The Association is still searching for a suitable person to assist with the administration activities. Anyone wishing to volunteer their services will be most welcomed.

The Executive Committee members for the past year have included me as Chairman, Clem Kourie as Vice-Chairman until his passing. Nicky Vakaloudis was then elected as the Vice-Chairman. The other members of the committee have included Sandra Andrew, Carla Pexirra, Morné Brits and Reuben Louw.

The number of members of the Association on our database has been reduced through careful review and management and now totals 260. Increasing the number of members is an area which requires greater attention as and when resources become available.

The establishment of a regular income and revenue stream and resources for KlipSA continues to be a priority. While donations and sponsorships will always be welcome it is the intention of the Executive Committee to ensure that projects and initiatives become self-funding.

The Association has maintained its registration as a Non-Profit Organisation. However, the application to be registered as a Public Benefit Organisation has been delayed. It is hoped that this application will be finalised in the coming year.

The establishment of the Advisory Board and the strategic relationship with the University of Johannesburg continue to be on hold until additional resources become available.

KlipSA continues to promote the use of a "network of networks" to work with other organisations to be able to share resources and information through their respective databases of members and interested people.

## **APPRECIATION**

As the Chairman of KlipSA, I would like to note my appreciation and gratitude to all the members of the teams and committees and acknowledge their contribution to what has been achieved through this year. In particular, the members of the Executive Committee who have willingly contributed their time on a regular basis to provide their support, knowledge and expertise towards what has been accomplished this year.

We would also like to express our sincere appreciation to members of the community who continue to support KlipSA and show an interest in the projects and initiatives through their participation in the various teams and committees, attendance at events and interaction in correspondence and through social media.

We also receive tremendous support and exposure through the local press and would like to record our appreciation to the management and staff of tameTimes and Caxton's Comaro Chronicle,

Southern Courier and Alberton Record. In addition, Karyn Richards, the editor of Landscape SA, is writing a series of articles on our initiatives and projects. Copies are available on the web site.

We are also very grateful to the venues and facilities who regularly host our meetings and events including Thaba Eco-Hotel and Joburg City Parks and Zoo for the Entrance Precinct for the monthly meetings and events and to Southview Lodge for hosting our AGM.

## **THE YEAR AHEAD**

As a voluntary Association, KlipSA is totally dependent on the willingness of people with an interest in and passion for the area and its unique and special qualities to give of their time, energy, expertise and wisdom. We have a few loyal volunteers that participate actively in KlipSA and its activities at the moment. However they are under tremendous strain to be able to respond to everything that needs to be done and to the demands being placed on the Association.

KlipSA has established itself as a credible organisation which is being approached to contribute and become involved in a number of economic, social and environmental initiatives and processes. Unfortunately we do not have the people and resources to respond and participate in all of these and will need to keep focused on the identified priority areas and build on the portfolios and activities noted above.

With additional volunteers, resources and sponsorship KlipSA has the potential to become a meaningful player and agent in realising sustainable economic and social development for the long-term future growth and development of Johannesburg and surrounding municipal areas. This growth and development will protect promote and enhance the natural assets and biodiversity value of the area. Until such time, the existing volunteers involved in KlipSA will continue to participate to the best of their ability.

It is also the intention that the promotion of the "Klipriviersberg Agritropolis" initiative to the business and corporate sector will also realise funding and resources which will assist in the greater development of the Association and its work in the region.

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.

KlipSA looks forward to your participation and working with everyone towards realising **SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH COLLABORATION.**

**Andrew Barker**



**Chairman**

**Tuesday, 26 August 2013**