

## MUIZENBERG IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

### SUMMARY OF CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY SOME MEMBERS (BOARD MEETING 9 JULY 2013)

#### CHAIR

##### 1. Infrequency of Board meetings

MID's new MOI requires a minimum of 12 Board meetings a year. It does not specify what type of meeting, nor at what intervals. The Board is made up of directors whose services in that capacity are entirely voluntary. Most of them are in full time employment. Timing of Board Meetings has necessarily therefore to be left to the discretion of the Board. This notwithstanding, the Board meets approximately monthly, sometimes more often.

The idea of alternating Board meetings and Strategy & Action planning meetings is to enable the Board to put more focus on actions. Members are invited to attend the first half hour of both types of meeting. This is in accordance with members' wishes as expressed at the 2012 AGM. Dates and times of proposed meetings for the rest of 2013 can be found on the MID web site ([www.mid.org.za](http://www.mid.org.za)) or obtained from the MID office ([manager@mid.org.za](mailto:manager@mid.org.za) or 021 788 1196).

##### 2. Lack of communication

We've been working since the 2012 AGM to improve communication within MID.

Mark Robinson, who's held the communications portfolio throughout the current business-plan cycle, resigned at the end of May. A new communications director has been nominated and we expect that she will be formally co-opted at the Board meeting on 9 July.

Meanwhile, we've developed a new interactive website. Do visit it at [www.mid.org.za](http://www.mid.org.za). We have been working for some time on a flyer to be distributed to all households in our area (now delivered). An informal multi-functional members' social event is also planned for 16 July. The Board intends to continue to explore new and helpful ways to communicate with MID members - both to listen and to inform. For communication to be effective it needs, of course, to flow in both directions. Structures, like the invitation to attend Board Meetings, and members' social events, are in place to facilitate this exchange. But they are helpful only to the extent that they are used. Members are again invited to put constructive suggestions to the Board or the MID office.

### **3. Role of MID Manager and Board Portfolio Holders**

With a turnover of not much over R1 000 000 a year, MID is a *small* “business”. In all small businesses, Directors have to roll up their sleeves and involve themselves in the nitty gritty. This model, of having a manager and volunteer portfolio holders, has been evolving for some years. It is the most practical, given MID’s limited resources. The Directors have to engage in doing tasks. One employee, which is all MID can afford, cannot realistically be expected to run the office, lead the Board and also manage MID’s activities in the area. MID’s resources (and current budget) do not allow for a larger administrative staff. The re-design of the Manager’s job was simply a matter of operational necessity.

MID members are invited to involve themselves in supporting the efforts of the volunteer Directors. With this kind of collaborative effort MID could achieve a great deal more than its very limited levy-funded resources currently allow.

### **4. Sivuyile**

The designer/copywriter concerned exceeded his brief without permission. MID disputed his charges. Significant attempts have been made to find a compromise solution. Latterly, MID’s *pro bono* attorney has had no response from Sivuyile’s legal representative, and the matter is currently in suspension.

### **5. Members Communications Event - see 2 above**

This event is planned for 16 July, partly in response to requests from the membership for more interactive communication. The approved R20 000 cost is simply a guesstimate (based on a professional caterer’s guideline) of R100 per person for 200 people. We expect the actual cost to be considerably less. The venue will be free.

### **6. Harrassing Phone Calls**

This matter should be reported to the Police.

## **GOVERNANCE**

### **7. New manager**

Chevone Petersen has been appointed and starts on 8 July. For details please check the new website.

### **8. Invitation for members or their representatives to attend Board meetings**

Members are always welcome to attend the 1<sup>st</sup> half hour of any meeting of Directors. If members are requesting a Board response to their queries, and are not able to attend Board meetings in person, they are welcome to send a representative member to speak on their behalf.

In general, the most effective way to obtain information about concerns or issues relating to a particular portfolio would be to meet with the portfolio holder concerned. Alternatively, to meet with the Chair or the Community Relations Director, or the Portfolio Holder for the Village or the Beachfront, depending on the location of one's property and the nature of the concern or issue which the Members wishes to raise.

Individual written responses to members' queries are not necessarily helpful. They are time consuming and detract from Directors' ability to focus on their specific tasks.

### **9. Policies, Protocols and Procedures Manual - is it necessary?**

Yes, it's necessary. Many of the current queries and difficulties simply would not have arisen had this manual been written earlier in MID's history. The community at large, and MID's members in particular, are entitled to know where MID stands on various issues of public interest (policies) including the requirements of the SRA by-law. Directors, particularly individuals newly elected to the Board, need specific guidance (protocols) on both these issues and also the detailed implementation of the MOI, etc. Any well run office should have a procedures manual to obviate confusion during periods of staff illness, leave or hand-over from one employee to another.

### **10. Policies, Protocols and Procedures manual - did we get 3 quotes, or tender?**

In this instance, it was not appropriate to go out to tender. Policies and protocols need to be developed by the MID Board, who do not charge for their time. Procedures are best written by someone with intimate knowledge of an organisation's operational methods. In MID's case, in light of the functioning of the newly structured Board, only Dorothy Johaadien qualifies. She will also be responsible for draft wording of the results of Directors' work.

**11. Budget pie-chart on website does not line up with the portfolio budgets**

Thank you for your feedback on the readability of the graphic and key. The graphic was primarily an experiment in visual communication. We will look at ways of making it more accurate and more useful. Constructive suggestions, such as these, are welcomed by the Board.

**12. Security at Checkers car park**

As private property, the area round Checkers is not part of MID's mandate. Since the owners' recent appointment of GRIT as security provider we are receiving reports of a distinct improvement.

**13. Relocation of Municipal buildings**

We agree that progress has been very slow, if indeed it is possible at all, but we will continue to lobby Council through our representative, Councillor Dave D'Alton.

**ENVIRONMENT**

**14. Buildings derelict for too long**

We agree. Kelleigh Hamilton, our recently co-opted director with this portfolio, is focusing on the problem and will report back to membership via the website and through other media in due course.

**15. Living Hope/NCC**

Please see the MID website for details of the appointment of the new cleaning contractors. MID changed the specification for the cleaning and garden maintenance contract and gave Living Grace more than the required contractual notice. Living Grace elected not to tender.

**DEFAMATORY COMMENTS ABOUT BOARD MEMBERS**

Members are requested to make enquiries and suggestions in a reasonable manner. Emotive comments and allegations that could well attract legal action for their defamatory nature are not helpful to anyone and do not serve the best interests of MID's community.

Both this Board and its immediate predecessors have paid due attention to matters of financial propriety and the careful management of members' levy funding. The focus has simply been the best interests of Muizenberg. No director has derived any improper personal financial benefit through his or her engagement in MID's affairs. Any allegation to the contrary should be regarded as ill informed or malicious.