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2010

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Bulletin

Official newsletter of the Overstrand Municipality

PROTECTION SERVICES SHOW METTLE ASSAULTS, FIRES, HOLIDAY TRAFFIC HANDLED WELL

In December, Overstrand contributed more than its share to the bad news on the front pages of newspapers, but what also clearly came to the fore in the reporting was the state of readiness of its Directorate Protection Services and the decisive action taken by decision makers to address issues.

The attack on tourists in the Fernkloof Nature Reserve had international repercussions and impacted visitor numbers negatively. Safety measures were instituted under the auspices of the Municipal Manager, Mr Werner Zybrands, and the Director of Protection Services, Mr Neville Michaels, and included amongst others determining and patrolling safe routes, hikers being escorted by municipal law enforcers, providing hikers with whistles and pepper spray and exercising access control at the main entrance and the start of major hiking trails.

Excellent cooperation between the municipal law enforcers, the SA Police Services and private security organisations eventually lead to the arrest of the alleged perpetrators.

According to the reserve manager, Mr Grant Forbes, they have not lowered their guard yet, but he is of the opinion that nature lovers should not be hesitant to visit the reserve.

While the Fernkloof crisis was still unresolved, several large fires in Overstrand and surrounding areas had to be fought.

On 24 December, a large fire broke out near Pearly Beach which was only brought under control five days later near Cape Agulhas. This fire destroyed more than 50 000 hectare fynbos, amongst others in the Cape Agulhas National Park, and resulted in the loss of homes and sheds while it also claimed the life of one farm worker in the Agulhas area.

A fire broke out on the same day in Franskraal which threatened homes and also required a rapid response from Overstrand's Fire Brigade.

On 28 December, a fire broke out in Hawston and could only be brought under control two days later, and on 6 January the mountain in Kleinmond suffered the brunt of a fire that broke out in the squatter camp.

Once more, excellent cooperation between Overstrand's Fire Brigade and the Fire Services of the Overberg District Municipality, CapeNature, Working on Fire teams and the South African Air Force was evident.

The cause of all these fires can presumably be ascribed to negligence, especially on the part of children.

Heavy traffic was experienced on Overstrand roads. According to many observers, more people visited the area this year, but they stayed for shorter periods. Speed checks were conducted on a regular basis and there were many parking transgressions. Several motor



Reservist recruits of Overstrand's Protection Services underwent thorough training in November and were ready to render assistance with the 48 brushfires, four formal house fires, 16 informal house fires and four rescue operations during the holiday season.

vehicle accidents also occurred.

According to Traffic Chief Rudi Fraser, his division was thoroughly geared for these contingencies since they instituted a sound operational plan and were prepared to handle the heightened influx of vehicles. In total, 100 reservists were appointed prior to the holidays to support the respective divisions of the Directorate Protection Services with the execution of their tasks.

Fraser was pleasantly surprised by numerous calls from the public to thank his division for the thankless work they

had to do.

At a special council meeting on 14 January 2009, Mayor Theo Beyleveldt expressed his thanks to the Municipal Manager, the Directors, the Area Managers and everyone involved in rendering protection and municipal services for the work they performed over the holiday period. Numerous compliments were received on the beaches, especially the three Blue Flag beaches, and it was clear that the prohibition on the consumption of alcohol on the beaches contributed towards families' being able to enjoy a truly relaxing time.

BY-ELECTION IN WARD 1

At the first special council meeting of the year on Thursday 14 January 2010, the Speaker, Mr Anton Coetsee, announced that two councillors had to vacate their positions during the council recess and that a municipal by-election is likely to be held in ward 1 (Gansbaai, Masakhane and Blompark) on 24 February 2010.

The by-election stems from disciplinary action in August 2009 against councillor Voilet Tutu (NPP) due to non-attendance of 10 meetings of the Portfolio Committee and Council between

September 2007 and June 2009. Although mitigating circumstances were put forward, the Western Cape MEC for Local Government ruled that it would not be in the community's interest should she remain in office and discharged her as councillor.

Another member of the National People's Party (NPP), Cllr Moira Opperman, was suspended by her party and recalled as councillor. She held a proportional seat and her replacement is to be announced by the Independent Electoral Commission soon.

MONEY FOR ESTUARY MANAGEMENT

The recent inexplicable dying-off of fish in the Klein River estuary brought the dire need for proper management of this valuable natural asset of the Overstrand to the fore.

At the last council meeting of 2009, the extension of the operational budget for environmental management with R120 000 for the establishment of an estuary management position in Hermanus was approved. The funding for this was provided by the Table Mountain Fund (TMF).

The TMF became aware of this need following on a talk on the estuaries of Overstrand by Hermanus' environmental officer, Ms Willemien Swanepoel, at a

CAPE (Cape Action for People and the Environment) Conference in May last year.

TMF also agreed to fund the position for three years at an amount of R240 000 per annum. The municipality undertook to provide office space and equipment for the three-year period.

Overstrand Municipality, in association with CAPE, developed environmental management plans for the two priority estuaries within the municipal borders, namely Klein River and Bot River. The estuary manager will focus on establishing organisational arrangements and institutional capacity to support the implementation of the plan for the Klein River estuary.

STALLS ENHANCE HISTORIC TOWN CENTRE

The redevelopment of Market Square in Hermanus was subject to some controversy in its final stages with regard to materials used for and the size of the trading complex.

On 15 December 2009, this development was officially opened with the handing over of the key to the new Tourist Information Kiosk on the square to Mr Dan Acker, Vice Chairperson of Cape Whale Coast, the destination marketing organisation of the Overstrand.

The traders immediately started off with brisk trading in their brand-new facilities, and very soon it became apparent from newspaper reports, telephone calls and letters that visitors and residents alike accepted the historic red corrugated iron buildings as if they have always been part of Hermanus.

"We are relieved about the way matters developed", says Executive Mayor Theo Beyleveldt. "The new trading complex on Market Square in Hermanus is not only a practical solution to the need for space for informal economic development opportunities but was, in fact, designed by one of the town's leading architects free of charge as a contribution to enhance the original Victorian fishing-village character of the CBD."

Architect Andrew Greeff, member of the Heritage Committee, says the original design for the trading structures was not acceptable to the committee. It would have comprised a built structure with gables and charcoal-coloured tiled roofing which would have been out of place on Market Square.

His design greatly softens the feeling of permanence through the use of corrugated iron with a Victorian profile, which not only speaks the same language as the roofs of the Old Harbour Museum buildings but is also a material commonly used by residents of early Hermanus. The colour used is Heritage Red and is the closest to the lead with which corrugated iron was painted in the olden days.

The structures are smaller than those originally planned and by leaving corridors in between them, passers-by can still catch glimpses of the sea, the mountain and the town from all angles. Each of the units houses four traders, who will be able to lock away their goods at the end of the day. Storage space was also created by lifting the roofs, which in turn allows for ventilation in keeping with occupational health requirements.

Although the main corridors remain open all the time, the remainder can be closed down with roll-down doors to serve as additional storage space for trestle tables et cetera at night.

It should also be noted that even though parking space has been reduced, vendors are not allowed to use the available space for long-term parking during the day.

Subcontracted to Lighthouse Construction from Hermanus, the cost to erect these structures amounted to more than R2,9 million. Beforehand, plans were widely workshoped with interested and affected parties, such as the ward committee, the Destination Marketing Organisation, the adjoining land owners, the traders and the business association.



Whereas in the past both trader and buyer had to dodge anything-but-stable canopies and structures, nowadays nothing can detract from a good haggle on the true value of a rare find.



OUTDOOR SPORTS PARADISE

The Totalsports Challenge on Saturday 9 January 2010 in Kleinmond marked the end of the very busy and eventful summer holiday period in Overstrand. Overall, great support was experienced at outdoor sporting events, such as road races as well as beach rugby and cricket tournaments. Bad weather had an effect at times, though, resulting in two of the seven relay events in the Totalsports Challenge being cancelled due to adverse conditions. Nonetheless, excellent performances were recorded with the Totalsports PRO 7-member men's team completing the event in a combined time of 04hours14minutes30seconds. Here, Mayor Theo Beyleveldt (left) congratulates Warren Petersen on his team's victory in its category. Photo: www.oakpics.com

VALENTINE'S NIGHT CHOICE

For a romantic night out on Valentine's Day (Sunday 14 February 2010) in Hermanus this year, the best choice will be to attend the performance by Capella Concertante in the Hermanus Civic Centre's auditorium. Overstrand Arts/Kunste managed to attract this group from Austria who is celebrating its 25th year of existence by touring Namibia and South Africa. The group will perform well-loved masterpieces by Mozart, Johann Strauss, Franz Lehar and others. Bookings can be made at Bellini Gallery, 028 312 4988.



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