

New plans to secure an SRA

The badly eroded and damaged dune spit that protects the St Francis Bay canals from the sea. Photo: Simon Picton - Tabervill

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TAFS APPA

In its constant pursuit to establish a Special Rating area (SRA) in St Francis, the St Francis Bay Property Owners Association (SFPO) held a public meeting on 3 January to make two big changes to its Special Rating Agency (SRA) proposal.

These changes are designed so the SFPO, aka, the SFB Residents' Association, can get a required 50% +1 vote from all property owners in an area in order to enable an SRA to be formed.

For those not in the know, the previous number of votes from the whole St Francis Bay area was lower than the above amount, required in terms of municipal by-laws, and so the SRA could not be formed. The new changes, which the SFPO hopes will elicit the required number of voters, includes firstly a 25% rates levy for the Canals and Village areas only (as opposed to the previously proposed 50% of property owners' monthly rates bill) for an initial period of 10 years.

The new demarcation area for the levy will initially include only the Village and the Canal areas only so that priority issues of the restoration of the beach, spit and river can be addressed. The SFPO decision to exclude Saarlansbaai, St Francis on Sea, the Port, Otters Landing and the Industrial Area was because it is difficult to get sufficient property owners in these areas to vote for the SRA.

In addition these areas will not be able contribute enough to fund the restoration of their own roads, as a result they would therefore be subsidised by the Canal and Village property owners. It is possible these areas will form their own separate SRA to restore their own roads and a new committee for these areas has been formed to decide on this issue.

This new committee will be represented on the SFPO Association Committee to ensure it gets necessary support. The Links has also been invited to join when there is sufficient support for joining the SRA.

The SRA will focus on three projects, in order of priority: restoring the River, Spit and Beach; Roads; and CCTV security cameras and 24/7 monitoring.

The installation of CCTV camera surveillance will be in the demarcated Canals and Village) areas only. The repair and

maintenance of sections of roads and parking areas will be confined to the Village Centre and main intersections, along with pedestrian and cycle tracks along main arterial roads.

A re-vote is now planned in the new area of the canals and village and this will take place early this year, probably March, or once the Kouga Municipality has gazetted the above amendments to the By-Law.

Beach

A main focus of the SFPO's SRA is the SFB beach, which SFPO says is now very serious, adding "We just cannot delay any further."

At the AGM of the SFPO in December, the new Municipal Manager of the Kouga Municipality, Charl du Plessis, said the state of the spit will certainly breach sooner than later, and that emergency repair work will need to take place to ward off a disaster. To facilitate this, he called on the community to request immediate emergency action by the authorities.

At the Members-only AGM of the SFPO in December the possible long term solutions for the beach, compiled by coastal engineering company, Advision were presented. The most likely solution will include the construction of groynes, the total one being from the spit close to the river mouth coupled with beach nourishment with sand sourced from the dredging of the Krumme River and canals. In addition it is thought the sand which Port currently dredges from its main beach could also be re-directed to nourish main beach.

Additional Funding

The SFPO says it has secured additional sources of revenue to assist with funding the proposed projects and services.

The St Francis Riparian Association and the Krumme River Estates (who receive a Canal levy and a Boat licence revenue from the Kouga Municipality and will contribute directly to the River, Spit and Beach restoration project, proposed by SFPO.

The Port currently dredges a considerable amount of sand and will supply this for use on St Francis Bay beaches. The Municipality says it will also contribute to the SRA projects.

The SFPO presented its proposal at a public meeting on 20 December to seek feedback in preparation for its official public meeting on 3 January, as required by the SRA Policy.

CSF Residents Association Newsletter: Cape St Francis Civics ensures good holidays

The new Cape St Francis Civics / Ratepayers Association has have put a lot of extra effort into looking after the village during the crowded summer season. The Civics realises it's the summer season is the lifeblood of the little village for many people, and opted to make the season as easy and painless as possible.

In their bids to keep things tidy, Civics has employed Bennie and Beauty to help with beach maintenance. Bennie assists with safety and security on the beach, as well as monitoring the ongoing problems with dogs on the beach during the season – the car park to the lookout is deemed a no-dog zone for season. Beauty helps with beach cleanup and maintains the public ablutions,

and helps with litter – some people still like to throw their papers on the ground.

Civics has also stood in to help and assist with the local lifeguards, ensuring that they have the necessary equipment and other needs. The lifeguards have been busy, with the beach at Cape St Francis having a few packed out days with fairly dangerous conditions and ripts. They also rescued a fisherman on the wild side who fell into the water and got into serious difficulties.

Civics also setup the Woodridge lifeguards, who have been on duty and assisting every Sunday during the year, and will continue to do so after the season has ended.

Civics has installed a CCTV security

camera monitoring vehicle movement into and out of the village at the entrance to the village, and hope that this will help to deter and combat crime.

Many people have volunteered their help to the Civics at no extra cost, including people like Lynn Edwards from Calibro Security who installed security on the lifeguard room free of charge, Bob Mielke who fixed the lifeguard and toilet doors and locks free of charge, and Pierre van de Walt for bringing a team down to mow the beachside grass on the Boulevard free of charge.

It was also the Civics who, after much communication and deals, managed to get the roadsides verges on the R330 to which they were proving extremely hazardous to

runners and cyclists, who were being forced into the road to get around the overgrown bushes.

It was a Civic initiative to fix the decking at the Boulevard showers, thanks to Alex Oudeval for sponsoring the timber and Stuart Minehan for the carpentry assistance free of charge.

It has been a massive learning curve for the Civics Committee who are largely inexperienced with many of the matters and issues that have presented themselves, but they have tried their utmost to make Cape St Francis village a better place for locals and for visitors alike. Much thanks to everyone for their support of the Civics initiatives.