

Municipal News

Kouga municipal call centre now only for service delivery

The new Kouga municipal government has changed the way its call centre works and this has caused big confusion among Kouga residents.

There had been a big increase in the number of calls to the call centre from people wanting to be transferred to a specific municipal department or official. This has prompted the new Kouga Mayor, Horatio Hendricks, to announce that its call centre is only for the reporting of service delivery issues.

"The call centre is not the switchboard. It is specifically for the reporting of service faults," the mayor said.

Anyone wanting to speak to someone in a department at the municipal offices should be informed of the municipal offices that needed information or answers to queries, must hold (without pressing any number options), while hearing recorded voice options, until they reach the words "Hold for the operator" and then a switchboard operator will transfer them to the correct department and person.

"Should callers have a query or wish to speak to a specific department or official, we ask that they please hold for the switchboard operator when dialling the

municipal number," Hendricks said.

The call centre was set up by the municipality in October last year as a platform for residents to report issues such as uncollected refuse, burst pipes, electrical outages, sewer spills, etc. However, it was not clearly explained to Kouga residents at the time how they can phone and speak to someone in the municipality about other matters.

To reach people in the municipality about anything unrelated to service delivery or emergency calls to the fire department, people are asked to call 042 200 2200.

"Once the call is picked up, callers are guided by a voice prompt inviting them to press "one for Fire and Disaster Management, two for the Call Centre, three for the Traffic Department, four for Account Queries or hold for the operator," the mayor elaborated.

He maintained that someone will answer at this number seven days a week from 7:30am to 7pm. After 7pm, callers are asked to dial the all-hour emergency numbers 042 291 0250 or 042 200 8330.

New changes to Kouga Mayoral Committee

Baxter replaces Hattingh Borman, who has been elected as Kouga's new Speaker. Borman replaces Horatio Hendricks, who was the Speaker before being elected as the new Kouga Mayor on 20 April, following the passing of Kouga Mayor, Elza van Lingen on 19 April.

Hendricks worked as a teacher for 22 years, including 12 years as the principal of Andrieskraal Primary. Before the 2016 elections, he served as councillor at the Sarah Baerman District Municipality (SDBM), where he was also elected as the chairperson of the Municipal Public Accounts Committee (MPAC).

Hendricks also completed Certificates in Municipal Finance and Law, Municipal Finance and Practical Labour Law. The full list of Mayoral Committee members are:

Freddy Campher - Infrastructure and Engineering
Bryan Othludhu - Planning, Economic Development and Tourism
Brenton Williams - Finance
Daniel Benson - Community Services
Frances Baxter - Corporate Services



New Kouga Mayor, Horatio Hendricks.

In line with the new Kouga DA municipal government's aims to have a more 'corporate' municipality, it has been recruiting highly-skilled individuals for critical positions to get the best people in its jobs.

Two of these 'corporate appointments' are Tourism and Special Programmes Portfolio Councillor Frances Baxter, who is now head of Corporate Services, and Fazelka Mabusela, who is the new Director: Planning, Development and Tourism.

CCTV, Santareme colours under spotlight

The Santareme sub-committee is awaiting progress by the St Francis Property Owners Association (SFPPO) to finalise its plans for CCTV coverage of the village and canal areas.

David Harpur who heads up this committee says: "It is the intention to endeavour to link into the overall plans for the village to avoid duplication of costs and expenses and to ensure continuity of camera surveillance of the entire St Francis Drive, thus avoiding the movement of criminal activities from surveyed areas to those not served by camera coverage."

"Once more detailed costs are available these will be shared with Santareme residents and owners and then there will be a call to raise the necessary funding for the project as we are not a part of the SRA."

"It may be that it is more viable and affordable for clusters of houses or roads to fund camera coverage if there is a lack of overall support for the project. The cramped space in the Santareme area already demonstrates the need to consider this type of action."

Harpur says it is interesting and encouraging to hear the installation of several surveillance cameras in Cape St Francis has coincided with a drop off of crime in the area.

In terms of the aesthetics of the area it is a concern to many residents to see the number of new and older houses that have been painted

a range of colours, which do not meet the local building requirements of 'muted earthy tones' and roofs that do not meet the requirements to be made of 'materials that must be deep profile baked terra cotta earthenware or such similar looking and similar coloured material as may have been approved by the Aesthetics Committee and Council.

Harpur says the same rules apply to the repainting of homes but there seems to have been a lack of control in this regard in recent times.

"One of the major attractions of St Francis Bay since its original development has been the consistency of colour schemes that give the place a unique sense of place and style. There are many other building guide lines, adhered to by so many residents over many years, that are now being ignored and these need to be controlled to maintain the consistency of the area and to protect our property values."

"We do not want to let the charm of our themed village be ruined by a wide range of colour schemes that may be attractive but are out of place and style."

Harpur says these matters are being investigated and will be raised at the next forum meeting to obtain residents' further views. Matters still requiring attention are bush clearing for fire and security reasons, storm water drainage, roads, water burn seawage, public parking areas at nature reserve access points and many others.

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