

Chairman's report on Napier Heritage and Conservation Body (NHCB).

2021/2022 has been an interesting year as we all learn more about the importance and value of having a registered Heritage Body in Napier. The Steering Committee can see how heritage aspects have been neglected and overlooked in some areas regarding the planning in the village. While there have been successes, there is still much to do going forwards. We feel that as time passes, this body will be able to make its presence felt more and more. The Steering committee continue to meet monthly to discuss some of the topics which I mention in this report.

From a regulation perspective, the NHCB has been registered as an NPO by the Department of Social Development. This required a small change to the constitution relating to winding up and what can be done with assets of the body in this instance. This is a further form of compliance with regulates the NHCB more but we see this as a good thing to ensure more transparency and openness of the Body. We will also apply for an exempt status from a tax perspective during this coming year. This will ensure that all donations and possible income will go towards actual projects and not the government coffers

During the ward committee elections in November 2021, the NHCB was elected by the public to be a Ward 1 committee member which is chaired by our ward councillor and Deputy Mayor, Raymond Ross. We are certain that as part of this elected committee, we will be able to make a positive contribution to the running of our village bearing in mind that this is for a 5 year term. As a matter of interest, another of our Steering committee represents Cape Agulhas Business Association on this same committee so definitely have more clout having 2 votes.

During the year under review we have been able to start a heritage survey of Napier. This is a document which, legally, every municipality should have which reflects a full list of properties over 60 years old which at this time is non existent. We have elicited the services of a professor and post graduate students from the University of Stellenbosch who started this survey. This will be continued with a new group of students this year and hopefully become an ongoing project until completed. Because of the newly implemented POPI Act, we will need to approach owners for permission to list property details and while this could be quite a task it does need to be done. Please could anyone who owns such a property be in touch with the NHCB by email to assist us to provide the students with data. The reason for 60 years being the cut off is that this is the age at which Heritage Western Cape approval is required to alter or change a building. A further development in this area is that the University of Stellenbosch is in the process of setting up a Memorandum of Understanding with Cape Agulhas Municipality which will include the NHCB as a party.

The Heritage body is now an integral part of the building plan processing by Cape Agulhas Municipality. We get to see and comment on plans for new buildings or alterations that are submitted to CAM. In addition all subdivisions, departures and rezonings are now also sent to the NHCB for comment or objection in need.

The Spatial Development Framework is a 5 year document which is prepared by local municipalities. This is a very important document from a heritage perspective as it 'controls' development in what is called the Heritage Overlay Zone. During this year, we have found that many of the previous Aesthetic guidelines that set out what can and cannot be built in the heritage sensitive parts of Napier had been omitted from the current document when it was drafted 5 years ago. This includes issues of Subdivisions as well. The 2022/2027 document is about to be prepared by consultants and we have been listed as an interested party and will certainly make sure that some of the previous 'controls' are re-implemented. We can only make recommendations but being a formal registered body, we hope to carry some significant influence in this process. Once CAM have the draft document with our input, they will start a public participation process in normal course so please watch out for this in the next few months.

The NHCB have also been involved in submissions to Heritage Western Cape for the church refurbishment. This is the first time that HWC has been included in plans of this nature for this National Monument although this should have been done each time there has been any work done on the building. This is a significant project which is aimed at the centenary celebrations of the church in 2028.

Something that we have noticed over the past year is the influx of new, often younger, residents who have an interest in preserving the heritage of this village. A number of these are in Sarel Cillier Street. This excites us. We are sometimes consulted by property practitioners, owners and architects to discuss these aspects even before an offer is put in on a particular property or plans submitted to the Municipality. This is very encouraging for us going forward so as to avoid 'difficult' conversations at a later stage. An example of this was a recent positive meeting with an architect to discuss changes to plans presented to us to be more sympathetic to heritage in a very sensitive part of the village. We have even been able to provide a new owner with an old photograph of his property which he intends restoring. We would like to thank those property practitioners who have bought into this partnership. We hope to expand on these partnerships going forwards to ensure win-win situations.

We have to date not pushed membership of the NHCB but is something that the Steering committee will be investigating more fully. We will be researching other heritage bodies to see what is being done. Having a formal membership fee will help with fund raising for smaller projects such as assisting with small renovation or paint jobs where owners may not be in a position to maintain a heritage building.

Lastly, I am pleased to advise that the NHCB website is up and running. Thanks very much to Ina Georgala for her input and efforts in getting this done. Please have a look at the site and give us feedback. Bear in mind we will be adding pictures and articles on an ongoing basis to keep the site interesting with new material.

I wish to thank my fellow Steering committee members for their time and efforts during this year. I am sure that going forward, we will continue to move this very worthwhile

organisation in the right direction. We are as always open to suggestions or comments from interested parties in our village.

Thank you.