



# NORWOOD OAKLANDS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

INCORPORATING ORCHARDS, THE GARDENS AND CHELTONDALE

## Chairman's Report for the Year Ending 28 February 2021

This has been the most challenging year in recent history, but despite many setbacks, much was achieved.

Here follows a summary of major interventions in the past year.

### **Town Planning**

#### *Densification*

Last year we reported that we welcomed higher density residential developments on The Avenue and Grant Avenue, as this supported the retail and commercial spine. What we do not welcome is high density in parts of the neighbourhood that are remote from the amenities that Grant Avenue provides, and are out of character with the quiet suburban pockets in which they are located. We have therefore objected in the strongest terms to the proposed building on 9 units on 2 Nellie Road, resulting in a density of 70 dwelling units per hectare. We have also joined the Johannesburg Heritage Foundation in objecting to the application on heritage grounds, as approval would result in the demolition of House Jones, which was built in 1911 and is the oldest building in Norwood. It is a remarkably intact and fine example of Edwardian bungalow architecture, and we will not let this proceed without a fight.

#### *Security Access Restrictions (SARs)*

In the last year we published the applications for a SAR in Orchards, and facilitated objections. NORA's position was clear – SARs are governed by a legal process, and ultimately a majority of residents in the area make the decision, but we will not support unreasonable pedestrian restriction at closure points. It was on this basis that we objected to the Orchards closure, and we achieved a significant victory when the applicants agreed to honour pedestrian access during the day at closure points prior to a hearing taking place. We understand that a process to create a SAR in Norwood west of Grant Avenue is currently underway, and upon publication of the Notice of Intent (when the proposed closure is published in the Government Gazette and newspapers, and is open for public comment), NORA will send out a notice to residents highlighting the notice and advising residents on their right to comment.

### *Skydeck*

After many years of fighting the proposed Skydeck over the M1, we were pleased to receive a notice from the developers that they were withdrawing their application. We thank Steve Jaspan and the Skydeck Committee for their leadership in this matter, and to the many residents who responded to our appeal to Object, Object, Object!

### *Cydna*

There has been no movement on the City's proposal for Cydna this year, most likely because of the chaos at the Joburg Property Company.

### *Paterson Park Residential Developments*

We warned that the tenders published in 2019 for the Paterson Park residential developments would be unsuccessful (due to ridiculously restrictive conditions) and were proved right. There has been no further progress on the matter, again probably because of the chaos at the Joburg Property Company.

### *Paterson Park Recreation Centre*

Four years after the first published completion date, and well over budget, the Paterson Park Recreation Centre was completed this year. We have not received a notification of when it will be open to the public, but are hopeful that it will be before the end of this year. The Norwood Library has vacated its current premises in Iris Road, and we understand that this will be allocated to a use to support Norwood SAPS at some time in future. We will keep a close eye on this building to ensure that it is not hijacked in the hiatus.

### *Orchards Clinic*

As with the Recreation Centre, Orchards Clinic is four years over time and well over budget, but we are hopeful that it will be opened by the end of this year.

## **Grant Avenue**

Grant Avenue was severely impacted in the first months of lockdown, but has bounced back strongly since late 2020. A number of new stores have opened, and there has been an improvement in the retail mix. Business owners and landlords are also taking more responsibility for the management of the high street, and the funding of street security has noticeably improved its appearance and safety. We continue to provide a cleaning service on Grant Avenue, The Avenue, and other problem area in the neighbourhood on an as-needed basis.

## **Our Parks**

### *Norwood Park*

The start of lockdown showed what would happen if we didn't maintain Norwood Park. We weren't allowed in for five weeks at the start of lockdown, and during that period infrastructure was vandalized and stolen (including the solar lights that we had installed at great expense in the previous year), rubbish was dumped, beds and lawns were not maintained, and a community of drug users moved in. In response,

and as soon as we were able to, we increased our maintenance of the park to four days a week, with one day being wholly funded by an anonymous resident. We are also thankful to the support provided by Gillian Gresack, 64 Ivy Road and 16 Iris Road who donate a monthly amount for park maintenance. The position at the park has stabilized, but we continue to battle with residents who think its ok to dump on the pavement, and the enormous mess created by the homeless population. We have included a summary of progress at Norwood Park as an attachment.

### *Hilson Bridge*

We reported on the exciting news last year that a Walmart donation to the Johannesburg Heritage Foundation allowed us to start the restoration of Hilson Bridge, including the enormous erosion problems. The work was conceptualized and supervised by Richard Holden, a civil engineer who already does so much for our neighbourhood, and largely performed by Thulani Madondo. It has been enormously successful, and we have had no flooding of The Avenue since completion. On the back of this, we have formed a Gardens Conservancy User Group, under the leadership of Louise Marx, who keep an eye on this beautiful river frontage, help maintain it, and open it for public use on weekends. We are also very grateful to an anonymous resident who cleans up the Conservancy on a weekly basis and mows the lawn. We have included a summary of progress at The Gardens Conservancy as an attachment.

### *Pretoria Street Bridge Park*

Like most parks in our neighbourhood not under our care, Pretoria Street Bridge Park had become a dumping ground by the start of 2020. Local residents valiantly led cleanups, but these were ultimately ineffectual. We realized the only way to retain this as a viable open space was to fence the park. A fundraising initiative for this was led by Trevor Lunt, and over R80,000 was raised from residents across our suburbs. The park was fenced by mid-2020, and Trevor has continued to lead clean ups. There is still much work to be done, but the difference is already tangible. To support Trevor's work here, an anonymous local resident has been maintaining the verge around the Orchards Club to Our Parents Home.

### *Cheltondale Park*

In response to increasing complaints about the cleanliness, maintenance and illegal activities taking place in Cheltondale Park, NORA formed a WhatsApp user group. The focus has been on getting local residents to report illegal activities – which is harder than it sounds!

### **Love Norwood Day and other fundraising events**

Under the pandemic restrictions, we have not been able to hold Love Norwood Day since 2019, and are unlikely to be able to do so in 2021. Unfortunately, this has left a R25,000 gap in our budget. A very small Hilson Bridge Festive Market held at the end of 2020 raised just under R5,000.

### **Sector 3 Crime Forum and NCPF**

The results of a functioning NCPF have become visible this year. We have seen a much better response from both SAPS and JMPD to law enforcement matters reported, and under the very able leadership of

Colin Wasserfall, much better follow up and resident engagement. We urge our community to support their efforts – attend meetings, and contribute meaningfully to a safer neighbourhood.

### **Basic services rendered by the City of Johannesburg**

In this year previously dysfunctional CoJ departments collapsed. We have virtually no service delivery from the JRA (and our streets and pavements are an increasing risk to residents), and poor service delivery from Joburg Water and City Parks. This is unlikely to change. As in other parts of the country, residents will have to take on more and more responsibility for the neighbourhoods in which they live.

We thank our councilors – Eleanor Huggett in Ward 73, and David Fisher in Ward 74 – for doing the best they can in the circumstances.

### **Committee Members**

Without the dedicated service of a handful of volunteer committee members none of this would have been possible. I thank Brendan Lombard, Trevor Lunt, Cindy Meltzer, and Nadine Hocter for their service and passion.

### **Financial Statement Review**

Income for the 2020/21 year was 8% higher than the previous year, but this was largely attributable to donations for special projects received as Subs were down by 15%.

The inability to hold Love Norwood Day resulted in a R27,505 drop in net income as compared to the prior year.

We received the following amounts for special projects:

Pretoria Street Bridge fencing and cleanup	R82,783
Hilson Bridge Repair	R56,998

Our maintenance activities in the NORA areas resulted in the following expenses:

Norwood Park	R83,968
Grant Avenue and other street cleaning	R29,040

Our cash reserves decreased by R15,000 over the past year, a situation which is likely to continue into the new year as Subs contributions do not match the ongoing work we perform in the neighbourhood, and we are unlikely to be able to hold Love Norwood Day in 2021.

## Norwood Oaklands Residents Association

### Statement of Income and Expenses

<b>Year ended 29 February 2020</b>	
<b>Income Received:</b>	<b>R 235 463</b>
Membership Fees	R 83 626
Donations	R 19 022
Love Norwood Day	
Sponsorships	R 48 000
Table Rental	R 15 200
Park activities	
Walking Tours	
Liquor Objection Donations	R 15 300
Grant Avenue Beautification	R 45 300
Walmart (Hilson Bridge)	R 4 720
Interest	R 4 295
<b>Expenses Incurred:</b>	<b>R 246 077</b>
Norwood Park	R 36 530
Love Norwood Day	R 35 695
Web Hosting & Social Media	R 6 506
Legal Costs	R 20 500
Events	R -
Equipment/Branding	R -
Tree Planting/Pot Plant Project	R 103 547
Bank Charges	R 2 466
Grant Avenue & Other Street Cleaning	R 36 112
Hilson Bridge Repair	R 4 720
<b>Net Income for the Period</b>	<b>R -10 613</b>

<b>Year ended 28 February 2021</b>	
<b>Income Received:</b>	<b>R 254 564</b>
Membership Fees	R 70 947
Donations	R 22 537
Love Norwood Day	R -
Sponsorships	R -
Table Rental	R -
Pretoria Bridge Fencing & Cleanup	R 82 783
Cellphone Mast Legal Donations	R 5 300
Liquor Objection Donations	R -
Grant Avenue Beautification	R 8 800
Hilson Bridge Repair (JHF)	R 56 998
Hilson Bridge Festive Market	R 4 700
Interest	R 2 499
<b>Expenses Incurred:</b>	<b>R 269 705</b>
Norwood Park	R 83 968
Love Norwood Day	R -
Web Hosting & Social Media	R 575
Legal Costs	R -
Events	R -
Equipment/Branding	R 1 229
Grant Avenue Beautification	R 3 200
Bank Charges	R 2 413
Membership & Donations	R 2 700
Pretoria Bridge Fencing & Cleanup	R 82 733
Cellphone Mast Legal Expenses	R 5 300
Grant Avenue & Other Street Cleaning	R 29 040
Hilson Bridge Repair	R 58 548
<b>Net Income for the Period</b>	<b>R -15 141</b>

### Balance Sheet

<b>Year ended 28 February 2020</b>	
<b>Net Assets as at 01 March 2018</b>	<b>R 125 965</b>
Bank	R 125 965
Accounts Payable	R -
<b>Net Assets as at 28 February 2019</b>	<b>R 115 352</b>
Bank - Current Account	R 11 057
Bank - Call Account	R 104 295
Accounts Payable	R -
<b>Net Assets Movement for the Period</b>	<b>R -10 613</b>

<b>Year ended 28 February 2021</b>	
<b>Net Assets as at 01 March 2020</b>	<b>R 115 352</b>
Bank - Current Account	R 11 057
Bank - Call Account	R 104 295
Accounts Payable	R -
<b>Net Assets as at 28 February 2021</b>	<b>R 100 210</b>
Bank - Current Account	R 30 716
Bank - Call Account	R 74 794
Accounts Payable	R -5 300
<b>Net Assets Movement for the Period</b>	<b>R -15 142</b>

## Priorities for 2021/22

The priorities determined by our committee members are:

Priorities	Led by
<b>Ongoing</b>	
Norwood Park maintenance and beautification	Andre Scheepers
Grant Avenue cleaning and beautification	Brendan Lombard
The Gardens Conservancy maintenance and beautification	Louise Marx
Pretoria Street Bridge Park maintenance	Trevor Lunt
Engagement with the City on Cydna, Paterson Park, and Orchards Clinic	Brett McDougall
Town Planning matters	Brett McDougall
Working with Grant Avenue business to increase resident participation, including Events	Nadine Hocter
Increase number of subs payments	Brendan Lombard
Reinstatement of pavements on Grant Avenue	Brendan Lombard
Recycling education for residents	Nadine Hocter
Oaklands gateway project – improving the aesthetics of Kruger Street between Beaumont Street and Pretoria Street	Trevor Lunt and Cindy Meltzer
PSHB response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conduct a tree survey</li><li>• Education</li><li>• Tree Planting</li></ul>	Cindy Meltzer

### *Resignation as Chairman*

I have chaired NORA since 2014, and during the last seven years have been proud of what we have achieved. I, however, believe it is time for fresh ideas under new leadership, and will not stand for Chair in the coming year. I will continue to serve as a committee member. I thank each and every one who has supported me in making our neighbourhood a better place.

Brett McDougall

Chairman

Norwood Oaklands Residents Association