



Ratepayers' & Residents'
ASSOCIATION

MINUTES of CIBRA Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday 27 November 2024

1. Nicky Esson welcomed all, thanking everyone for their attendance, and thanking Exco colleagues for setting up and making the AGM possible. She noted that there were already 34 members present with more arriving, plus 2 proxies received, which made the AGM quorate.

2. A presentation was given by Roland Postma of the Young Urbanists entitled "The nexus between public spaces and sustainable density for a growing City Bowl". See details in the recording available for viewing [HERE](#). Key points raised include:

- Young Urbanists' mission to make the City Bowl more inclusive and sustainable.
- Experimenting with local urban interventions (e.g. on Bree Street) to collect evidence about impacts.
- Densification is not inherently good or bad, it is a question of how it is done and having the right infrastructures to support greater densities, especially public spaces.
- Introduced the notion of 'gentle densification', which is people first and connecting them better to services, including public transport, and green spaces, including rivers. This includes a healthy rental market of affordable apartments.

3. After the presentation, Roland's colleague Phano made a few closing remarks about partnering with residents' associations like CIBRA to make change happen in the city that is people-centric and inviting members to follow up as relevant. He responded to questions from attendees regarding the types of public-private partnerships the Young Urbanists are involved in and the need to increase flows of people and vehicles in the central city to accommodate tour groups.

4. Jan Molenaar, as acting CIBRA Exco Chairperson, reported on 2024 CIBRA activities and finances (see details in slides [HERE](#)), highlighting that:

- CIBRA can only be effective if it has active members making the voice of the community heard through relevant channels in relation to decisions and actions being taken by the city government.
- One such channel is the Ward Committee, on which CIBRA is represented but is struggling to make any meaningful progress.
- A focus for CIBRA has been on road infrastructure, especially upgrades needed to accommodate densification and how this is considered in relation to large-scale development applications. It has been frustrating trying to get relevant information out of the City, with many delays and ongoing referrals. But finally, a meeting has been arranged to hear directly from the City's transport engineers about a planned upgrade to the intersection M3 & Crassula St affecting the Vredehoek area.

- CIBRA Exco has reached out to neighbouring civics to discuss mutual problems, and we found these meetings very useful to build understanding and alliances.
- A recent development has been the formation of the Collective Ratepayers Association (CRA), of which CIBRA is a founding member.
- The CRA put pressure on the CoCT with a powerful media campaign as it related to the Public Participation process regarding the proposed Municipal Planning Bylaw amendments. The campaign was covered on social media, newspapers and local publications, resulting in the extension of the commenting period, a series of extended consultations, and more people making submissions.
- CIBRA has been keeping a close eye on the decisions of the Municipal Planning Tribunal (MPT), involved in approvals for buildings that deviate from the City's regulations, and issuing admin penalties for those who didn't seek approval in the first place. In our planning district there are as many penalties as there are building applications. Despite the high value of the properties in question, most admin penalties are very low, thereby not providing much of a disincentive to break the rules. This is highly concerning.
- CIBRA has an active WhatsApp noticeboard where information about local development applications, outdoor signage applications, bylaw amendments, budget issues, noise exemption applications and other requests for public comments are shared.
- CIBRA has been actively following the controversy around marine outfalls of sewage and wastewater along the Atlantic seaboard and participated in the Permit Advisory Forum.
- CIBRA finances remain in surplus, with favourable interest rates contributing more than membership payments (only 33 members paid their subscriptions in 2024). Expenses remained low, mainly linked to website maintenance and AGM costs and bank charges.

5. Karinina Ingwersen presented a report from the CIBRA Conservation Panel (see details in slides [HERE](#)), highlighting:

- Cape Town's CBD has a unique heritage and cultural character, attracting tourists to its pedestrian-friendly quarters. Preserving this delicate heritage fabric should be prioritised for its economic and cultural value.
- However, Cape Town's approach often favours developers at the expense of heritage conservation.
- Panel reviews all plan applications for additions or new-builds that fall within Heritage Protection Overlay Zone (HPOZ) or are older than 60 years.
- CIBRA supports application or recommends an alternative.
- The Panel's aim is to maintain streetscapes and architectural character, preserve heritage fabric in a harmonious balance with any new/proposed structures.
- 3 categories of applications: Acceptable submissions; Moderated outcome following CIBRA Panel's input; Ineffective outcome despite the CIBRA Panel's input.
- 75% of applications were supported in 2024.
- Since inception of the densification Policy (2012) about 50 applications were not supported due to over-bearing height, mass and bulk.

- The need for specific heritage zoning to enable protection and avoid key heritage buildings simply being used as podiums or facades (e.g. Standard Bank building on Adderley St) and/or being dwarfed.
- Concerns regarding the cumulative effect of the growing numbers of micro-units (some as small as 14m²) in the CBD without adequate public spaces and supporting social services.
- The need for more public participation in the CoCT's spatial planning and land use policy and strategy development processes (notably the LSDF), in addition to simply commenting on specific development applications.
- Concerns over numerous high-rise buildings planned for CBD that could cause serious congestion problems and dwarf surrounding buildings, degrading the streetscape, e.g. 15-17 Bree St.
- Panel wants to be realistic and encourage development but concerns that many applications have no architectural merit and are not appropriate for the needs of future residents.
- Appeal for new panel members.

6. The ensuing comments and discussion raised concerns over the power and sway developers hold relative to the influence of residents and locals on the decisions about development applications. In addition to putting pressure on the CoCT, a suggestion was made that the Panel and residents should also voice their concerns to South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) and Heritage Western Cape. Some members questioned whether CIBRA should be focussing on local residential issues, rather than investing limited time and energy on issues like marine outfalls and tall buildings in the central city. However, others felt that if CIBRA goes hyper local we will dilute the little power we have with the City. The comment was made that ratepayers have been too reactive in responding to applications and requests for public comment, and rather need to become more proactive in expressing and arguing for what residents want in their areas, to shape the policy agenda. This is more aligned to what is being proposed for the role of the Collective Ratepayers Association (CRA), with many ratepayers' associations teaming up under one umbrella organisation and hiring professionals to be effective. Positive feedback and appreciation was expressed by members who value receiving the information and notifications via the CIBRA noticeboard.

7. Members were asked to vote on three possible ways forward for CIBRA. **1) Close CIBRA:** We feel that we don't really make a difference, and with the added complexity of having a small old-fashioned Civic Association deal with a modern and complex megacity like Cape Town is very difficult with our limited resources – not necessarily financial, but manpower. **2) Do nothing:** Offer a limited service that we can cope with. **3) Join CRA:** Be part of a big group represented by more than 40 000 households, with professional input and ongoing media campaigns. Members voted in favour of option 3, to join CRA. Exco members will engage further with the CRA organising committee in the new year to explore what shape and form this could take, and at what cost to members. This will be reported back to members in due course.

The meeting was closed with a word of thanks, and everyone was invited to join for cheese and wine.