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Chairman's Report

For the Board, as for all of us, Covid has defined most of 2020. In the early lockdown period MID helped the Council implement its policy of moving homeless persons into the Strandfontein facility and provided assistance with a feeding scheme and security for some weeks. Board meetings became virtual and only recently reverted to the normal face to face format. Nevertheless, Grit patrols continued uninterrupted and, once stage 5 ended, street cleaning resumed. Muizenberg seemed oddly quiet and semi deserted during that stressful period but is more or less back to its bustling self now. In particular the once cordoned off and abandoned beachfront is buzzing.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Despite the disruption of Covid, 2020 has seen MID succeed in its biggest project ever by implementing the long awaited CCTV camera surveillance system. At a capital cost of around R750,000 and an annual operating budget of some R450,000 this constitutes a major leap forward in our efforts to reduce crime - which unfortunately has spiked over the past couple of months. Residents will no doubt have noticed the notable increase in numbers of homeless and unemployed persons on the streets who provide cover for those with criminal intent. At the time of writing four arrests have directly resulted from footage from the cameras - two of them well known characters in the area.

Michael Lategan, our Ops Manager, is a volunteer LE Officer and, assisted by Toby Megaw MID Public Safety Director, have assisted Grit with the training of their patrollers and camera operators in how to identify and deal with potentially criminal elements. With controllers and patrollers - assisted by the public - working together we can beat crime.

ENVIRONMENT

MID employs four cleaners supervised by the Operations Manager. A team of two of them thoroughly sweep and weed MID streets doing one zone daily covering all areas once per week. The other team of two pick up litter in all zones not being swept on that day. Generally this ensures a high standard of cleanliness in the MID although some areas are a headache needing constant attention.

Another issue under Environment is to ensure that the Council repairs infrastructural damage ranging from street lights not working to repair of potholes etc. Since Covid it has been a battle to get Council to respond timeously to reports of issues needing attention.

Finally there are a few garden areas which MID maintains and for this an outside firm is engaged from time to time where sprucing up is necessary.

Joanne Hichens Is the Director who oversees this important portfolio and gets busy with her cellphone camera documenting areas of concern and seeing that the team give them attention. Her efforts here are never ceasing and for this she deserves a large pat on the back.

COMMUNICATIONS

For several years this important portfolio of Communications has not been filled. But this year Melany Bendix has taken it on and has done an amazing job. Regular informative newsletters have gone out by email to about 75% of property owners for whom we have email addresses. In addition the MID has a social media presence and a frequently updated Facebook page. It is hoped that

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Melany's efforts will create more awareness of what MID is and does. We are currently putting together a small pamphlet dealing with public safety and the cameras, and it be distributed to every resident and every business in the MID. It is intended to achieve greater involvement of the greater community - not just property owners. In future this means of communication is intended to be repeated.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT.

During the initial period of Covid lockdown MID used some of its Social Development budget assisting with the Council's homeless programme by donating to CAN towards its feeding scheme near the Waterslides. Following that it appeared that Council had committed to providing a Safe Space for Muizenberg Homeless to which MID would have made a sizeable financial contribution. However, this project didn't materialize. Instead MID has been fortunate to have found a potential partner in UTurn, a well known NGO dealing with rehabilitation of homeless people, and a short term project looks very promising and a longer term partnership project has been proposed to Council for the establishment and operation of a combined Safe Space and rehabilitation centre.

MID is still awaiting the handing over of Muizenberg Bowling Club to Coastal Management who have agreed in principal to the establishment of a community vegetable garden on the erstwhile bowling greens. Should this come about MID will facilitate an appropriate NGO to manage the project which would then be able to provide food for a feeding scheme at the hoped for homeless rehabilitation centre.

Unfortunately this all seems somewhat "what if" but it relies heavily on other parties who also determine the timing. In the meantime our Social Development programme unfortunately remains "up in the air".

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Council plan to implement pay parking at the beachfront early in the New Year. Tariffs have already been approved by Council but further details are not yet known. MID will not be involved with this project but it will help with the car guard issues there and also provide some proper employment for suitable candidates. However, indications are that there may be delays in implementation of the project.

Efforts are also being made to get Council to shake the dust of the further phases of its development plan for the refurbishment of the beachfront area from Surfers Corner to the vlei. Phase one has been a huge success over the past fifteen years. Those with longer memories will recall that where busy restaurants and upmarket flats now exist were a series of run down or derelict buildings. It seems time now to refurbish and revitalize the rest of the beachfront including the Pavilion as was envisaged at the time the plan was presented to the public of Muizenberg.

CONCLUSION

Despite Covid a great deal has been and is being achieved during the year. This has been thanks to an enthusiastic, hard working, and talented Board of Directors who have all been completely involved and dedicated to MID and to the Muizenberg community. This is particularly praiseworthy as we lost two of seven elected Directors early in the year due to personal commitments and the remaining five simply shouldered the additional burden and got on with it. As Chair I am exceptionally proud of Joanne, Toby, Melany, and Dale for their constant support and for the way

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they have worked together as a team. It has been a pleasure to be a part of this year's work. Thank you all.

The other essential part of the MID effort has been the work and support from Michael Lategan, Operations Manager, and Tatiana Kelm, Administration. This has been the first full year that MID has split the two functions and has had someone full time out on the streets seeing that the day to day functions of the MID are efficiently carried out. And it has worked beyond expectations. Well done to both Michael and Tatiana.

Peter Corbett
Chair