

Muizenberg Improvement District NPC
P.O. Box 138, Muizenberg 7950
2 Atlantic Road, Clinic Building,
Muizenberg 7945
Tel: 076 600 5339
Email: chair@mid.org.za
Web: www.mid.org.za



October 2023

Chairman's Report

Dear Members of the Muizenberg Improvement District,

As we approach this year's Annual General Meeting, it's an opportune time to reflect on the past year and look forward to the future. The Muizenberg Improvement District, having served the community for over two decades, remains committed to the mandate and foundational values recently outlined in our updated motivation report. I'm personally excited about the opportunity before us and look forward to the next year with the board and the committed membership base – we have a number of exciting projects and what I believe is a compelling vision.

Where We Started

When the largely new board formed just under a year ago, we inherited an organisation with its own set of challenges and opportunities. We had the Safe Space debacle to wrap our heads and arms around, and all the other “organisational debt” that naturally accrues over time. The nature of relying on a mix of salaried staff and unpaid volunteers meant that not all aspects of the organisation were receiving the attention they deserved. Volunteer turnover, a common challenge in many organisations, had its impact on continuity and momentum. However, it is clear that the passion for and commitment to Muizenberg from the staff, the new board members and the community remained largely undiminished.

What We Have Accomplished and Learnt

Our first order of business was to strengthen the internal workings of the MID. We've made key decisions to ensure that our operations are efficient and that our foundation is robust. This involved upgrading some technology, redefining roles, doing an honest and methodical self-assessment, not to mention, a number of mistakes!

We have put effort into various projects, not all with great success, but we have managed to take learnings from them all, we believe. The bowling greens and park restoration project, which we hope to break ground on next year, has been an example of the patience required in dealing with public/private/government partnerships. We've worked to re-catalyse the neighbourhood watch - a key pillar of the public safety for us as a community.

Personally, I have put a large amount of time into relationship building and getting support and advice from the stalwarts of the community. The sheer number of people who have put so much effort into this beloved community over the last 3 decades is impressive.

Our journey this year has been a learning experience (for me in particular). We've come to realise the importance of maintaining a strong connection with the community – we have worked hard to establish clear communication networks which allow us to really engage with the MID members. I've been grateful for the warm reception with the likes of the “Friends of the MID Board” WhatsApp group, where constructive input is received, and people are generous with their time in reviewing our plans and ideas. Transparency, honesty, and open dialogue have been some of our guiding principles. We've worked diligently to rebuild relationships, understanding that trust is earned over time. We've also recognised the importance of pacing ourselves, ensuring that our ambitions align with the capabilities of the organisation and the

strength of our relationships. This was shown in the safe space project, which we stepped back from this year. The organisation could not have taken on a project of this complexity in the state it was in, and whilst a difficult decision, we believe it was the right one.

When I've grown tired of criticism, or the tedious work sometimes needed for this role, I have been encouraged by the vision for and the enjoyment of Muizenberg – the possibility of a Muizenberg Park where I can safely picnic with my family. I think of the possibility of an entire beach up to Sunrise Circle being enjoyed without fear, by all Capetonians. Even without these dreams, it's small things like a friendly chat with someone I've never met at the market, or an early morning run up the mountain which make the efforts worthwhile. It's this enjoyment, and the hope of what we could have, which keeps me going (and should keep us as a community going too).

What We Are Building Towards

Looking ahead, I feel that our vision for the Muizenberg Improvement District itself is clear. We aim to continue to improve the level of organisation and professionalism internally, while we build and mend the relationships with our members.

The proposed extension of the MID bounds is seen as pivotal to this transition towards a well-run, well-governed, and sustainable company. Without the added resources, I believe that the MID may continue to limp along. Yes, it'll keep going, but at the continued cost of relationships, exhaustion, and a completely missed opportunity. Of particular importance will be the move towards a healthier separation between the role of the board (and network of advisors being the members and community), and the role of staff and service providers.

In terms of the vision for the community itself, we envision a community that's safe, vibrant, and unique – a place where every member feels a sense of belonging and pride. Our plans show where we feel the organisation can and should go – but the community and the neighbourhood as a whole need to have more than just an organised board – it needs each and every person to do their part. To achieve this, we need more than just plans; we need the honest and constructive support of the members.

Muizenberg's character stems at least partially from its diversity, this makes it all the more important to embrace differing perspectives respectfully. It's not a place for unilateral decisions or assumptions about what people need. Sometimes it's tempting to “go fast” and not take the time needed to ask questions or explain our plans, or to listen to what might appear at first to be a critic. So we hope to see greater levels of membership involvement in our plans going forward, a strong team of volunteers in committees and on the board, holding the vision of the organisation and the community closely, but not running ahead and burning out in the process.

In conclusion, I want to express my deep gratitude for the trust you've placed in me personally and us as a board of directors. Your support and feedback have been invaluable. Let's continue working hand in hand, towards a safer and ever-eclectic future for Muizenberg.

Warm regards,

Simon Roberts

Chairman, Muizenberg Improvement District