

## **KLIPSA (KLIPRIVIERSBERG SUSTAINABILITY ASSOCIATION)**

### **TENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY 14 AUGUST 2019**

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 2018/2019**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

It gives me great pleasure to present the Chairman's Report for the period of 2018 to 2019 at the Tenth Annual General Meeting of KlipSA (Klipriviersberg Sustainability Association). It should be noted that this report includes progress and achievements through to the date of this AGM to provide the latest and most up-to-date information to members and those who are interested in our activities.

In doing so, I would like to open this report by following the example set by Charles Dickens in 1859 when he penned his classic "A Tale of Two Cities" where the opening paragraph included the following:

*"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way..."*

KlipSA still contends that importance of the South of Johannesburg as a well located and accessible space for spatial transformation, economic growth, social development is founded on the agricultural value chain, hospitality, tourism, sports and recreation activities. This is our "spring of hope".

This is supported by increased recognition of the Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve and the value of the general biodiversity in the southern areas of Johannesburg. This is gaining greater attention and interest. With this, the growing recognition of the importance of our biodiversity and its role in future city growth and development.

This gives us hope to continue promoting our role as KlipSA to protect promote and enhance the value of our natural resources through appropriate social and economic development. This can and will

contribute to the spatial, economic, social and environmental transformation and growth of Gauteng and Johannesburg.

Our main challenge continues to be accessing and securing resources for implementation and management of our various initiatives and projects to bring benefits to local communities.

Through this report I will touch on the progress we have made through the period under review. Hopefully, this will bring further recognition and support and participation of our community in our activities.

## **2. OVERVIEW OF THE PAST YEAR**

The KlipSA Executive Committee has continued to focus on a few key priorities and projects in accordance with availability of resources.

KlipSA's overarching strategy contained in the Klipriviersberg Economic and Ecosystem Development Zone (KEEDZ) has formed the backbone of our activities to address food security, poverty and unemployment in the surrounding urban areas and communities. With that, the context and setting of the Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve, our “Jewel of the South”, are critically important in this region to provide the right setting and biodiversity context for the sustainability of the Nature Reserve.

KlipSA's partnership with SOJO Business and Tourism and the University of Johannesburg (UJ) has continued to grow stronger. This particularly relates to but is not limited to development of the urban agriculture value chain and the related opportunities for urban regeneration and management to address spatial, economic and social issues including food security, job creation and community growth and development.

In partnership with UJ, particularly the iZindaba Zokudla farmers and entrepreneurial forums, more business and community organisations, such as the Joburg Inner City Partnership and Joburg CID Forum, are promoting the establishment and development of various agricultural value chain initiatives. The initial focus is ensuring availability of healthy food that is easily accessible and affordable which can form the basis of further economic growth and development.

The Johannesburg urban farming network includes inner-city rooftop farms, urban farming and community gardens, tunnel farming, pack-house and logistics networks and smart logistics systems linking urban farmers to retail and hospitality consumers. We even have “farming” in restaurants being established by young entrepreneurs using hydroponics and smart technology to provide patrons with the freshest of produce.

KlipSA actively promotes the concept of “network of networks” and continues to interact and engage with local, provincial and national authorities and agencies, business representatives, community organisations and residents. This is received positively with growing support for the proactive environmental and biodiversity-based developmental agenda and KlipSA's catalytic role.

The City of Johannesburg administration and political leadership has unfortunately not realised the support and interest that KlipSA was hoping to achieve due to other City priorities and growing political power-plays. This has been a general experience and frustration in building collaborative relationships with the City which is being felt by many community, business and environmental organisations.

The City professes to recognise the importance of collaboration and partnerships with the private sector, business, academia and communities. However, the reality is seldom meaningfully achieved to realise investment and development which would address fundamental economic and social development.

The private sector wishes to get things done for their clients and communities. They cannot wait for the authorities to take decisions. As a result, they are initiating and activating developmental investment and projects within accepted legislation, strategies and policies while continuing to build and strengthen meaningful collaborative relationships with the authorities.

### **3. KLIPRIVIERSBERG ECONOMIC AND ECOSYSTEM DEVELOPMENT ZONE (KEEDZ)**

Through the year KlipSA and SOJO have worked together and with UJ to promote appropriate economic and social growth and development in the southern areas of Johannesburg. There are four key projects and related initiatives associated with KEEDZ including:

#### **3.1. Klipriviersberg Agritropolis**

This project seeks to stimulate urban economic and social growth and development through the establishment of naturally based agricultural activities and the growth of the urban agricultural value chain. The prime focus is to address food security, unemployment, poverty and inequality by providing economic opportunities close to where people are living.

The City of Johannesburg has finally released their developmental opus for their Southern Farms land for public review and comment. They have also advertised for development proposals for this land. The proposals include an extensive expansion of the urban footprint outside the urban development boundary. This is contrary to the Gauteng province and City's policies to concentrate, densify and regenerate the existing urban areas particularly around available infrastructure and public transport. The City already has a R190 billion backlog of infrastructure management and maintenance. Yet it proposes to extend services requiring additional management, maintenance and costs to accommodate the new housing and other uses.

Large areas of the land they wish to develop have high value urban agricultural potential which could be used for addressing the extensive problems of food security, poverty and unemployment close to where people are living.

Fortunately, through the activities of UJ and private sector in the inner city and suburban areas the focus on urban agriculture has continued to escalate. Individuals and communities are addressing food security, providing job opportunities, establishing and growing businesses through the full spectrum of the agricultural value chain. This is stimulating and exciting and is certainly part of the “season of Light”.

With this growth new services, systems and processes are being developed to provide communication, education and operational channels for information sharing and support. We are finding an interest amongst the youth to become involved in urban agriculture as they see and develop opportunities. These are being nurtured through support programs and initiatives.

### **3.2. Klipriviersberg Sustainable Environmental Education Centre (KlipSEC)**

KlipSEC is the establishment of a world class multipurpose community centre at the existing Klipriviersberg Recreation Centre and adjacent Entrance Precinct. The centre would include facilities for environmental education and research, a tourism node and linkages to the N12 Treasure Route, social and community services, sports and recreation.

There has unfortunately been no further progress with this project. The UJ architectural student initiatives developed and provided valuable understanding, ideas and concepts which show that such an initiative could be possible and should still be pursued.

For this project to proceed further, it is important that the City endorses the idea and concept and allows securing of resources for further investment in time and energy to develop the project proposals for further consideration.

### **3.3. Klip River Integrated Wetland Management Strategy (KlipWaS)**

The extremely poor quality of the water in the Klip River continues to be a major concern. The ongoing unacceptably high levels of pollution particularly of E.-coli are regularly raised by KlipSA with national, provincial and local authorities and agencies. The reaction and response from the authorities is similarly putrid.

It is KlipSA's contention that the solution lies in an integrated catchment and urban management plan which incorporates large areas of southern Johannesburg, Soweto and the city centre. In addition, it is essential that the City addresses the breakdown of sewage infrastructure and overloading of the wastewater treatment works which feed into this vitally important source of water for the sustainable future of Gauteng and its communities and businesses.

Last year it was reported that KlipSA had started a river stewardship initiative with the CSIR. After the initial launch was flooded out by the Klip River, and the relaunch of Klip River Water Stewardship Initiative (KlipWaS) has been successful under the leadership of Dennis Jane.

The intention of KlipWaS is a collaborative approach for the preparation of a management plan to address the water quality and quantity in the Klip River catchment and the associated wetland areas and to identify economic and social goods and services.

KlipWaS is working with local business and communities to address some of the problem areas in the catchment.

With iProp, the opportunity to establish a constructed wetland in the Crown Valley of approximately 20 ha has been identified and is being researched with UJ and Wits. This will provide an initial “scrub” of the water draining from the inner city through the Robinson Canal.

The Panorama stream and wetland upgrade has also been identified as a “nursery project” to develop a collaborative approach with communities, landowners and authorities. In addition, Community Catchment Clean-ups are being initiated involving local communities, schools and organisations to take ownership of their neighbourhood wetlands in catchment areas.

KlipSA continues to work with ARMOUR (Action for Responsible Management of Our Rivers), ably led by Anthony and Helen Duigan, who have become promoters and coordinators of several projects and initiatives in the Jukskei catchment. In this regard, KlipSA recommends that members follow their social page to see the work they are involved in along the Hennops and Jukskei.

We share a common interest in the major northern and southern catchment areas of Gauteng and recognise the importance of improved strategic and operational management of the catchment areas and Gauteng river network.

From a strategic and future water supply perspective, KlipSA with SOJO have continued to lobby the authorities and agencies to address long-term water supply sustainability and security. It is KlipSA's contention that there is a need for a Gauteng City Region integrated sustainable water management strategy and plan of action. This is a critical requirement to secure long-term investment in the growth and development of the economic hub of South Africa.

There has been some progress, albeit very slow, with the completion of a status quo review of the status of water in the province completed by the Gauteng City Region Observatory towards the end of last year. However, there has been nothing further from the provincial administration in this regard.

### **3.4. SOJO Tourism and Marketing Strategy**

The initiative to stimulate economic growth and development through tourism, sports, recreation and hospitality requires coordination and collaboration of existing tourism related facilities, activities, goods and services. This includes the development and promotion of future ecotourism and agri-tourism value chains.

KlipSA supports SOJO in promoting economic and social development through the advancement of the existing hospitality, tourism, conferencing, sports and recreation opportunities. The partnerships with provincial (Gauteng Tourism) and local (Joburg Tourism) tourism departments and agencies are used to promote tourism projects and initiatives for the area with a focus on the environmental and biodiversity opportunities offered for ecotourism as the unique offering from the region.

Discussions are ongoing with key members of SOJO to initiate the preparation of a tourism and marketing strategy for the region which will include Joburg Tourism and service providers in the tourism sector.

#### **4. PORTFOLIOS AND ACTIVITIES**

The resources of the Executive Committee are limited. However, we have been assisted by representatives from local business and community members. KlipSA records its appreciation for the time, energy and sponsorship that companies and individuals have invested in KlipSA's projects and initiatives and assistance in the various portfolios and activities through the year.

The main portfolios and activities include the following:

##### **4.1. Sustainable Business**

The strategic partnership with SOJO Business and Tourism continues. SOJO focuses on ensuring an appropriate environment for "business to do business" while KlipSA focuses on the sustainability dimension of business and its environment.

The Executive Committee would like to thank the SOJO executives and directors, chaired by Richard Bennet of iProp, for their continued support and interest in KlipSA and its activities. We would also like to acknowledge the untiring support and effort of the SOJO CEO Nicky Vakaloudis.

In addition to the KEEDZ initiatives, other key projects which have been developed and implemented in partnership with SOJO include:

- SOJO Business Network Breakfast

The SOJO Business Network Breakfast events are held quarterly with a growing attendance of local business enjoying informative talks and networking opportunities. KlipSA works closely with SOJO to introduce and promote responsible and sustainable business practices through these events.

- Urban management

SOJO has established a working relationship with the City and its various agencies and is constantly reporting and monitoring service and urban management issues in behalf of members. Urban management issues relating to illegal use and occupation of land and buildings, dumping, waste disposal and management and maintenance of the urban infrastructure and environment are impacting on the business, urban and natural environments.

- Johannesburg Business Forum (JBF)

The Johannesburg Business Forum (JBF) and its subcommittees have collapsed due to the City focus on small and medium enterprise development.

As noted above, despite the professed need for collaboration and partnerships with business, the City did not see the JBF as an appropriate vehicle to build constructive engagement with small, medium and large business sector stakeholders.

The possibility of a private sector initiative to establish a “voice for business” to interface with authorities is being investigated.

## 4.2. Sustainable Urban Development

The Sustainable Development Team meets monthly to proactively protect, promote and enhance the value of the natural assets of the region through appropriate economic and social development. I would like to thank all the members of the Team who have regularly attended meetings and those who have “remotely” participated and contributed to the discussion and work that the Team has undertaken.

The focus of the work of the Team includes the following:

- Development Strategies and Policies

The Team has made submissions and actively participated in stakeholder discussions and meetings with iProp and SOJO on economic and spatial developmental and environmental strategies and policies for local municipalities and provincial and national authorities.

- Biodiversity Management

KlipSA’s key focus continues to ensure the integrity of the Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve (KNR) and the surrounding Klipriviersberg ridges and areas with their wide range of fauna and flora with a rich and valuable biodiversity and several “red data” species. In addition, the Klip River and its wetlands and the unique grasslands and open areas are of critical importance and value to the biodiversity richness of the region.

The Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve Association (KNRA) has continued to work tirelessly towards realising the proper management of the KNR. The difficulties relating to working with Joburg City Parks & Zoo unfortunately continue.

KlipSA members have been involved in efforts to resuscitate a community-based support and interest Forum to build a collaborative relationship between the various stakeholders.

Further to the projects noted under KEEDZ earlier, other projects and initiatives regarding biodiversity and environmental management include:

- KUBiC - Kliprivier Urban Biodiversity Corridor

KUBiC was launched with SOJO on 31 October 2012 as a “greenway” along 12 km of the Kliprivier Drive by designing, planting, managing and maintaining a biodiversity corridor of appropriate species of vegetation. In addition, the integration of public and non-motorised transport services and facilities will add further value for the many users, residents and workers.

KlipSA continues to promote this corridor as an important biodiversity and transportation corridor between the inner city and its peripheral areas.

The recognition of working with communities along this corridor has strengthened with a need to broaden the scope of this project.

We would welcome anybody who wishes to participate and become involved in the KUBiC project and its activities.

- Wetland and catchment forums

KlipSA representatives attend the regular meetings of the Gauteng Wetland Forum and Klip River Catchment Forum at which issues relating to the administration, management and protection of these vital resources is discussed by representatives of national, provincial and local authorities and agencies, business and community organisations.

At these forums KlipSA continues to raise serious concerns regarding water quality and stronger compliance monitoring and enforcement. In addition, the need for an integrated water management strategy.

- Urban Development

The Team has continued to review and comment on town planning and environmental authorisation applications and proposals, although these have been fewer in the period under review.

Discussions have been held with developers and professional teams to minimise impacts and find suitable mitigating measures for proposed developments. Residential, retail, mixed-use and other town planning, infrastructure and environmental applications have been reviewed and suitable comments and submissions have been made.

The Team continues to encourage developers to adopt and participate in the Biodiversity Stewardship programme where possible.

Overall, inputs and comments from KlipSA have been acknowledged and positively received and accommodated where possible. However, we are very concerned regarding the position taken by authorities to not support their own strategies and policies particularly in relation to decisions and authorisations for development on sensitive areas and ridges.

To support the proactive development approach being followed by KlipSA, the Team is eager to secure additional resources to expand its professional expertise and support base to prepare environmental, spatial and economic development frameworks and policies for the area and to provide additional professional services and support for developers and investors. Any offers and volunteers will be welcomed.

### **4.3. Sustainable Urban Living**

The Sustainable Urban Living events to provide information for homeowners regarding sustainable living and lifestyle are still on hold until further notice.

### **4.4. Administration and Finance**

The current members of the Executive Committee include Andrew Barker as Chairman, Frank Diener as Vice-Chairman, Sandra Andrew who has looked after the finances, Alan Bentley who has provided secretarial support, Dennis Jane, Suvania Naidoo, Nisha Singh and Nicky Vakaloudis.

The number of members of the Association on our database now stands at 257 (226 last year). We have 249 (219 last year) people following our Facebook page and 186 (187 last year) followers on Twitter.

Suvania Naidoo has been working on a redesign and update of our KlipSA website which we hope to launch soon.

We are not making the best use of our internet and social platforms and need to become more active in communicating with our members with a greater use of the social media to raise the KlipSA profile and share information.

This is important for KlipsSA to address the younger generations to be able to satisfy their interest and needs and to increase their participation and involvement.

Any contributions, ideas or suggestions in this regard will always be welcomed. In addition, anyone with skills and expertise in this field would be a welcome addition to our team.

The establishment of a regular income and revenue stream and resources for KlipSA continues to be important. While donations and sponsorships will always be welcome it is the intention of the Executive Committee to ensure that projects and initiatives become self-funding. Partnerships and collaboration with the corporate world need to be established for projects to secure resources, investment, donations and their participation.

KlipSA is investigating and will be making an application to join the Woolworths “MySchool MyVillage MyPlanet” program to try and source a more regular income.

The Association has maintained its registration as a Non-Profit Organisation. The application to be registered as a Public Benefit Organisation is on hold.

KlipSA visibility in the local press has not been as high as in past years due to less activity in the community. With less visibility and activity KlipSA has not been approached by mainstream media for comments and inputs into articles and TV documentaries.

KlipSA continues to promote the use of a "network of networks" to work with other organisations to be able to share resources and information through their respective databases of members and interested people.

## **5. APPRECIATION**

As the Chairman of KlipSA, I would like to note my personal appreciation and gratitude to all the members of the teams and committees and acknowledge their contribution to what has been achieved through this year. In particular, the members of the Executive Committee who have willingly contributed their time on a regular basis to provide their support, knowledge and expertise towards what has been accomplished this year.

We would also like to express our sincere appreciation to members of the community who continue to support KlipSA and show an interest in the projects and initiatives through their participation in the various teams and committees, attendance at events and interaction in correspondence and through social media.



## 6. THE YEAR AHEAD

KlipSA will remain strong in its belief of the need to care for and nurture our natural environment and assets focusing on the Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve and the surrounding region. It is important that these assets are recognised as a strategic and transformational opportunity and advantage for the communities in the area, the affected municipalities of Johannesburg, Midvaal and Ekurhuleni and the Gauteng City Region as a whole.

In reviewing the Chairman's report last year, the scenarios regarding the context within which we operate continue to play out. The political power plays and "one-up-man-ship" with the promises of site-and-service housing and threats of the expropriation without compensation now making policy and legislative processes have given rise to ongoing impromptu but well organised land invasions. This is making the context and arena within which KlipSA operates a challenging one. Unfortunately, in these situations the importance of environment becomes a very low priority in the pursuit of political parties' votes and dominance.

Then there are the ongoing challenges being faced and uncovered by authorities and their agencies, particularly relating to their leadership, priorities, corruption, governance, capacities, competencies, processes and procedures. We are finding there is great reticence to proceed and take decisions on many aspects of investment and development.

If one sees this as part of the "worst of times", it should also be seen as the "age of wisdom" as we learn to be innovative and opportunistic to continue to move forward with projects and partnerships wherever possible to bring about "the best of times". All the while, we need to keep the authorities fully informed and involved when they can

Vigilance and awareness of the context within which KlipSA operates must be our underlying approach to be proactive in protecting, promoting and enhancing the value of our natural assets in the region. In this regard, KlipSA will continue to work closely with developers and investors, business and community organisations to realise benefits for all the communities in the region to bring about appropriate social and economic development, job creation and infrastructure investment to the region.

What we have in the southern areas of Johannesburg continues to be acknowledged and recognised as being special and incredibly unique. It is for this reason that we all need to become more knowledgeable and understanding of our environment and its sensitivities and to be able to care for and enhance what we treasure.

Through the last 10 years KlipSA has become an established and credible organisation. KlipSA will continue to be a strong voice for attracting appropriate development and investment in the southern areas of Johannesburg.

With everything before us, additional volunteers, resources and sponsorship will assist KlipSA to become a more meaningful player and catalytic agent in releasing the potential of sustainable economic

and social development for the long-term future growth and development of Johannesburg and surrounding municipal areas.

KlipSA will continue to be a catalyst for effective and productive collaboration between the community, business, academia and authority stakeholders with the focus on realising environmental and biodiversity value by adding opportunities through sustainable social and economic development.

KlipSA looks forward to your further active involvement and participation and working with everyone towards realising **SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH COLLABORATION IN OUR OWN BACKYARD.**

**Thank you**



**Andrew Barker  
Chairman**

**Wednesday, 14 August 2019**