



GREENSPACE

Annual Report 2006 – 2007

1. Greenspace – an umbrella body

The Greenspace constitution defines this organization clearly as a non-profit voluntary organization. Its aim is to work towards establishing and maintaining a sustainable greenbelt network for urban Namibia.

The objectives include:-

- Ø Build awareness of the concept of a greenbelt
- Ø Promote sustainable and environmentally sensible utilization of urban open spaces
- Ø Propose an open space system (greenbelt network) for Windhoek

The management activities around the leased area of Avis dam form but a portion of the mandate.

From the remainder of this report and other contributions tonight you will observe that the major focus of the Greenspace Executive Committee during the last year was on the Avis dam.

As all will be aware, Windhoek continues to expand rapidly with developers and builders utilizing every possible available open space for expansions. Today, more than ever before, it has become necessary for organized public participation in the shaping of our urban space.

I urge the members of Greenspace to come forward and for this organization to re-claim its position as a public participant in all matters regarding greenbelt placings and open space developments.

This leads me to the activities of the current committee. The daily management of the Avis dam – and believe me, it is a **daily** task – by volunteers simply does not allow for taking on duties outside this immediate sphere, It is a hands-on, activity driven focus, rather than one of concept and strategies.

In this context I would also urge this meeting to consider dividing the activities of the Avis Management Committee from those of a Greenspace Executive Board/Council. The Avis Management Committee to then be functioning under the broader umbrella of Greenspace.

2. Membership

Some years back – that was in the times prior to security guards on the parking areas of Avis dam – individuals became proper members of Greenspace (and not of the Avis dam activity alone). Since then, during 2005, security – or entrance fees are being levied for the purpose of covering the costs of the security guards. This step resulted in dilution of the concept of true membership of this organization.

I strongly suggest to differentiate between ‘users’ of the dam (i.e persons walking their dogs, going for a jog, cycling etc) and who may prefer to pay the security fees on an annual basis, from those persons who have the promotion of the aims and objectives of Greenspace at heart – that is, true members – who, in essence through the opportunity of voting, are empowered to shape the cause of the organization.

You will see this thought mirrored in the proposal around the 2007/08 fee structure.

3. Management Plan

The validity of the 30 year lease agreement of the Avis dam area from the City of Windhoek is based on a management plan agreed to by both parties. The plan was drawn up in 1998. During last year the committee made work to re-look at the plan to ensure its contents remain current.

The group agreed to re-affirm that *‘the main objective of the management plan is to preserve and manage the Avis dam basin as an almost undisturbed natural open space – not a city park’.*

The current key issues in the plan are:-

- Ø Lease area boundaries and zoning
- Ø Internal use zoning
- Ø Access
- Ø Security
- Ø Rehabilitation
- Ø Establishment of the Greenspace Avis Dam Nature Reserve Management Board of Trustees

The document serves as the indispensable basis to provide direction and prioritize activities to current and future Committees.

Once the updated plan has been accepted by Greenspace members, the plan will be submitted to the City of Windhoek for their approval.

4. Security

The security fee of N\$ 5- per car (or, in the case of users who pay annually, N\$ 400- p.a.) is used for the payment of the security guards on duty between sunrise and sunset.

Members will appreciate that the monthly expense of N\$ 10 000 to the Security Company requires careful financial management. Greenspace does not receive any form of formal financial support – be it from the City of Windhoek or otherwise. You will see that some increases/amendments are proposed to the fee structure. I assure members that this is done after careful consideration and most certainly in the interest of a continued relatively safe environment at the dam.

Although we usually have 5 guards stationed at the dam, I need to re-iterate that in spite of this presence, personal safety remains the responsibility of the visitor.

5. Fishing

The Committee is in the process of amending the fishing regulations to fall in line with those of fishing licences issued by the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources.

With the receding water of the dam at the moment, we will continue adjusting the demarcated fishing zone accordingly.

A continued appeal to all fishermen and women:

Please take out what you brought in. Littering specifically in the fishing zone remains a challenge for us – it is also often hazardous for the wildlife,

6. Avis Development

The City of Windhoek intends developing the areas west of the dam wall, as well as erf 2882, which lies just south of the access road to the parking area at the wall. The erf measures 4 ha and we believe the building of a hotel complex remains the preferred option by the City Council.

In line with the stated practice of public participation by the City of Windhoek, an Avis Development Committee was formed some two years ago. Various interested parties and employees of the City of Windhoek serve on this committee. The objective is to ensure public participation in the decision making process on land utilization. As things stand currently, the committee's appeal to incorporate erf 2882 into the Avis lease area – or at least leave that land undeveloped – does not appear to be met favourably by the City of Windhoek.

Negotiations continue.

7. Committee and activities

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Executive Committee for their input and work. Some of the tasks go far beyond normal committee duties; e.g. cash is taken in daily, counted on kitchen counters, banked. Security, rabid kudus, black bags for daily rubbish collection – it just never stops. A special warm thank you to our never-tiring Secretary, Kitti Stern.

It has been a good year. As people we often do not see progress. Only looking back, as we do now, do we see that achievements have been successful.

Thank you all for your support.

Ulla von Holtz
Chairperson