Hamerkop Mountain Trust Annual General Meeting 2023

Held on Thursday 19 October 2023 at 7.30 pm
by virtual Zoom Meeting

1. **Welcome** Jad welcomed all present.

2. **Attendance and apologies**
   Present: Jad Ball, Margie Owen-Smith, Mark Epstein, Steve Spottiswoode, Karin Spottiswoode, Duncan Barker, Claudine Bennetts, Serv Venter, Magdeleen Enslin, Roy Kendall, Jane Luck, Jean Prior, Humphrey Farrer, Tina Culwick-Fatti, Alan Irvin, Annabe Pretorius, Justine Limpitlaw, Paul Mackenzie, Kirsten Venter, Oliver Oppler, Judith Oppler, Julia Van-Biljon-Heidemann
   Apologies: Oliver Barker, Jen & Ray Basson, Lawrence Mallen, Andre Toich, Paul Rainier-Pope, Eppie Epstein

3. **Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting**
   Minutes had been circulated within 10 days of the 2022 AGM and re-circulated with documents for the present meeting and were therefore taken as read. Minutes acceptance: Proposed by Serv Venter and seconded by Annabe Pretorius.

4. **Matters arising from the minutes**
   Point 4 - Thank you to Annabe Pretorius for the shower curtain and bathmat in Annex bathroom/shower.
   Point 5 - Thank you to Gerhard Le Roux for replacing the combination lock at the gate. Reminder to push the lock to open.

5. **Maintenance report**
   Serv presented the Maintenance report:
   Buildings: The property is in good condition; the septic tanks are stable and the staff quarters good. On inspection the staff geyser has no problems as was previously raised as a concern. **Roof painting:** This is budgeted for and will be the focus of maintenance for the coming year. **Tree clearing:** The bulk of maintenance went into the continuous clearing of trees in and around the house, annex, staff quarters and septic tanks.
   Serv was thanked for his efficiency and hard work.

6. **Chairman's Annual Report**
   Please see Chairman's Report attached.

7. **Beneficiaries Involvement (BI)**
   Jad highlighted that the Management Committee has performed really well this year but stressed and repeated the call for involvement from beneficiaries as in the pre-AGM message from the Chairperson circulated via email (4 October 2023), as well as the Chairman's report (see point 6). Jad thanked beneficiaries who fix and improve things at the Hamerkop house as they notice them, mentioning Paul Mackenzie for the little

table next to stove; Alan and Peter Irvin for the new wash line; Steve Spottiswoode for the dartboard and Noel Modes for his general workmanship in the house.
The aim of involvement is to generate proprietorship in all beneficiaries about and for Hamerkop.

8. **Management Committee for 2024**
Margie pointed out 4 categories of volunteers needed for managing Hamerkop:

   a) **Office-bearers.** Here we are short of a Treasurer, a Household manager and a Website manager.

   b) **Ordinary committee members**. We need at least four more people to participate in decision making at 3/4 meetings a year (on Zoom) and support our portfolio holders.

   c) **Specialist task team.** We have a number of specialists who regularly volunteer their services, but we need more. A list for people to give us their names and area of expertise will be circulated (see attached).

   d) **General helpers.** We need all beneficiaries to be willing to do odd jobs when they're in residence, and importantly, to message Karin, Judith or Serv beforehand to ask what needs to be done.

9. **Dog Policy**
The revised Hamerkop Dog policy (see attached) was circulated by Margie prior to this meeting and input welcomed. Justine Limpitlaw expressed the view that the control and liability requirements of points 2, 5 and 8 of our Dog policy make it unnecessary to also require that dogs be kept on a leash (point 4), and that a leash is impractical in the bush or kloofs. She was supported in this view by Duncan Barker and opposed by Jane Luck and Mark Epstein who feel that small wildlife is threatened even by dogs that are normally controllable, and that dogs off leashes are inappropriate in a conservancy inside a protected nature area.
It was pointed out that the current MCSA rule for the only two MCSA properties that allow dogs for security reasons (Grootkloof and Wilgepoort), is that dogs need to be kept on a leash at all times in these areas. Roy Kendall pointed out that the MCSA was currently reviewing their Dog policy. The suggestion from the Chair was that the *status quo* should be maintained until the MCSA had concluded its current policy review, whereafter we would revisit the issue. This was accepted.

10. **Audited Financial Statements – Questions & Discussion**
Financial Statements and Budget were pre-circulated with AGM documentation. Mark thanked Peter Irvin for keeping excellent records of the expenditures and finances. Mark took us systematically through his financial report for 2023 (see attached) clarifying the areas giving rise to a budget deficit of R16879. Most significant of these was the increase in electricity costs. His advice going forward is 1) to consider solar options and 2) to monitor electricity usage more closely and charge beneficiaries using

above the average rate. The ensuing discussion pointed to the fact that recent developments have made the installation of solar more feasible and also that we have experience and expertise amongst ourselves in this respect. Tina Culwick-Fatti volunteered her husband to help Hamerkop assess options and costs of going the solar route (www.decentral.co.za). The extraordinary increase in expenditure on cleaning materials also illustrates the need for closer monitoring of all costs.
A Question was raised about why the value of the land is not included as an asset in the financial statements, and it was clarified that with the Hamerkop's financials being an operating trust's statements, the value of the land is carried at cost and only needs to be recalculated if the land is to be sold.

11. **Adoption of Financial Statements**
    Reports and financial statements were proposed by Mark Epstein and seconded by Magdeleen Enslin.

12. **Voting on proposed 2024 levy**
    Mark highlighted that paying levies early makes life easier for our treasurer and the cash benefit does not represent a loss (the budget is based on the lesser amount). None of us should have the unpleasant task of having to chase others who forget to pay.
    The two proposals put to the meeting:
    1) a special levy of **R500** per unit to address the 2023 deficit, and
    2) the annual levy for **2024** to be increased by 18%, taking it to **R4780** per week (discounted to **R4430** for payments received before the end of January 2024).
    Both proposals were accepted unopposed.

13. **General**
    Mark reiterated beneficiary or children/grandchildren of beneficiaries' involvement and Karin will ask in the Newsletter if anyone can suggest beneficiaries or beneficiary family members who can get involved. Mark indicated that at least 16 weeks (32% of the weeks) are owned by beneficiaries living in the Cape or overseas and relying on Gauteng residents was not fair. Duncan Barker offered to look into involvement with the website.
    Thanks: Magdeleen and Margie thanked Jad for his leadership. Annabe Pretorius thanked the Management Committee for their work and dedication.

14. **Closure**
    Jad thanked everyone for attending and the meeting was officially closed at 21h05.