

OF THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION ON THE DRAFT WATER STRATEGY HELD ON TUESDAY, 5 MARCH 2019, IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, ALPHEN CENTRE, CONSTANTIA MAIN ROAD, CONSTANTIA AT 19:00

PRESENT

SUBCOUNCIL MEMBERS

Councillors/Aldermen:

Cllr Ian Iversen
Cllr Elizabeth Brunette
Cllr Penelope East
Cllr Kevin Southgate

Democratic Alliance: Chairperson
Democratic Alliance
Democratic Alliance
Democratic Alliance

OFFICIALS

Mr Richard White
Mrs Brigitte Francis
Mr Jody Okkers
Mr Dylan Furst
Mr Adlie Salie
Ms Sarah Rushmere

Urban Management: Subcouncil 20
Urban Management: Subcouncil 20
Urban Management: Subcouncil 20
Water Inspectorate
Water Inspectorate
Water & Sanitation Department

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Dr Peter Humphreys
Mr Len Cramer
Mr Henk Egberink
Mr Graeme Hill
Mr Harry Cowley

Ward 72 Ward Committee
Ward 73 Ward Committee
Ward 59 Ward Committee
Constantia Hills' Residents' Association
Constantia Hills' Residents' Association

ACRONYMS

CLLR Councillor
PH Power of Hydrogen
RPZ Reduced Pressure Zone
SANS South African National Standards

At 18:30 those present were informed that the Presenter, Ms Rushmere was stuck in traffic.

At 18:45 those present were informed that the Ms Rushmere was still en-route to the meeting.

At this juncture Cllr East requested that Mr Adli Salie and Mr Dylan Furst provide feedback on the quality of the water in Constantia Hills.

Mr Salie reported as follows:

- Following complaints from residents in the Constantia Hills area that their water turned pale blue when boiled, samples were taken at various properties for analysis at the City's Scientific Services Laboratory.
- After testing, the results of the samples showed that there were high levels of copper present due to the borehole water that had been pumped into the copper pipes. In light of this, the following process occurred:
 - 383 properties were inspected.
 - 64 properties were found to be in contravention.
 - 17 properties have since been fitted with the required Reduced Pressure Zone (RPZ) valve.
 - 38 properties that have disconnected their interconnection with the city's supply system.
 - 9 properties where the supply was shut on the municipal side
- Owners were given instructions to disconnect the connection and advised to install the RPZ valve, many of the owners took this option.
- The Inspectorate was still battling to access some properties, all efforts will be made to inspect it, calling cards have also been left, some remained non-responsive.
- To use an alternative water source, an application needed to be made to Council.
- He had a spreadsheet of the affected properties and those inspected thus far.

Cllr East said that 2 members from Constantia Hills Residents' Association were present and invited them to comment on the contamination of the water in the area.

Mr Graham Hill thanked the Inspectorate for their work, he was aware of the problems they encountered accessing properties but was aghast at some of the attitudes during this period. He recommended a test to check for the presence of copper, wash hands with soap and water in a basin, if the water turned blue, there was a presence of copper. At Constantia Hills, Council was flushing the pipes regularly and it seemed that only a small pocket in the area was still affected but the problem seemed to have dissipated where he lived. At his property he had the PH levels tested and there was not a trace of copper.

He welcomed the fact that a final test will be done to verify (by inspection) that all illegal connections had been removed and replaced with an RPZ valve.

Cllr Brunette said that she was the Ward Councillor for Constantia, Bishopscourt, Fernwood, Wynberg and Plumstead. She was aware that residents had fitted devices and was using borehole water for their households. She enquired how many homes in Ward 62 had been inspected.

Mr Salie said that only the homes in Constantia Hills have been inspected. He had a spreadsheet containing all the addresses that has been inspected as well as the status of the properties with regards to the RPZ valves, devices and connections. Thus far the inspections have been restricted to the Constantia Hills area because that is where the complaints emanated from.

Cllr Brunette indicated that Valley Walk and Valley Close (off Southern Cross Drive) was also affected but it appeared that complaints had not been lodged by residents. Many people were using borehole water in Southern Cross Drive, Constantia Main Road, Brommersvlei Road as far as the top of the mountain.

Mr Salie concurred with Cllr Brunette, adding that presently the Inspectorate was reacting reacting to complaints about poor water quality and that borehole water was being used throughout the Metro. No complaints have been received thus far.

Mr Hill spoke about the linkage of the borehole water and omitting to raise the ph level. He said that the one-way valve must be installed and the ph level must be raised otherwise the copper pipes could be destroyed.

At 18:50 Ms Rushmere arrived. She apologised for being late due to heavy traffic.

1. OPENING

The Chairperson, Cllr Iversen welcomed Ms Rushmere, officials from the Water Inspectorate and members of the public to this session. He encouraged those present to raised questions.

NOTED

2. PRESENTATION: DRAFT WATER STRATEGY

Ms Rushmere gave a PowerPoint presentation entitled "How to Safely Install Alternative Water Systems, February 2019", emphasising that no one should be using any form of alternative water without the City's permission. It was not only a matter of raising the ph level. This presentation will soon be presented as alternative water systems were being used throughout the Metro. She shared the following salient points:

- People should not be drinking borehole water, washing or cooking with it.
- Borehole water was not safe, it should be used for toilets and washing of cars.
- Underground water moved all the time and should there be an underground sewerage spill, the borehole water can be contaminated and because the contamination is not visible, people can be harmed without realising the cause. Fortunately, there were no bacteria in the case of Constantia Hills.

Cllr Southgate was of the view that although the situation in Constantia Hills was contained, many people elsewhere were using alternative water sources, especially borehole water in their homes. They see themselves as "champions" using borehole water and are unaware of the implications of connecting their borehole water to the City's water supply. He emphasised that this information should have been published at the beginning of the drought because should there be contamination of water on a large scale, a civil suit could be instituted.

Mr Salie advised that the Water By-law, Water Acts and SANS, speaks to the fact that the use of alternative water is illegal without obtaining permission from the relevant authorities.

Cllr Southgate responded that the public is not aware of this legislation. During the drought, people were encouraged to use alternative water sources but no one referred to legislation. People have also sunk boreholes and water points on their property.

Ms Rushmere explained that the safe use of grey water, guidelines on the City's website, alternative water should be for operational use in businesses and toilet flushing and not for cooking, ablution and drinking. There has been media releases about the matter.

She raised the following facts:

- Different types of alternative water sources, namely, grey water, rain water, ground water, borehole water, springs, basement water (buildings on foreshore built below the water level where water seeps through the floor and is pumped into the stormwater system), service water in the form of streams and rivers on one's property, are used by residents.
- Businesses also has package plants – using the water for its air conditioners. Sea water was also being used for flushing but large quantities was not being recommended.
- The safe use of alternative water was being encouraged (on City's website).
- Private households cannot go off the grid because it was not safe to do so, it was also illegal in terms of Water Legislation.
- Very few large consumers are allowed to go off the grid because the City has to play a monitoring role. The companies should also have the resources and systems to ensure that its monitoring can be done hourly. Old Mutual with a staff of 10 000 can be contracted as off the grid.
- Individual households do not have the resources and cannot be allowed to off the grid for the aforementioned reasons.
- RPZ valves is a guaranteed one-way valve (no particular brand is endorsed)
- RPZ to be installed above the ground.
- Appropriate signage to be displayed at the entrance to the property.
- Colour coded wiring
- Accredited plumber to be used for the installation.

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- SANS 2:4:1 determines the drinking quality of water.
 - Reasonable domestic use is acceptable and water is a scarce resource. Anything over 20 million litres must be replaced.
 - Website links on the presentation.

Questions and Responses

- The Chairperson enquired whether a check has been done to determine how many households are off the grid.

Response by Mr Salie: An exercise was presently in progress to determine the low consumption consumers and the no consumption consumers. Those properties will be visited and inspected.

- Mr Hill said that households were not able to go off the grid however, many residents are partially or totally off the grid, they have invested a lot of money in sinking boreholes and buying the RPZ valve. It was too late and what will the City do about it.

Response by Ms Rushmere: People will have to accept that there are laws and that they have to operate within its confines. People will have to adjust and change their ways.

- Cllr Brunette said that one of the residents who is off the grid in Constantia Hills was still receiving a water bill each month.

Response by Mr Furst: There will still be a reading on the meter as from when consumption of Council water ceased. The City will estimate the onthly consumption until an inspector is able to do an inspection at the property to determine whether there is a fault, an anomaly on the property if the consumer has gone off the grid. Should it be the latter, the appropriate process will follow.

- Cllr Brunette enquired about the tankers transporting large quantities of water to properties. Rhodes Drive and Upper Moss Street, sales of water 10 to 12 trucks a day.

Response by Mr Furst: As per the presentation, it was explained that should a household's extraction of water exceed the normal daily usage, application must be made to the National Department of Water and Sanitation for the excessive extraction. It is mandated to regulate and enforce the law, the City is not mandated regarding enforcement. In response to a further question about not being able to contact the National Department, Cllr Brunette was advised that the Senior Management, the Executive Director: Water and Sanitation and the City Manager of the Mr Harry Cowley enquired about swimming pools, chlorine was used and the water should be clean, could borehole water be used here as it should pass through the chlorinator.

Response by Ms Rushmere: The SANS 2:4:1 guideline to be applied, rainwater can also be used although there may be chemicals therein.

Borehole water will corrode the machinery. The chlorinator may not be sufficient.

Response by Mr Salie: He suggested that the pool be filled with municipal water and topped-up with borehole water.

- Mr Hill said that this narrative started with the announcement of Day Zero and people made contingency plans for an alternative water source. Council should be very careful when communicating this issue to the public because they saw themselves as helping the City during the drought.

Salient Points Raised by the Inspectorate:

- In terms of the Water By-Law all work done by people installing devices for alternative water sources must be accredited and registered with the City.
- Plumbers are undergoing training in terms of SANS guidelines. Funding has been put into a training programme for plumbers, they are showed photos of the installations, how to do installations and where to source the equipment from. They are also being familiarised with Legislation pertaining to water matters. A checklist has been made available to them as well, allowing them to do a thorough job.
- People connecting alternative sources and the "DIY" persons must also be accredited.
- If there are rainwater tanks with a tap on the property, signage "Do Not Drink" to be displayed at the entrance.
- Colour Codes should also be displayed on the pipes as set out in the presentation.
- Department should be requested to liaise with National Government (Water and Sanitation).
- Ms Rushmere suggested that Mr Rashied Khan, the Head of the Regional Office (National Water and Sanitation) be contacted about National Water matters. His details will be forwarded to Cllr Brunette.
- Using swimming pool water was not ideal to use due to the chlorine, rainwater also contained chemicals and borehole water will corrode the pipes.

At this juncture, a second PowerPoint presentation was given on the Draft Water Strategy, filed in the Official Minutes as Annexure B.

The Inspectorate explained the importance of the RPZ valve and the colour coding of the various pipes.

Questions were raised about leaks and burst pipes. Ms Rushmere responded that 1000 service requests were received daily which is an indication of the situation.

It was suggested that more taps be installed in informal settlements and that an education campaign be embarked upon in informal settlements and in affluent areas about water being a scarce resource.

Cllr Brunette requested that the Draft Water Strategy be condensed and that a simpler version be made available. She was of the opinion that the document in its current state was too technical.

Ms Rushmere advised that she was working on a communiqué, the checklist used by Mr Furst and Mr Alie will be included. She thanked everyone for attending the session and for the dialogue.

Mr Henk Egberink expressed concern about how to retain the water levels in the dams. He spoke about wetlands, silting and that there should be no haste to remove invasive vegetation because then water will be lost to evaporation.

3. CLOSING

The Chairperson thanked everyone for attending the session. He also thanked Ms Rushmere and her team for providing such informative responses.

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Cllr Ian Iversen

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Date