



MOTIVATION for MIDI premises: Submission by ACTIVE CITIZENS' MOVEMENT (ACM) Pmb)

The Board of Directors: MIDI

It is commonly understood and acknowledged, that The Msunduzi Innovation and Development Institute (MIDI) has been a unique initiative and partnership of the Pietermaritzburg-Msunduzi Municipality, the Pietermaritzburg Chamber of Business, the Durban University of Technology and the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The core business of MIDI has been underpinned by five main pillars or guiding concepts for the city of Pietermaritzburg/ Msunduzi viz. **a safe city, a learning city, an environmentally conscious city, a working city, a playing city.** These pillars are integrally interwoven, and the ideal to holistically develop the city and its citizens, have been to approach these pillars/ concepts as mutually inclusive components. Thus, MIDI's innovative and imaginative projects that aimed to address the key challenges facing the City and to promote cross-sectoral engagement in bringing these projects to fruition, have been laudable and is commended. MIDI's vision has always been to position Msunduzi as a forward-looking, successful and sustainable "City of Choice," that is able to attract and retain innovators at the leading edge of the economy, and one that facilitates a qualitative life for all its residents, not least, its youth and children.

Commensurate with the partnership principle, The ACM in PMB may be viewed as a case study in partnerships. At a workshop in January 2017, the consensus that emerged from the 100 attendee citizens, was that the problems and challenges experienced by (civil) society were due to the lack of meaningful service delivery and development in healthcare, education, the green economy and community participation in governance.

The other problems listed were wide scale corruption in (local) government and the marginalisation of poor communities by big business in the latter's prioritisation of profits over sustainable developmental projects. Some argued that the paradoxical link between capital and poverty was a corrupt system that perpetuated the ever- growing gap between the poor masses and the wealthy few.

The challenge for ACM (Pmb) as an emerging civil movement, was whether to embark on an advocacy project , in partnership with organisations such as 'Save SA,' 'Corruption Watch,' 'Future SA,' 'The Helen Suzman Foundation' and 'Freedom under Law' or, to seek a model of community participation in development projects.

The internal tensions and contradictions which subsequently unfolded, and which continue to facilitate healthy debate and development of the ACM, helped inform the guiding principles of ACM, some of which are, as enshrined in its Constitution:

CORE VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

As part of a network of non-party politically aligned civil organisation, the ACM is committed to the following core values and principles:

- *the protection, defending and advancement of, of the values and principles of our country's Constitution and Bill of Rights*

- *[the] reclaiming the values, principles and ethics of our Democratic State in which all people benefit from the economy*
- *the provision of a platform to enhance the collective voice, agency and capabilities of marginalised communities*
- *the protection and promotion of universal human values of political, economic, social and environmental justice for all South Africans, irrespective of race, class, gender, religion or national identity*

ACTIONS/ ACTIVITIES OF THE ACM

The ACM commits to activities which include, but is not limited to the following:

- *to be the watchdog of the citizenry of the (PMB) community, to identify issues, propose solutions and hold local government to account in the delivery of their duties*
- *to understand the roles and functions of the municipality and ensure they are held accountable; and to hold government officials responsible to their oath of office and always act in the best interests of the citizenry*
- *to conscientise and raise awareness of issues among citizens, including their rights as contained in the country's Constitution and Bill of Rights*
- *to identify and develop partnerships with fraternal organisations to develop a broad mass front to strengthen action around issues of social, political, economic and environmental justice*
- *to be a facilitator and a conduit in engagements with issues and organs; to not take on the mandated responsibilities of other organisations, but to ensure that such responsibilities are carried out timeously, efficiently and effectively*
- *to enhance the tenets of social cohesion in its communities*

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the ACM PMB shall be to:

- 4.1 *align itself with the principles, values and ethos contained in the Constitution of the National/ Provincial ACM.*
- 4.2 *strengthen democracy through, among others, developing a common vision of a socially just society, a strong and responsive civil society, and developing specific programmes to promote an understanding of the diversity in our society.*
- 4.3 *develop and/or strengthen local structures across all sectors of society and promote the active participation of citizens in their affairs.*
- 4.4 *actively engage authorities at various levels, as well as the private sector, to ensure accountability for their decisions, demand quality of services to which citizens are entitled, and to assist authorities to achieve this objective.*
- 4.5 *expose poor delivery, corruption and mismanagement where they may be found or suspected to occur in public sector and undertake measures to achieve this objective;*
- 4.6 *engage in any other activities in order to advance social justice, prevent the abuse of power and any form of discrimination against citizens.*
- 4.7 *ensure that representatives of the community and the wider population, at all levels of governance, are directly nominated and elected by their host communities; and further to ensure that the nominating and electing communities have the right to recall public representatives for failure to carry out their obligations.*

- 4.8 *engage in any other activity in order to advance social justice, prevent the abuse of power and any form of discrimination against citizens and non-citizens.*
- 4.9 *strive for and promote harmony across gender, race and other differences mentioned explicitly and implicitly in the SA Constitution.*
- 4.10 *strive to work with other organisations with similar objectives, provided they do not conflict with the ethos of the ACM.*

(ACM-Pmb Constitution pp-3,4,5)

Thus, the model or approach embarked upon by ACM Pmb, to support the realisation of its objectives, which have social cohesion and development at its core ideological foundation, was one of community mobilisation and stakeholder inclusivity. This was to facilitate the negotiation of better services from government through active participation, and through the empowerment of communities to respond constructively to issues/ challenges confronting them which include: the climate/ environmental crisis, food security, the development of youth skills both in a green and digital economy/ education, unemployment.

To this end, the ACM PMB has set up various desks or sub-committees, of which the following three have been active and impactful in the one year since its inauguration:

- ACM Health Sub-Committee
- ACM Education Sub-Committee
- ACM Environment Sub-Committee

1) **ACM Health Sub-Committee**

The health sub-committee has three directors sitting on the boards of 2 provincial hospitals and it has created a PUBLIC, PRIVATE, COMMUNITY HEALTH FORUM (PPCHF) to drive change within the healthcare sector. ACM has facilitated 67 cataract operations at a Mandela day programme, in partnership with a private hospital, private donors and a provincial hospital in which free cataract operations were provided to poor patients, some of whom were on a waiting list for 3 years. ACM has negotiated with another private hospital to do 30 free cataract operations per month for a year. Most importantly, it has secured high-tech eye care equipment from a private hospital for use at a provincial hospital. The objective is to build capacity in that public hospital. ACM is currently embarking on a project, whereby, 500 cataract operations are to be done in early 2019; this is part of the addressing of a current backlog of 6000 cataract patients in the district. Healthcare strategic planning is a work in progress. Provincial healthcare has dire challenges. The NHS requires an organised civil society as a part of its structure to ensure that healthcare service delivery is a priority over new business models.

2) **ACM Education Sub-Committee**

The ACM Education Sub-Committee is currently involved in an Educare programme which has seen the adoption of two rural schools and 1 urban school with the goal to provide Early Childhood Development facilities and services at these schools. The centres will also be day-care centres. One such project is to be launched imminently in a township in Ezitikeni and will house 200 children between 1 and 5 years with a qualified teacher and 4 learner teachers, whose training will be supported by a private school and funded by private donors. This is an initiative seeking to address the education crisis at the root point of impact. The strategic plan is to have 39 ECD centres - one in each ward of PMB. A partnership with institutions of higher learning is critical.

3) **ACM Environmental Sub-Committee**

ACM Envirocare talks to integrating a large - scale awareness programme in schools and communities about the climate crisis. However, economic driven projects will facilitate an action plan to educate and empower communities to clean their spaces and to develop community gardens. The process of embarking on education about the climate crisis, will drive long term activism. Such activism it is envisaged, will organically develop its own vision to create smart communities that will embrace and advocate for clean energy in their communities eg. through solar energy and other models of clean energy.

ACM is currently embarking on an initiative whereby a semi-informal community comprising of about 8 000 people is to be given access to clean access to water and proper sanitation services. Further, environmentally sustainable initiatives through use of solar energy, recycling initiatives and protection of and recycling of the water supply are planned. The vision is to also build an innovation hub. Job creation, skills development & economic development will be focused on in the green and digital informal economy. This same community is the pilot site for the ECD programme of 200 children.

4) **The ACM One City Coalition**

The ACM One City Coalition is an attempt to bring together all stakeholders of civil society- ratepayer organisations, religious organisations, business formations, sporting bodies, education bodies and NGOs. The aim is to hold the municipality accountable whilst enabling and supporting civil society to be part of the strategic plan and enabling partner of Pietermaritzburg and the Umgungundlovu district, in terms of renewal and development. Key partners will be, amongst other important stakeholders, the Pietermaritzburg Chamber of Business and organised labour.

It is envisaged that the one city coalition will:

- Participate in the municipal invited space of the Integrated Development Plan (IDP)
- Monitor compliance with the Municipal Management Finance Act (MMFA) to ensure service delivery to all citizens.
- Driving and participating in the PMB project of becoming a technological hub and a smart city.

ACM is now registered as an NPO and PBO. It is however, still in the process of establishing itself. Notwithstanding that, it sees its role as a facilitator of and agent for change through its active support of and advocacy for civil society. Communities must mobilise. At the heart of its mission, is the realisation of a world- class, people-centred, smart, safe, clean city.

The real new dawn lies in a community driven, partnership-based project. The ACM's (Pmb) shared vision and alignment with that of MIDI's goals and core values, is distinct and unequivocal; there is resonance in the development and innovative vision around a smart and productive city.

It is our sincere belief that ACM Pmb is the natural successor to the MIDI vision. We are multi-sectoral, visionary and is rapidly developing a core strategy that is rooted within our communities. The location of an ACM office at this strategic point, can only serve to support and enhance the realisation of ACM's and its partners' aims and goals.

We trust that you will see ACM as a worthy successor to your current premises in order to ensure the continuation of your ideals, and to which, we seek and invite your sustained participation.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our interest in and motivate for this critical resource.