

MEET YOUR CITY OFFICIALS

THE CITY OF JOBURG PROPERTY COMPANY

On Friday 23 June over 100 delegates attended the Meet Your City Officials Business Breakfast organised by the JCCI Property Cluster to introduce the CEO of The City of Joburg Property Company, Helen Botes to members.

The Joburg Property Company was established in 2000 with the mandate of managing and developing the City's property assets for the purpose of maximising both social and commercial opportunities for the Council. The book value of the City's property portfolio is some R8.6 billion, the current value is about R40 billion, with approximately 64 000 properties under management, covering 39 000 hectares across seven municipal regions.

Part of the company's stated objective is to utilise council-owned property assets to leverage private sector investment in public infrastructure.

Ms Botes provided insights into The City of Joburg Property Company's role, strategic objectives, and how working with the private sector can attract development to Johannesburg in order to provide the impetus to achieve the Mayor's goal of 5% growth for the City.

Ms Botes shared the various business opportunities available through developing private sector partnerships, using the City of Johannesburg land and outdoor advertising portfolios. Many present in the audience took advantage of the

opportunity to ask Ms Botes questions about problems they had been experiencing.

Alex Potgieter, the chair of the JCCI Property Cluster, explained that the Meet Your City Officials series of events form part of the mandate of the JCCI Property Cluster to establish strategic partnerships between the private and public sectors. This includes working with both National Government and the Gauteng Department of Public Works.

Mr Potgieter undertook to liaise with the Joburg Property Company to organise regular follow-up meetings where there will be further opportunity for constructive interaction between the private sector and the Property Company.

Also present at the Breakfast was Pat Corbin, a former President of the Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce and Industry, who has recently been appointed Chair of the City of Joburg Property Company Board.

Mr Corbin expressed the view that the Joburg Property Company is a well-managed entity run by a very experienced CEO and competent staff in the various portfolios.

He said, "As an entity of the City of Johannesburg the Board has to report to Council who have to endorse any proceedings of the City of Joburg Property Company. The entity is also required to follow the lead of the mayor."



Pat Corbin (Chair of the Joburg Property Company Board), Helen Botes (CEO of Joburg Property Co), Alex Potgieter (Chair, JCCI Property Cluster)

A current major focus is addressing the issues of distressed buildings in the Johannesburg CBD. A particular concern is the impact that legislation has when repossessing distressed buildings, which require rehabilitation in order to provide properly managed accommodation and ownership.

"This will require an approach to Parliament as an unintended consequence of the current legislation is that it protects criminal element. The freedom to occupy and take over buildings and not be charged with trespassing or being served with eviction notices needs

to be countered. This is a big impediment to progress," said Mr Corbin.

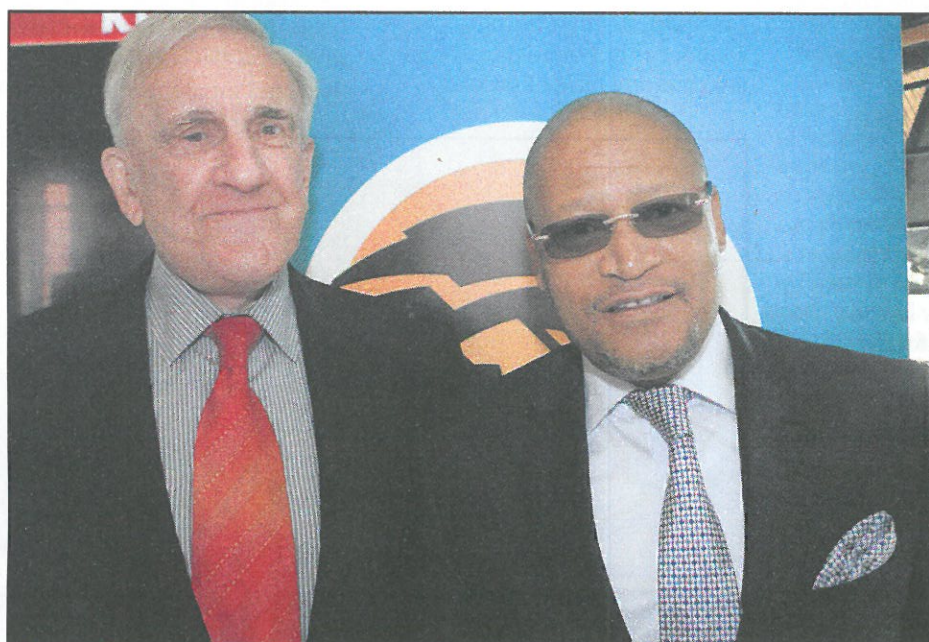
"Currently, within a three kilometre radius of Killarney, there are two similar flats; one is on the market for R150 000 and the other R1.5 million. However, once a building becomes untenable from a residential or business point of view, it is worth very little. In the CBD we are sitting with millions of rand of property on which rates aren't being paid and, in addition, we can't house people. As the City is a third-tier government level it cannot address this situation forcibly."

A second focus of the City of Joburg Property Company is

facilitating the provision of title deeds for property ownership so that people have equity for accessing finance for business.

Corbin stressed that business support is essential to take these issues forward. Properly managed accommodation and ownership require partnerships to ensure that these goals are realised.

There was a general consensus from the Breakfast delegates and the City Property representatives that this event had been a positive first step in understanding the needs and the concerns of both parties. Regular future engagements will build on this process. ■



JCCI congratulates two of its stalwarts on their appointments: (L) Pat Corbin as Chairman of the Joburg Property Company and (R) Siphso Tshabalala as Chairman of the Joburg Roads Agency



Delegates taking advantage of the opportunity to hear from Helen Botes