



THE LANDLORD FEB 2024

Newsletter for Sectional Title Trustees and Landlords

Maybe, Maybe, Metro Is Starting To Get It Right!

At a meeting of around 200 developers and others in the building industry Metro shared their vision of a new start. They promised to comply with the 30/60 days allowed for approval/comment on building plans and township approval and to start the process of ensuring that owners of Bloemfontein properties comply with zoning and building plan requirements. It appears that all the old bosses have gone and that most of the head positions are filled by acting staff. They have employed 6 new building inspectors with the financial help of Johannesburg Metro and the Department and are hoping that they will be able to work without supervision by the start of the new financial year (April). Let's hope so.

Attendees at the function did not hold back about the contempt they held the township and building plans approval departments of Metro and made it bluntly clear that these personnel must either get to grips with their work or resign.

There were numerous complaints about non-compliant buildings and the lack of enforcement of building regulations. Promises were received that enforcement was being taken very seriously. A word of caution for owners of student accommodation that Metro are looking at strict enforcement of the regulations as many building in this market were illegal or not indicated as such when building plans were submitted. Owners were also reminded that NO alterations to buildings could be done without approved plans. This particularly applied to subdivision of rooms and buildings which resulted in unsafe and unhealthy buildings.

WAITING LIST NOW OPENED FOR CONSORTIUM SHARES

With the owners of Benchmark visiting Bloemfontein from India and Czech Republic over the next couple of months, a waiting list for consortium investments is now being opened. Simply email your name, email address and cell number to mike@mikespencer.co.za (tel 082 082 0990). No money required, just an indication of the number of shares wanted. (SHARES COST R2000 EACH)

Essentially 200 plus 60 sq m 2 bedroom, one bathroom, open plan lounge kitchen, carport apartments are to be built with company ownership. Initial return will be 6 to 8% rising as rentals increase. Two separate schemes will be available for 204 and 330 apartments. All income is retained to buy further development sites and to build an expected 2 buildings every ten years using the accumulated income. Unlike sectional title units there is no transfer or bond costs. Shareholders are not responsible for bond payments or rates and taxes or individual flats that could be vacant. Thus this is a low risk investment. Unlike sectional title units there is no need to be involved in the management of the scheme or come to owner meetings. All letting and building management will be done by a professional management company to be set up to manage all buildings developed. Shares will be set at R2,000 to allow everyone to participate in this capital growth investment.

NEW TREE TRIMMING & FELLING COMPANY

Chopping down trees is not as easy as it looks! That's why it is on the expensive side at around R7000 per largish tree.

Gavin and Logan are now collaborating to offer modern tree felling. They will offer a range of products from chopping down large trees and removing the roots to chopping off branches, stomping (chopping down but leaving the stump), taking down ivy and more. Must say they don't like to chop palm trees because they are hard on their equipment but you could twist their arm.

You can choose whether they must just drop the trees or have them take the tree and branches away. (You might have your own bakkie to do that). They will also take down creepers off walls. All this can be done for individual owners or whole body corporates. They will even diarise you and talk to you every six months or so. They have even arranged a cheap removal service. Call 0834593992 or 0783611358

IS YOUR DRAINAGE SUFFICIENT

Heavy rain is not unusual but rather typical for a summer rainfall area. Not only that heavy rain can come down very quickly and over a short time. Is your body corporate ready for the problems of heavy rain?

While the rain falling on your erf is a problem a bigger problem is the amount of run off from neighbours. This run off comes from the same place every time that it rains. Does your building have sufficient overflow drainage. Its actually not that expensive or difficult to do yourself. I just did it for my house garden and it has quickly solved the problem.

All that is really needed are drains (with metal grids) and brown 110 mm drain piping (beige not white). All you need is somebody with basic plumbing skills and a trench 500 mm deep. While it may not be used for months it will take away excessive rain. You might like to dig in a 2500 litre or bigger underground water storage tank and use this runoff water to water gardens.

If you are cleaver, you can overflow rainwater from gutters into the same underground storage tanks. Not only will it prevent damage but give you a source of garden water.

SECURITY – NOTHING ELSE MATTERS.

Whatever the size of your scheme security is vital. Far to many owners and tenants take a lax attitude to security. This means keeping strangers out of your complex. This can be done by boundary security and entrance security. Boundary means razor wire or spikes on walls and automatically closing and opening gates on the entrance. If people cannot get in to the scheme they cannot cause problems.

Tips on keeping you safe.

1. Don't let people tail gate. One car at the time. Drive in slowly, go past the eye and let the gate close behind you. before you drive off (going in or going out) remember that NO person other than an owner or tenant is allowed to have a gate control or come through the gate. Don't feel sorry for strangers.
2. For the same reason make the gate close much quicker. Even consider taking off the eye so people cannot reopen the gate.
3. Report faulty gates immediately and get them fixed ASAP.
4. Have strong lights in the complex. Either full time or movement activated. Don't leave dark spots. No excuses from owners or tenants about it disturbing them. Security comes first.
5. Have good quality security cameras which can easily read numberplates and take clear face pictures. It DOES help you find culprits and burglars.
6. Don't use remotes (they can be duplicated) have a secure cell phone system and remove old owners and tenants.

DON'T PAY YOUR LEVY – LOOSE YOUR RIGHTS.

The STSMA is very democratic with each owner having a vote based on the percentage of the total area of all units in the building. It is not easy to take that right away, but it can be done if they are in arrears with their levy or are seriously in breach of the complex rules. But this must be done in a legal way which is usually by way of a complaint to CSOS who regulate the industry. A complaint stating that the owner is in arrears with their levy and asking for an order that they must pay, is what is needed. This can include an order that the tenant must pay the rental over to the Body Corporate until the arrears are settled. An application should include that the owner may not be a Trustee or vote at a general meeting until the outstanding levy is paid. The reason for asking for this is that an owner who is not paying his levy is a burden on everyone else and is motivated regarding the levy unlike normal owners. He will fight tooth and nail not to increase levies in line with budget needs of the building. Such people are simply being subsidised by other owners. Contact CSOS at CSOS.org.za. The application form is on their web page. An owner or Trustee or the Body Corporate can initiate a complaint to CSOS.