

**THE FACE OF THE MUNICIPAL ENGINEER IN A
COMMUNITY ORIENTATED PROJECT**

Luchelle Damons

ABSTRACT

Drakenstein Municipality has undertaken to investigate the potential development of *Die Kraal* in Paarl. *Die Kraal* was once a very popular sporting ground in Paarl where members of the coloured community played rugby, cricket and netball on a weekly basis in front of hundreds of spectators. Under the apartheid regime, the intense political climate and differences in political opinion, a rift was caused between the local rugby clubs in Paarl. This division led to a decline in the use of *Die Kraal*, resulting in it currently being a vacant piece of land.

It is the intention of Drakenstein Municipality to develop *Die Kraal* in two phases: Phase 1 of the project is the public participation process that requires interviewing and liaising with numerous interested and affected parties (I & AP) in Paarl, as well as hosting public meetings so as to gauge the general feeling of the community. Phase 2 of the project, (which will only commence dependent on the outcomes of Phase 1), will entail the detailed design of engineering infrastructure, embodying the requirements from all I&AP's.

The development of *Die Kraal* remains a contentious issue amongst members of the coloured community of Paarl, due to legislation that had been enforced during the Apartheid era, which saw them lose ownership of *Die Kraal* to the local authority.

This project illustrated that the work of the municipal engineer often goes beyond the provision and design of engineering infrastructure. In this project, the engineer acted as the link between the client and the community in a politically sensitive setting. Seeing that the municipal engineer had to act as historian, journalist, mediator and engineer, it demonstrates that the face of the municipal engineer is indeed changing.

1. Introduction

Drakenstein Municipality has undertaken to investigate the development of the land known as *Die Kraal*. The development of *Die Kraal* was initiated by the community, driven by the Paarl Sports Forum, who requested the rejuvenation of the once popular sporting ground that now lies vacant. It is foreseen that the project will be executed in two phases. Phase 1 of the project is the public participation process, which required liaison with the community so as to ascertain their requirements for the development at *Die Kraal*. In the event of a decision to develop *Die Kraal* as a sporting facility, Phase 2 of the project will be initiated: planning the engineering infrastructure for the development.

In order for the municipal engineers on the project to gain an understanding of the history of *Die Kraal*, various stakeholders were consulted. These parties were mostly residents of Paarl who either previously played rugby at *Die Kraal*, or currently are involved in sporting codes in Paarl. Community meetings were hosted by the municipal engineers on behalf of Drakenstein Municipality, on 23rd and 25th March 2015 in the Huguenot Community Hall and Paulus Joubert Secondary School Hall respectively, in order to inform the community with regards to the development of *Die Kraal*. In addition to being an informative meeting, a secondary objective of the community meetings was to involve all parties in the process of developing *Die Kraal*. Sporting bodies, individuals and the community at large were given the opportunity to provide the history, background and sentiments for the land in question. It was requested by the community that a third community meeting be held, as the first two community meetings were not well attended. A third community meeting was agreed upon for 12th May 2015, to allow more role-players the opportunity to provide input on the development strategy.

The following figure illustrates the method used by the engineer to gather information:

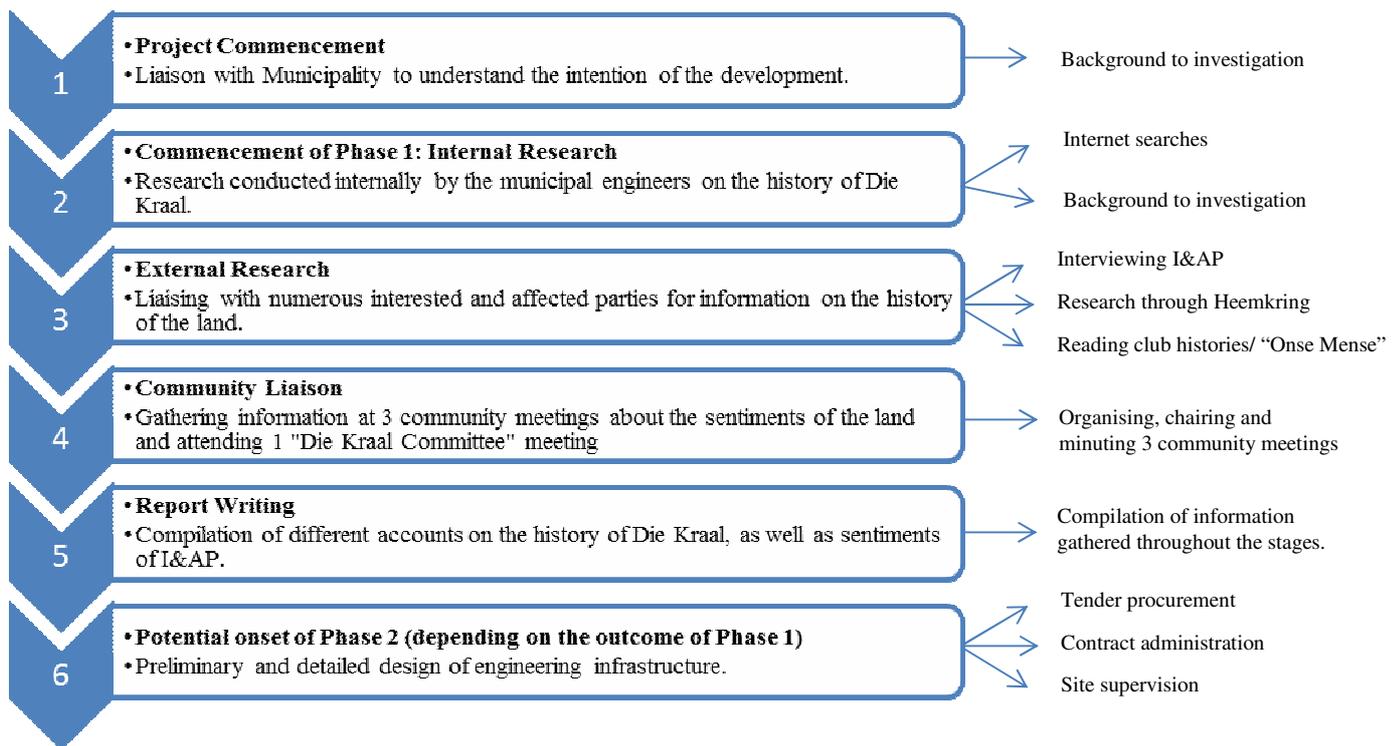


Figure 1: Process followed in acquiring information

Die Kraal is situated on the corner of Ambagsvallei Street and Jan van Riebeeck Drive in Paarl. Due to racial segregation in South Africa between 1948 and 1994, separate development based on race- apartheid- was enforced through legislation. *Die Kraal* was situated in an area designated for non-whites. This land provided a centre for the community to take part in sporting events and other community activities. The land, prior to being used as a community centre, was used to enclose livestock, hence the name "*Die Kraal*".

While trying to address how this project has demonstrated the changing face of the municipal engineer, this report will outline the history of *Die Kraal* and explain the ramifications of apartheid on the lives of the coloured community of Paarl. Furthermore the community responses and sentiments will be presented.

2. The changing face of the municipal engineer

It is apparent that a misconception exists on what exactly a civil engineer does. A high school class might answer that a civil engineer builds bridges and designs buildings, and while this might be true in specific cases, it is evident that the youth do not possess a good understanding of what a civil engineer does. As a recent Civil Engineering Graduate of the University of Cape Town, I may venture as far as to say that many graduates do not possess a good understanding of what a civil engineer does either. According to the Department of Higher Education and Training's *National Scarce Skills List: Top 100 Occupations in Demand* (2014), the 2nd scarcest skill in South Africa is Civil Engineering. In order to have more learners studying civil engineering at a tertiary level, the youth need to be better informed about the profession. Additionally, the perceptions held in young minds about the industry need to be addressed: it is no longer a career field reserved for those of a certain gender, race or age; which is testament to the changing face of the engineer.

The *Die Kraal* project demonstrates this changing face as it illustrates how the engineer has had to find a balance between the very technical approach to projects, and the "softer" issues which often arise. Phase 1 of this project entailed no engineering design, only non-technical research. Typically, when municipal engineers would leave the design office, it would be for a technical meeting or for a site inspection. In this project, the municipal engineer had to leave the design office to have tea in an elderly gentleman's home and listen while he nostalgically recalls the tries he scored at *Die Kraal*. This forced a change in mindset, as this type of work is not typically done by the engineer. Phase 1 was an integral part of the design process, because its findings would better equip decision makers during Phase 2. It is no longer acceptable for engineers to provide infrastructure without extensive consultation with communities. This means that municipal engineers have to alter their roles to be able to holistically satisfy the community and the client in a project of this nature.

CASE STUDY: DIE KRAAL (PAARL)

3. The political climate in South Africa

In order to appreciate the significance of *Die Kraal* in the lives of the coloured community of Paarl, the practices and ideals of apartheid must be understood. Apartheid was based on a system of racial segregation in South Africa and was enforced by the National Party between 1948 and 1994. South Africans were categorized as either "black", "white", "coloured" or "indian" and depending on their classification, that individual's rights, associations, education, living conditions and movements were defined.

Die Kraal formed an integral part of the community of Paarl. This area was used as a centre where the community could congregate. The sensitivity around the land stems from the fact that *Die Kraal* was donated to the coloured community of Paarl for the development of sport, and through apartheid legislation of segregation, the land, and hence, the medium for interaction in the community, was lost. To date, the ownership of the *Die Kraal* land is a point of contention with a claim from the local people that the land belongs to the coloured community and that no development can take place on this land without consent and input from them.

The *Die Kraal* project falls within the Political and Legislative Perspectives category of the IMESA Conference theme for 2015. Because of the political situation in South Africa at the peak time of *Die Kraal's* use, and hence, the circumstances under which the land was taken away from the coloured community, this project requires more sensitivity than the typical upgrading of a sporting facility.

4. Land ownership

Die Kraal formed part of a larger farm in the Ambagsvallei region of Paarl. The farm was first issued to Zacharias Eloff in 1777. Eloff was from Germany and arrived in the Cape in 1759.

During the consultation process with the community, it was stated that *Die Kraal* was owned by a farmer whose cattle and sheep grazed on the land under discussion. According to Mrs. Lourens, the daughter of the farmer J.H. Slabber who owned the land, *Die Kraal* was donated to the coloured community for sport and recreation. However, some members of the community state that the land was specifically donated for rugby.

Another account of ownership declares that the donation of *Die Kraal* was made by a farmer to the municipality – not directly to the coloured people in the community (although the community was later granted ownership by the municipality, to be elaborated on in succeeding sections).

A third account of ownership during the late 19th century indicated that the land belonged to Dr. J.R. Zeederberg who subsequently sold the farm to Isaac Jacob de Villiers- not J.H. Slabber. This is confirmed by Mrs. E. Fitzpatrick, De Villiers' daughter who claimed that her father owned the land and later on donated it to the coloured community.

According to community members, the land was donated to the coloured community in 1923. Many details pertaining to the ownership and the intention with which the land was donated cannot be confirmed. Records of this transaction were destroyed when the offices of Drakenstein Municipality burned down in 1928.

These findings introduce the legislative aspect of this project: there is disagreement on the initial land ownership and the intent with which it was donated. In more technical projects, the municipal engineer would not likely be so involved in tracing the initial owner of the land, as was the case in this project. However, at *Die Kraal*, the land ownership is a critical component of the project that will determine the extent of the community's participation/support and the nature of the development that will take place.

5. Origin and evolution of rugby in Paarl

When the British settlers first occupied the Cape, settlers and soldiers introduced sports such as rugby to both black and white indigenous South Africans. Rugby in Paarl is currently approximately 120 years old, and is said to have originated at Paarl Gymnasium School. The Paarl Rugby Football Club (R.F.C), which catered for white people only, was founded in 1883. Currently, this club is the third oldest constituted club in the Western Cape. This club played matches on Van der Poels Square and on the fields where Boland College and the provincial hospital in Paarl are currently situated. The Paarl Rugby Football Club, (whose uniforms in 2015 are variations of blue), originally wore green and gold outfits that, as the legend goes, inspired the colour choices of the Springboks of today. In 1886, the coloured equivalent of the Paarl Rugby Football Club, the Western Province Coloured Rugby Union was formed. In 1891, the coloured community of Paarl developed the Young Standards Rugby Club, the first in a series of rugby clubs to be established. Rugby was enthusiastically played by coloured and black populations, but under the rules of the South Africa Coloured Rugby Board (est. 1896); teams were kept segregated according to race. At the turn of the century, rugby had spread around Paarl, Stellenbosch and other surrounding areas. This development encouraged people to form numerous rugby clubs in the coloured communities of Paarl. By 1948 there were 14 rugby clubs in Paarl alone: Young Standards (1891), Young Peoples (1895), Riverstones (1903), Violets (1903), Coronation R.F.C which catered for rugby clubs in Stellenbosch, Wellington and Paarl (1903), Albions (1919), Paarl Rangers (1914), Lower Paarl "Blues" (1937), Premier (1941), Vineyards (1944), Ferndales RFC, Shamrocks RFC, St Stephens RFC and Young Gardens.

The Muslim/ Malay people played a significant role in the history of rugby in Paarl. The first Muslims arrived in the Cape in 1667, most of whom were political exiles from Java. The Muslims, who constituted a small minority of the population, resided predominantly in Ou Tuin, and lived harmoniously with other residents despite religious and cultural differences. By 1944, Muslim rugby players were members of the numerous aforementioned Christian rugby clubs that were established from 1891 onwards. The fact that Muslim rugby players were divided between the different clubs was a concern for the Muslim community. Additionally, their religious convictions prevented them from attending or organising dances, parties, consuming alcohol, selling raffles, amongst other activities frequently occurring in the Christian rugby clubs. Furthermore, Muslims were discouraged from playing sport during the month of Ramadaan. As a result, the Vineyards R.F.C was established in 1944 to cater only for the Muslim rugby players and supporters in the

community. While the formation of Vineyards R.F.C was unifying for the Muslim community, it had the opposite effect on the broader coloured community, resulting in tension between Muslims and Christians both on and off the rugby field. Apart from the political and legislative challenges of this project, there was a further dimension of race and religious that needs to be considered, that, once again, are not factors that the municipal engineer typically has to consider in technical projects.

The aforementioned rugby clubs of Paarl evolved in three primary areas, namely Central Paarl, Noorder Paarl and Suider Paarl (known as “The Gate”). These primary areas evolved due to the existence of a mission church in each of these zones, from which the schools originated. The men residing in these three distinct areas established the different sport clubs, a tradition carried forward by their sons. Rugby and cricket were played in open areas of the neighbourhood and squares without fences, since the church schools did not have adequate grounds on which sports could be played. As a result of the formation of numerous clubs, the need arose for a single sports ground where matches could be played.

6. Acquisition of *Die Kraal* by coloured community

A committee comprising of community leaders was formed. This committee approached Paarl’s mayor, Mr. Alf Devine, to request a piece of land which could be used for sporting activities and other cultural events. The council agreed to allocate the land known as *Die Kraal* to the coloured people for this purpose. The committee purchased corrugated iron sheets from Mr. Devine, who owned a general dealership in Suider Paarl, at a cost of £100. These sheets were used to erect a fence around *Die Kraal* and became one of its identifying features in the years that followed. *Die Kraal* grounds were managed by the Paarl Coloured Recreation Board, which was established in 1933. 17 guarantors from the community signed an agreement with the authority at the time, decreeing that they would be the custodians of *Die Kraal*. These guarantors were considered the caretakers and curators of *Die Kraal*. The numerous rugby clubs officially adopted *Die Kraal* as their sports ground in 1952.

At the time, the local authority did not make schools available for people of colour. However, schools originated from the churches in the different regions. As a result, there was a lack of sporting facilities in Paarl, resulting in all the church schools in the area also adopting *Die Kraal* as their sports grounds. Rugby, cricket (in summer) and netball were the three most commonly played sports at *Die Kraal*, but the facilities were used for athletics, church choir performances, derbies, drum majorette shows and performances by the minstrels. Many accounts of history indicate that when it was donated, *Die Kraal* was not only intended for rugby. *Die Kraal* was a community facility catering for various needs of the community.

7. Rugby at *Die Kraal*

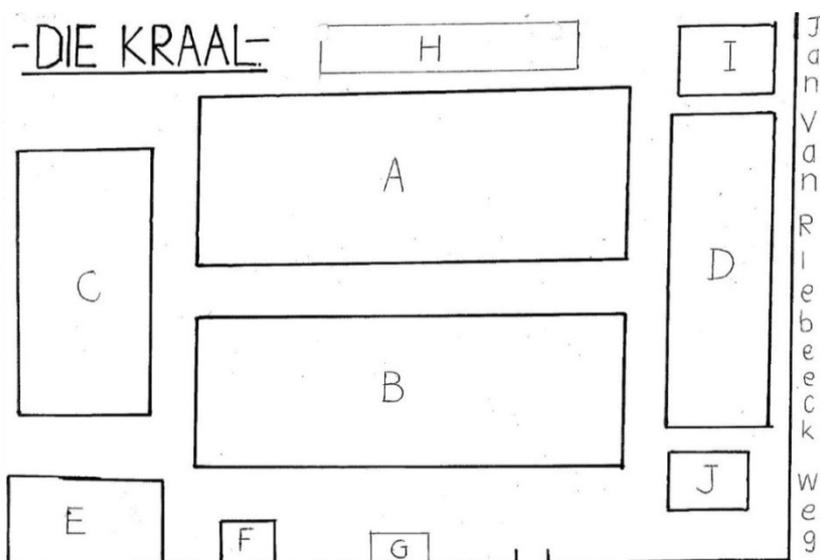


Figure 2: Layout of *Die Kraal* in 1950’s
(Source: Drawn by Mr Frankie Samaai, I & AP)

At the peak of its use, *Die Kraal* had two major fields, known as Fields A and B as seen in Figure 2. An area with a canopy for standing spectators could be found adjacent these fields (C), but as the need arose for more playing space, this area was transformed into a playing field as well. A fourth playing field was developed adjacent Jan Van Riebeeck Drive (D). Changing rooms (E), toilets (F) and a small café (G) were all later advances at *Die Kraal*. In addition, a netball court was developed (I), and a facility where meetings could be held (J). The meeting facility was especially important since, at the time, the community hall was off limits to all coloured people. In 1953, the grand stand was erected (H), providing seating for spectators.

Watching sport at *Die Kraal* was considered a community activity. Irrespective of class or social standing, members of the community would gather at *Die Kraal* to support their favourite teams.

8. Influence of apartheid legislation on rugby

During the apartheid era, people of colour were forced to move to areas that were allocated to them according to the Group Areas Development Act (Act 60 of 1955) and Group Areas Act (Act 75 of 1957). These Acts stipulated separate residential areas where different races could live, trade and work. For example, in 1960, an area called Ou Tuin, which was largely occupied by Muslims, was declared a “white zone”. This resulted in residents forcibly being removed and their houses and shops were demolished. Relocated people were furthermore categorized and divided based on their financial and social status. The wealthier coloured people, who could afford to build a house, were relocated to Charleston Hill. Those who could not afford to build a house were relocated to New Orleans. The poorest of the coloured people were relocated to Amstelhof, “Die Rug” and Chicago. Due to the fact that people were relocated according to their financial and social status, members of numerous rugby clubs were split geographically. Thus, significant effort was required by the players and administration to keep clubs from collapsing altogether. Some community members who were interviewed recalled emotionally how they were forcibly removed from their homes in 1965, and how churches, schools and recreational facilities were neglected and later dilapidated.

In the 1970’s South Africa received international pressure to abort all Apartheid policies and practices. When the South African government refused to succumb to such requests, the international community responded by banning South Africa from participating in all international sporting events. Numerous rugby tours that involved South African players as opponents were cancelled and there was increased scepticism from sporting teams who considered touring South Africa. In addition, South Africa experienced economic and other sanctions from countries, increasing political pressure. As a result, the South African government announced to the international community that its policies were no longer applicable to sport, and that it supported a racially mixed sports society. This policy however was not always demonstrated in practice.

In the 1970’s, the continued communal use of *Die Kraal* was adversely affected by the political conflict between the different sporting bodies. As a result of apartheid legislation which required the separation of all races, there was a division within the rugby fraternities, stemming from differences in political opinion. This division resulted in the formation of two groups, namely SACOS (South African Council on Sport) which was against segregated sport; and the Rugby Federation, which was not opposed to racially segregated sport, and had a closer affiliation with white people. The formation of these two distinctive groups split previously unified clubs. The division in rugby resulted in great rivalry between the Federation and SACOS both on and off the field, and this prompted the need for separate sporting facilities. As a result of the intense rivalry between SACOS and the Federation, rugby clubs who did not agree with either of the two bodies relocated and adopted Wellington as their official sporting grounds.

SACOS was established in 1973 as a non-racial sporting federation, and argued that there could be “no normal sport in an abnormal society”. In general, SACOS opposed sporting bodies that claimed to be non-discriminative, but did not adhere to non-discriminative policies in practice. The Federation gained momentum and support, as players considered the Federation to be doing more for rugby in Paarl, for example sending teams to Craven Week and investing in young players which led to sportsmen being discovered on a national and international level.

Between 1990 and 1991, apartheid was abolished in South Africa. In 1992, the Springbok rugby team was readmitted to international rugby. The South African Rugby Football Union was founded in 1992, when the

South African Coloured Rugby Board decided to drop the racial designation it had carried since 1896. The South African Rugby Football Union changed its name to the South African Rugby Union (SARU) in 2005.

9. Decline in use of *Die Kraal*

As a result of the split between different rugby fraternities and the resultant need for separate sporting facilities, members of the Federation were instructed to play rugby at the Dal Josafat Stadium while clubs who were affiliated with SACOS played at *Die Kraal*. In later years, the local authority decided to grant ownership of *Die Kraal* to the Federation and informed SACOS affiliated clubs that if they wanted to host sporting fixtures at *Die Kraal*, they would have to acquire permission from the Federation. The local authority prevented members affiliated with SACOS from playing at *Die Kraal*, and SACOS clubs were then instructed to host their games outside Paarl. Subsequently, the SACOS affiliated clubs took the local authority to court, disputing the local authority's instruction for SACOS clubs to play their rugby outside Paarl. SACOS won the case. This allowed SACOS clubs to make use of the Dal Josafat Stadium as well.

Owing to the fact that *Die Kraal* was not properly maintained and the existing structures dilapidated, a complete decline in the use of *Die Kraal* was observed. Eventually the decision was made to move all sporting activities to the Dal Josafat Stadium. Sport was played on other fields which were developed in the area, although *Die Kraal* was not considered for any development. Due to the fact that all sporting activities were moved to the Dal Josafat Stadium, a pavilion was erected at the Dal Josafat Stadium. The pavilion however, encroached on the existing cycling track, making the cycling track absolute. The inability to host cycling events at the Dal Josafat Stadium, made this stadium less popular.



Figure 3: Current layout of *Die Kraal* (2015)

In later years, the Haven Night Shelter was built on a portion of *Die Kraal*. At some stage, *Die Kraal* hosted an informal settlement which has since been removed, leaving the land vacant with no real purpose. Currently, the expanse of land that once hosted very competitive games, where generations of fathers and sons battled opponents for victory, lies vacant. Portions of *Die Kraal* are now occupied by vagrants.

A factor that contributes to the sensitivity around *Die Kraal* is race. Seeing that the land was allocated to the coloured community because of their race, and subsequently was taken away from them for the same reason, it remains a contentious issue. Seeing that the theme of race was common in this project, the municipal engineer had to adapt their approach to affected parties, and adopt a sensitivity that is not necessarily required in a project that is more technical in nature. In addition, the community displayed some reluctance to work with the municipality because the municipality is still largely viewed as the body that took the land away under apartheid. Seeing that the community viewed the municipal engineers as an extension of the municipality, the engineer had to work to gain the trust of the community members.

10. Attempts at selling *Die Kraal*

Many unsuccessful attempts at selling *Die Kraal* have been made over the years. Due to the political change in 1994, which allowed the inclusion of non-white people in decision-making positions in the municipality, the decision to avail *Die Kraal* for development as a business centre, was reversed.

In the years that followed, further proposals were made to develop *Die Kraal* into a business or commercial centre. The community formed action groups and lobbied against all such proposals. In September 2009, an article written by a concerned community member, Dr. Noel Adams, appeared in *Drakenstein Express*. In this article, Dr. Adams described how *Die Kraal* is the collective birthright of the coloured community of Paarl. The article further depicts how during the early 1990's, without consultation with the community, the infrastructure at *Die Kraal* was broken down by the local authority in order to create space for industries. The article highlights the importance of preserving the history in order for future generations to gain an appreciation of the role *Die Kraal* played in many lives. Dr. Adams also requested that through development, *Die Kraal* must be restored to its previous glory.

It is important to note that in a community-orientated project such as this, cooperation from the community will be the force that propels the project forward or impedes its progress. The fact that the community can be so effective in derailing a project confirms that the municipal engineer can no longer focus on satisfying the client only, the development must align with the needs of both the community and the client in order for it to be successful. For projects of this nature, the municipal engineer is most effective when they implement a "bottom up" approach, which, founded on the needs of the client, includes the community's sentiments and progresses from there; as opposed to a "top down" approach which excludes the community and focuses solely on the needs of the client.

11. Results of public participation process

Meetings were scheduled with the community as part of the public participation process. The different sporting codes were informed of the meetings and although widely advertised, the three community meetings were not well attended. While the community expressed their support of the development of a sporting facility at *Die Kraal*, many of the consulted parties were not forthcoming with information pertaining to the history of *Die Kraal*. This demonstrates the point alluded to earlier about the community not trusting the municipal engineers.

Additionally, private meetings with representatives from the various sporting bodies were held, as well as retired players of *Die Kraal*. These meetings were used to obtain information on the history of *Die Kraal* and ascertain if a need exists within the community and sport fraternity, to re-develop *Die Kraal*. Furthermore, all community members expressed how important *Die Kraal* was to them as a community, however, this was not evident in the attendance at the community meetings.

In order to obtain the requirements from the community members who either did not attend the meetings, or were not comfortable voicing their opinions in the meetings, a questionnaire was devised that each individual could complete at the meeting or at their own leisure. Meeting attendees were also invited to take questionnaires for friends, neighbours or the elderly who could not attend the meeting to complete.

12. Ownership of *Die Kraal*

The following section addresses the issue of land ownership that was raised during all of the discussions by representatives from the community or sports bodies:

12.1 Transferral to Coloured Community

The ownership of *Die Kraal* is a point of contention amongst many people within the community. The sentiment is that because the land was initially donated to the coloured community, but has since been acquired by Drakenstein Municipality, the ownership should be returned to the coloured community. The

details surrounding the acquisition of the land by the local authority under the previous dispensation are unclear.

The situation is further aggravated by the fact that the original land donated to the coloured community has been rezoned five times, and has since been subdivided/ sold and structures (the Haven Night Shelter) have been erected on it. The feelings surrounding this matter are very strong and community members expressed that if the ownership is not transferred back to the coloured community, the community will explore all avenues to deter any other development on *Die Kraal*, being for sport or otherwise.

While strong opinions exist for transferral of the land to the community, part of the community is of the opinion that *Die Kraal* should remain under complete ownership of Drakenstein Municipality. It is evident that maintenance of any development at *Die Kraal* will be expensive, hence the reluctance from part of the community to take ownership. Private sponsorship might prove to be inadequate to maintain a development at *Die Kraal*. This portion of the community is of the opinion that it is not the ownership, but rather the nature of the development at *Die Kraal* that is most important.

Irrespective of the ownership of *Die Kraal* and the agreement between the local authority and the I&AP's, all members of the community are in agreement that *Die Kraal* may not be sold for business purposes, but should be developed as a sporting facility.

12.2 Transferral to rugby forum

Furthermore, there is a very strong opinion amongst members of the public that *Die Kraal* must not only be given back to the coloured community, but must also be in the ownership of the Paarl Rugby Forum, and not the Sport Forum. This is based on the belief that the ground was initially donated to the coloured community for rugby, not for sport. However, the community members who have this opinion maintain that if the land were to be in the ownership of the Rugby Forum, provisions would be made for the inclusion of other sporting codes, depending on the infrastructure provided. For example, if a hall is to be built, indoor sports like basketball, karate and table tennis would be accommodated. Whilst some believe that *Die Kraal* should be developed around rugby only with provision made for other sports, others feel that because rugby, cricket and netball were originally played at *Die Kraal*, provision should be made for more sporting codes from the onset.

Part of the community has expressed the opinion that the land should be allocated to the sporting codes which have the greatest need for facilities, irrespective of the use initially intended for the land. Preliminary investigations revealed that inadequate amenities exist for hockey and indoor sporting activities in Paarl.

In more technical projects, there is not always need for debate of this nature, since design decisions are often made by the client in advance, and are based on factual information such as velocities of flow, costs of implementation et cetera. In a community orientated project, where there are "softer" issues under discussion, there is a lot of room for debate. In the project at *Die Kraal*, people very passionately defended their views and there were conflicts amongst community members on what they think will be the best use for *Die Kraal*. In these instances, the municipal engineer had to act as a mediator between parties and resolve conflicts in order for the successful progression of the project.

13. Extent of land available for development

The Human Settlement Plan dated 2010 for Drakenstein, identifies *Die Kraal* as an expanse of land in an established area with existing opportunities, facilities and services. *Die Kraal* has an attractive location for development due to a range of community facilities within easy access. The location of *Die Kraal* is close to existing retail, is adjacent the railway line and within walking distance of the train station.

The community requested feedback from the local authority with regards to the extent of the originally donated land a) being returned to the coloured community and b) being available for potential development. According to the records held by Drakenstein Municipality, *Die Kraal* initially consisted of the area indicated in blue on Figure 4: Plots 17439, 28699, 28700 and 21816. In addition, the donated land included

the area north of erf 17439 that was later used for the westerly elongation of Abattoir Road. According to the Human Settlement Plan (2010) for Drakenstein, *Die Kraal* is municipal owned land situated on erf numbers 5390 and 17439.



Figure 4: Original extents of *Die Kraal*
(Source: Drakenstein Municipality, 1955)

Some community members are under the impression that a substantial portion of erf 5390 with the inclusion of Ambagsvallei Street had been included in the initial donation. This land, on which the Huguenot Community Hall is now situated, does not form part of *Die Kraal* according to some records of Drakenstein Municipality. The Haven Night Shelter has been erected on *Die Kraal* on erf 21816. Construction of the Haven is perceived as an infringement on the land originally donated to the coloured community. Discussions with the community indicate that the relocation of the night shelter is not required.

In addition to the political background of *Die Kraal*, there is also the legislative perspective that must be considered. In this project, the municipal engineer had to investigate the legality of the development based on who is entitled to the land and who the owner currently is. Furthermore, there are legalities surrounding the extent of the land that is available for development. This case was especially sensitive because the coloured community was legally entitled to the land, while the client is the current owner thereof and ideally the engineer would like to find a solution that satisfies both parties. Once again, the municipal engineer is required to demonstrate objectivity when presenting findings to the client- a skill that is not always required in projects that are more technical in nature.

14. Establishment of “*Die Kraal* Committee”

During previous attempts at developing *Die Kraal*, a committee was formed to represent the community throughout the development process. This committee comprised of people who were familiar with the history of the area and represented various sporting codes. Many of the committee members had personal experiences with *Die Kraal* and would not support the development of commercial facilities within *Die Kraal*. In light of the fact that development at *Die Kraal* has again come to the fore, community members suggested that a committee be reinstated and/or a trust formed, to promote good communication and to establish a partnership between the community and Drakenstein Municipality. The sentiment was that the community had a vital role to play in the development, and the establishment of this committee would allow co-operative governance between the community and Drakenstein Municipality.

Once again, the establishment of this committee emphasizes that the community should not be underestimated or overlooked by the municipal engineer in the developmental process. As a result, the goal of the municipal engineer shifts from satisfying the client, to satisfying the community as well as the client.

15. Conclusion

The development of *Die Kraal* required the municipal engineer to act as journalist, historian, mediator and engineer. Prior to the commencement of any development, there needs to be thorough consultation with the community concerned. Due to the sensitive political backdrop of *Die Kraal*, it was imperative that the engineer engaged with the interested and affected parties so that this development would not be compromised as was the case in previous attempts at developing *Die Kraal*.

Upon commencement of a design project, the engineer might typically be provided with the information gathered in Phase 1 of this project. Since the municipal engineer was required to compile the background to the investigation, opposed to being provided with the information, it is evident that their role is changing. All of the information in this report was accumulated through research by the municipal engineer. As previously noted, research on the history of the land provides the decision makers of Phase 2 with a holistic view of *Die Kraal*, which will better equip them to make design choices going forward.

Owing to the fact that the land has a great historical sentiment, this project also required the municipal engineer to mediate between parties with conflicting views regarding race, ownership of the land and what should be developed on the land. One would typically expect that the municipal engineer would only be involved from the onset of Phase 2 of development, and would not have to interact with the community to such an extent. The fact that this is not the case is once again testament to the changing role of the municipal engineer, who has to adapt in order to successfully address the needs of the project.

Because South Africa has undergone significant economic, social and political changes in the last few decades, the municipal engineer needs to adapt and modify their role along with the changing environment. The nature of the project at *Die Kraal* has prompted me to change my perception of what exactly a municipal engineer does and has taught me flexibility in my role so as to satisfy all the elements of the project. Due to the political nature of this project, it is also evident that the sentiments people carry with them cannot be disregarded or undervalued, because in a community-orientated project, it is the people who either drive or impede the progress on a project.

Collecting information in such a non-technical manner is challenging, as it requires interviewed parties to recall memories made 50 years earlier, from which the engineer must extract facts. Due to the nature of this project, there was no way of verifying the information received. Information was deemed factual if more than one party interviewed recalled the event. Of course this is not an ideal way of separating factual information from opinion, but since no agreed record of the history of the land currently exists, there was no alternative.

Community meetings are not always an effective means of gathering information. Seeing that everyone is given the opportunity to voice their opinion and share their memories, the meetings are often lengthy, inconclusive, and they seldom adhere to the set agenda. While community meetings are imperative to hearing the sentiments of the community, they are ineffective as platforms on which factual information can be obtained. Thus, a more effective means of gathering information must be used.

The fact that neither of the consultants working on this development has ever been involved in a project of this nature is testament to the fact that the face of the municipal engineer is, in fact, changing. The engineer had to devise a practical way of serving the community whilst simultaneously satisfying the client. In order to remain effective, the municipal engineer needs to adapt along with the changing needs of the industry. The engineer of the future must add a “social” facet to the technical prowess s/he has. Engineering is not about sitting behind a desk performing calculations; attention must be paid to the social component of the work. The infrastructure provided by the engineer is only effective if it is used by the people, thus it is critical that the social aspect of design is not ignored.

16. Recommendations

In a community-orientated project, it is imperative that the community is sufficiently consulted. Previous attempts at developing *Die Kraal* taught Drakenstein Municipality that if the community is not sufficiently consulted, community members will lobby against any proposals that do not align with their expectations. Furthermore, the historical sentiment of an expanse of land should not be underestimated.

Co-operation should not be expected in a project of this nature. People might not be forthcoming with their personal memories and experiences, especially those who experienced oppression under the Apartheid regime. Thus, in community-orientated projects, more than in more technical projects, it is important to form a good working relationship with the community so that their trust is gained. The ultimate goal for the municipal engineer in this project would be to successfully upgrade *Die Kraal*, but that can only be achieved with input from the community. It is critical that all community members feel valued and that their opinions are welcome.

To a municipal engineer who is undertaking a project of this nature, the following recommendations are made:

- Advertise information pertaining to community meetings very widely. Especially if the land that is potentially to be developed is as sensitive as in the development of *Die Kraal*, people will hinder developmental processes in the future if they feel they have not been given sufficient opportunity to provide input.
- Be prepared to hear and minute everyone's opinion. Irrespective of how that opinion deviates from the agenda set for that meeting, or whether that point has been raised before. All community members must feel that their inputs are valuable and will be considered in the decision-making process.
- Be aware that community meetings do not foster dialogue. Additionally, community meetings can create an environment of "community vs municipality" as was observed in the project at *Die Kraal*.
- Some community members will feel intimidated speaking in front of a large crowd, so questionnaires can be used as a tool to gather information from less vocal individuals. While a questionnaire is effective in getting the participant to answer a series of set questions, it is not effective if it is the *only* means of gathering information. Especially in a project like *Die Kraal*, it cannot be assumed that everyone will a) receive the questionnaire, as I&AP were geographically dispersed around Paarl, and b) will be able to read and fill in the questionnaire successfully. Finally, if questionnaires must be returned to a designated place, that requires effort from the community, which cannot be guaranteed.