

Maracas Valley Action Committee
(MVAC)

Minutes of the first Annual General Meeting of the Maracas Valley Action Committee held on Sunday March 6th 2005 at the Vernon Andrews Auditorium, Fine Arts Centre, Caribbean Union College, starting at 5.00 p.m.

Present:	Thomas Gudat	President and Chair
	Pat McGaw	Secretary
	June Hezekiah	Treasurer

The meeting was called to order at 5.30 p.m. after time had been allocated for registration. A limited number of copies of the draft Constitution were available at this time.

1. Welcome and Introduction

Presidents Report

Outgoing President Thomas Gudat welcomed all present and, after giving some historical background about how MVAC had originally been loosely formed as a group of residents concerned about the illegal quarrying taking place in El Chorro Road in 2001-2002, noted that it was now registered as a non-profit, non-political organisation under the Company's Act. During the interim period, a structure had been put in place for an MVAC Executive which included formation of a database of concerned residents; participation by Area Representatives; formation of various sub-committees to tackle individual tasks. A mission statement had also been proposed and agreed and a draft Constitution prepared.

The importance of Registration and a Constitution was stressed as a requirement for accessing funding and for dealing with other organisations and he expressed the desire to reach agreement on the Constitution at the meeting today.

At a recent visit to the Valley by the Technical Working Committee on Hillside Development of the Town and Country Planning Division, Ministry of Planning and Development, considerable concern had been expressed about how the slopes in the Valley had been cleared and cut.

Thomas Gudat then shared his dream of Valley Residents becoming more pro-active and courageous in insisting that any development taking place in the Valley should be more transparent and should involve the participation of Residents. Three key points were then stressed

- Strengthening of the MVAC financial base so that a person could be employed to co-ordinate activities on a full or part time basis
- Using the financial resources to slow down/tie up developers – using legal advice, injunctions etc.
- Preparation of flyers/brochures/web site to keep residents informed about activities.

In closing, the outgoing President thanked June Hezekiah, Pat McGaw, all those who had given their time to assist with the preparation of the Mission Statement, Constitution,

worked on Committees, attended meetings. He noted that all had given their time and expertise to date and hoped that all will continue to share information. He also noted that networking is very important.

He then expressed a final desire to have the draft Constitution accepted that day.

Treasurers Report

June Hezekiah presented the following financial report:

Income:		
Money collected 2003/2004 from Subscriptions and Donations		\$ 890.00
Money collected from January 2005 – Subscriptions		<u>\$ 360.00</u>
	TOTAL	<u>\$1,250.00</u>
Expenditure		
Hire of P.A. System 2003/2004		\$ 450.00
Hire of P.A. System 2005		<u>\$ 400.00</u>
	TOTAL	<u>\$ 850.00</u>
Cash in Hand		<u>\$ 400.00</u>

Registration expenses were also incurred by Thomas Gudat. His commitment to the slow, often frustrating, registration process was highly commended. These expenses incurred have to be refunded. The Treasurer also noted that all groups require financing so invited all present to renew their membership. Donations were also invited.

2. Constitution

After considerable discussion, it was agreed by the meeting that a decision on the acceptance of the Constitution should be adjourned to a future date. In the meantime, it will be circulated as widely as possible and comments invited. Comments made at the meeting were noted.

At this time the outgoing President stood down and Cecil Chin agreed to act as Elections Officer.

3. Election of Officers

The following were elected:

President	Samuel Howard
Vice-President	Oliver Flax
Secretary	Pat McGaw
Treasurer	June Hezekiah
Assistant Secretary/Treasurer	Dara Farrell
Standing Committee Members	Chyrel Allicock
	Winston Ramsaroop
	Derek Soo Yee

At this time in the proceedings, the new President, Samuel Howard, took control of the meeting, thanked the Election Officer, the outgoing Committee and all who had participated to date. He also thanked the meeting for their confidence in his leadership, congratulated all those elected and looked forward to a productive term in office. He expressed the wish that MVAC should work alongside developers and potential developers to ensure that the nature of the Valley should be preserved as far as possible within the context of sustainable development in Trinidad as a whole. Target goals should be set. Active participation of the general membership is an essential and new ideas invited.

Randolf Hezekiah also thanked the outgoing committee for their hard work, making special mention of the input from Thomas Gudat, and wished for the new team all the best.

4. Any Other Business

The Secretary reported on the following matters:

Security in the Valley – Responses from Residents indicated that most of the Valley has been relatively crime free in recent times except for isolated incidences in Mountain View, Maracas Gardens, Acono. Several properties were broken into in the Maracas St. Joseph Village area, however, in January-March 2005. The young thieves were apprehended but it was a ‘wake-up’ call for residents. An interest in armed response was noted from several residents and a follow up to the various security firms indicated that this is an option offered by the larger security firms, especially those which already have a presence in the Valley. The main difficulty was the guaranteed response time because of the nature of the road and traffic conditions.

Other concerns noted as part of this survey were bush fires, Noisy parties/fetes, and the number of unemployed/unemployable young people in the area.

Traffic – Raymond Charles presented some preliminary figures indicating traffic flow up and down Abercromby St., St. Joseph, just south of the Silver Bridge. These indicated peak flow times at 6-9 a.m. (Max. flow 1 vehicle/11 secs) going out of the Valley. Return to the Valley in the evening was spread over a larger time span of 5-6 hours. He has agreed to continue with the monitoring at other sites, such as between La Baja and the Silver Bridge.

Other Matters discussed were – methods by which people can channel questions. This is achieved by email to the Secretary and through Area Representatives at this time. It was agreed that solutions to problems should be acceptable to all parties.

There being no further business the meeting was declared closed at 7.00 p.m.

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Secretary

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Chairman