

Tariff increases rejected

THEMBA NYATHIKAZI

ANGRY ratepayers packed the Sunday morning meeting at the Pinetown Civic Centre complaining about a lack of development in their areas while rejecting the Council's tariff increase aimed at meeting backlogs and improving infrastructure.

The draft budget was not welcomed and participants said it failed to focus on specific wards in the Pinetown South zone.

Participants also said the regional presentation should be resubmitted to the community since the ward profiling was inaccurate in the draft document.

Arthur Archary, of the Pinetown Ratepayers Association, said the community was not given enough notice about the integrated development plan/budget meetings.

He said many people were either unemployed or living below affordability levels in his area as they were mostly pensioners.

The clinic at eTshelumn-

yama, Nagina and Mariannridge was another source of anger. Residents said it was not serving the community as expected.

Local councillors gave the draft budget a thumbs down. They felt the presentation was not a true reflection of what was presented to them

"People living in complexes are deprived of the council's free six kilolitres of water since there is a bloc charge at the end of the month"

– Elizabeth Emmanuel Pinetown Ratepayers' Association

initially by council.

Issues raised by ratepayers included the level of debt collection (that the council had accumulated huge outstanding debts and fines), the cost of maintaining city assets and the free water provision.

"People living in complexes are

deprived of the council's free six kilolitres of water a month since there is a bloc charge at the end of the month," said Elizabeth Emmanuel of the Pinetown Ratepayers Association.

Some meeting-goers also said the costs of maintaining council assets were extremely high and rejected the proposed 10% surcharge on water and electricity for businesses.

nyathikazi@durban.gov.za

Clermont: absent councillors get stick

EMMANUEL KLEINBOOI

RESIDENTS at the Clermont budget hearings commended the Council for consulting with ratepayers but lashed out at those ward councillors who failed to attend.

The audience was highly critical of the absence of ward councillors. Of the six councillors expected to attend, only one was present.

The poorly attended budget meeting at the Clermont Hall was chaired by Cllr Nellie Nyanisa and the draft budget was presented by Deputy City Manager Sayo Skweyiya.

Some residents from the area complained they were not receiving the 50kwh of

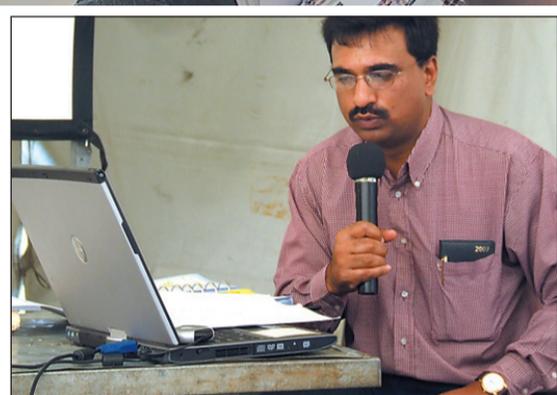
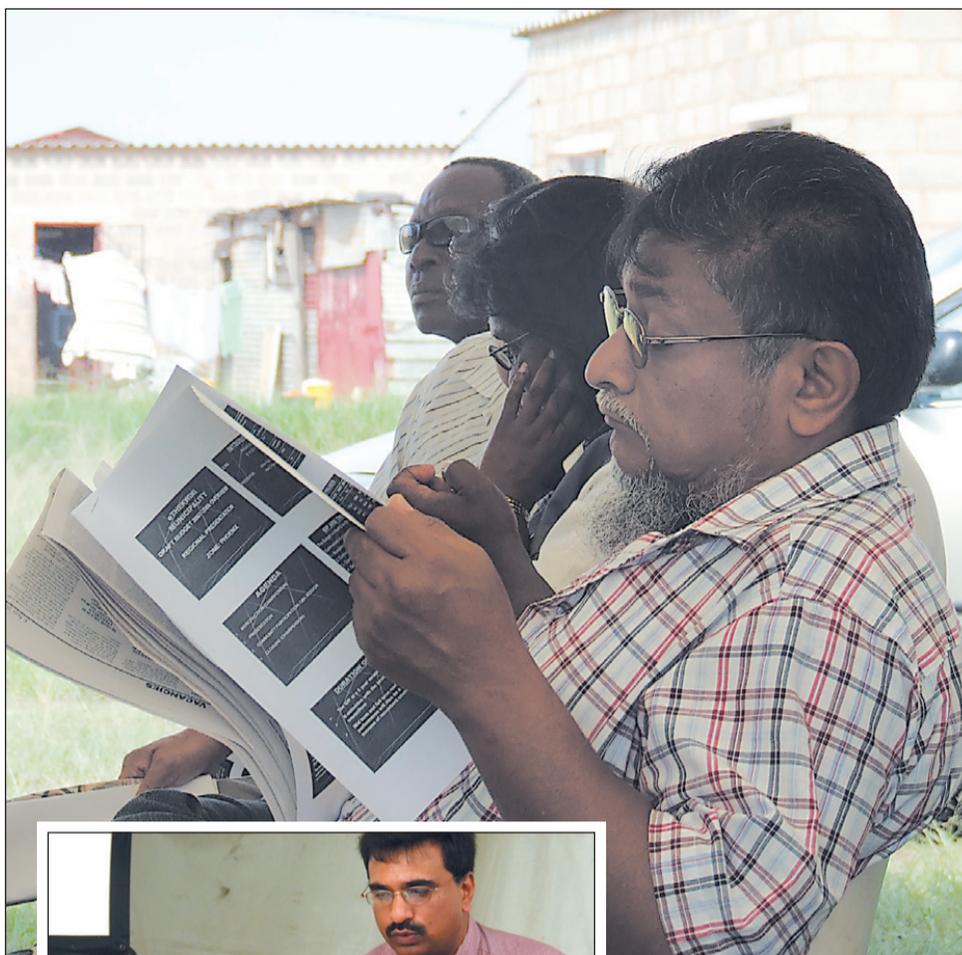
electricity extended to qualifying households and the 6kl of water enjoyed by residents within the municipality.

A ward 19 resident questioned why the presentation contained no information about any development earmarked for his ward.

The accuracy of the ward profile document was also queried and residents complained it would take the council 47 years to wipe out backlogs on sidewalks, pedestrian bridges and footpaths.

However, residents commended the council for consulting with them through meetings such as the one being held.

kleinbooi@durban.gov.za



ABOVE: A citizens reads over a draft budget overview at the Bhambayi meeting
LEFT: Adrian Peters, Head of Engineering, gives a presentation on the draft budget

Pictures: THEMBA KHUMALO

Increases to meet all needs

NOMSA MAKHUTLE

TARIFF increases proposed by the municipality were necessary to meet the needs of the people of eThekweni.

This was said by Head of Engineering, Adrian Peters, who presented the draft budget to the residents of wards 48, 49, 50, 51, and 52 at the Bhambayi sportsfield.

He was responding to concerns by residents that the increased tariffs on water, electricity and rates were high.

Peters said the increases were needed so the

municipality would have enough money to meet the needs of all its people.

He gave an example of some of the budget challenges: "We need to replace old pipes made of asbestos with new pipes. Others are leaking and some are threatening to burst resulting in the municipality, losing thousands of rand in water," said Peters.

Residents complained that the meeting venue had been changed a day before the hearing. This, they said, explained the poor attendance by residents.

Cllr Siphon Kaunda said transport to the new venue had been made available at the original venue.

"We made sure there was someone at the Redfern Hall to transport those who wished to attend the hearing. Cllr Kaunda said it was important the people attended the hearings: "These hearings are aimed at giving people the chance to raise concerns. These would be taken into consideration when council makes their decision on the budget."

makhutlen@durban.gov.za

Unemployment a big problem

THRUSHA NAIDOO

THE hearing in Bayview Chatsworth, which included seven wards, went off smoothly, although it was poorly attended.

Public concerns centred around tariff increases for basic services, the allocation of housing and the growth in informal settlements.

"You (council representatives) have highlighted in your presentation of the city's draft budget that one of the city's major problems is unemployment.

"If poverty is a major problem, how then can tariff increases rise up to three times higher than that of inflation?" asked Archie

Pillay, of Ward 71.

Shannon Tulsiram, the city's Head of Economic Development and Markets, and Executive Committee member and Chairman of the city's Infrastructure Committee, Cllr Visvin Reddy led the meeting, with the support of officials and councillors.

naidoothrusa@durban.gov.za

Few attend Central and Umlazi meetings

KEN MCHUNU

THE city's efforts to engage with residents of Umlazi and central Durban over the budget came to nought, owing to a poor turnout by residents.

Speaking to a room of council officials and barely

five community members, instead of the throng expected from Umlazi's 13 wards, Cllr Nomvuzo Shabalala, a member of the council's Executive Committee, said the poor turnout showed that the community neglected serious issues.

She expressed her disa-

ppointment in residents' disregard for a people-centred governance system that eThekweni had strived to maintain.

Shabalala urged the municipality to improve publicity before public meetings to ensure better attendance.

The meeting, she said,

would have taught the community how the city allocated monies to its departments.

She said this would have been an ideal opportunity for residents to lodge complaints and make suggestions about how the budget could be directed to meet their needs.

On the other side of town,

Eric Apelgren, Head of the city's International Relations Unit, echoed Cllr Shabalala's statements.

Apelgren was to present the draft budget to residents of 15 central wards but the City Hall meeting was cancelled because of poor attendance.

MchunuK@durban.gov.za

YOUR HEALTH

Malaria

Malaria can be fatal. The following information will help you safeguard yourself from the disease, especially when travelling to a high-risk malaria area.

What is malaria

The Anopheline mosquito is the carrier which transmits the malaria parasite, Plasmodium, from human host to host. The mosquito sucks blood from an infected human being. When the infected mosquito obtains a second blood meal, saliva containing the malaria parasite is injected into the blood stream, so infecting a new host.

Affected areas

In South Africa there are areas where malaria is endemic (where it always occurs) and epidemic (where it occurs sporadically). The endemic malaria areas lie in the Eastern Lowveld and in Northern Zululand. Malaria transmission is usually at its maximum from September to April and minimum from May to August. It can be carried into low-risk areas by vehicles and public transport

You cannot get malaria:

From sitting next to an infected person, using the same utensils as an infected person, touching infected people and from all mosquitoes.

You can only get malaria:

From an infected Anopheline mosquito when it bites you.

Signs and symptoms

Flu-like symptoms such as fever, headaches and muscular pains after visiting a high risk area without precautions. Untreated, malaria can damage the kidney and liver systems or other bodily functions. In its most severe form, it may cause a cerebral infection, which can be fatal.

Prevention

Living and sleeping accommodation should be sprayed with insecticide. Use insect or mosquito repellents for exposed skin. Sleep under nets which have been pre-treated with a recommended insecticide. Before you travel to a high-risk area, get advice and medication from your travel clinic or pharmacy.

What's being done at a community level

The ditching of streams and watercourses to destroy mosquito breeding sites. Treating stagnant waters; surveillance at sampling sites to monitor the importation and breeding of mosquitoes; improving stormwater drainage; and disseminating health information.

For more information, call your local clinic or call 031 311 3555.

Compiled by the eThekweni Health Department