

Battle of the sign boards

By Bev Mortimer

Too many estate agents boards have negative implications for St Francis Bay and are bad for business.

New rules are to be drawn up and should these not be obeyed illegal boards will be removed and there will be consequences.

This was the general consensus among seven St Francis Bay's estate agents at a meeting called by St Francis Tourism and the SFB Residents Association (SFBRA). The meeting was called to address the situation about estate agents boards and the bylaw protecting it.

According to newly elected chairman of Tourism, Peet Kemp, local community associations and business owners said: "This is it! We have an obligation towards ourselves and our own investments to restore St Francis and surrounds to the beautiful place we fell in love with."

Chairman of the SFBRA, Nigel Atkinson said the overload of advertising of property has more negative implications than what is good for the seller. "We are here to discuss a workable situation taking control of what is important to us."

meeting that access boards throughout the village and at major intersections are in fact bad for business. The principals of the seven estate agents will meet this week to finalise a set of rules, within the law, suitable for the St Francis area.

"St Francis Tourism is happy to take responsibility of this project with the help of its members," Kemp said. "But in return, offenders will have to contribute towards an earmarked community project, such as the entrance garden or a new community notice board."

"It won't stop at here," Peet said, "before season we will address outdoor signage, working within the Kouga bylaws to make sure excessive advertising and dilapidated signsboards don't have a negative impact on visitors and tourism."

Commenting afterwards, John Cooper, principal of Harcourts said Harcourts and he personally fully support the Residents Association and the Tourism committee initiative to call a meeting of agents to address the agents boards is due. "It has been too long overdue and needed to be addressed urgently."

"The meeting was very pro active and all stakeholders were agreeable that the boards needed to be addressed. Not all principals were present."

"Agency and agents need to take responsibility and to understand the Village image is bigger than the individual agent! The Village looks tacky, untidy and does not project a good impression."

"It was agreed that principals will meet this week to iron out the rules and put it in black and white for all agencies to sign the agreement. For this to bear fruit, we also agreed that there will be consequences if an agent does not adhere to it. Penalty to be paid to tourism to get board back, dedicated person to police the boards if not taken down within times agreed," Cooper continued.

"I believe the agreement can only work if their are consequences. Pay if guilty!"

"Other signage in town which is also illegal will also be addressed soon. Agents signage not the only signage in Village that needs to be addressed. Lots of illegal signage, illegal occupation of buildings with illegal signage, signage from businesses outside of St Francis etc. Some agents suggested a total ban of boards it is not possible to ban all boards."

Cooper added that the Municipality does not have the manpower or competency level to attend to signage. "We as residents and business owners need to take control of our destiny and manage issues in our Village ourselves," he added.

Pam Golding's Richard Ardenne said: "It would suit us to have boards banned completely, but apparently this is not possible. We are happy to go along with any reasonable proposals to improve the image of St Francis Bay."

"All estate agents should be encouraged to be more diligent about taking their boards down on Mondays. We at Pam Golding Properties have an employee whose sole job on Fridays and Mondays is to put up and take down boards, but he could be diverted to making coffee on those days if boards are banned."

Gene Mark of Enid Pretorius Properties believed it was a good and necessary meeting. She agreed all estate agent signs by the entrance to town and along the road into the village area are an eyesore.

"There should be rules regarding the putting up and taking down of the signs – such as that of putting them up on a Friday and then take them down on a Monday. If everyone co-operates things should be better," Marks said.

Peet concluded: "We want to go back to the days when the focus was on the natural beauty of our area, that is why people come here, and why others live here."



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I	O	R
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