

Last weekend the Municipality held a series of hearings to brief residents and answer questions on the draft budget for 2008/2009. **Metro Reporters** recorded some of the public's comments and concerns

Needy areas get priority, Chats told

THE City has the urgent task of addressing service backlogs and accelerating housing delivery, the community of Chatsworth has been told.

Addressing a draft budget hearing at the Chatsworth Youth Centre, Deputy City Manager for Procurement and Infrastructure Derek Naidoo said the Municipality was aware of the needs of all its communities, but it had to service extremely deserving communities, some of whom were without proper housing and sanitation.

"We are not saying that certain areas will be left out. This is a city-wide budget and everyone stands to benefit."

Naidoo said that the Council classified its communities under three categories: developed, underdeveloped and undeveloped.

Areas such as Chatsworth fell under the developed category as 95% of residents had access to basic services, a well-developed road system, stadium, shops and schools.

Maintenance

"So this is not an area which requires many strategic projects, but an area where we need to maintain what we already have, such as repairing potholes and cutting verges."

But despite Naidoo's explanations, some residents complained about the poor response time to complaints.

"We report potholes and (street) lights that are on during daytime on Higginson Highway, but we seldom get a response," a resident said.

The community complained about the rates valuation process, load shedding and the proliferation of drugs and crime in the area.

Local Councillor Visvin Reddy, who chaired the hearing, got into an argument with a man who identified himself as Bob Daniels, after Daniels described those who attended the hearings as "yes men," uncritical of the slow pace of service delivery in the area.

The brief spat saw police posted outside the venue moving into the hall. Calm was restored after the majority of those present moved for Daniels to retract his comments.

THE budget hearing at the St Ramalinga Hall, Isipingo on 12 April was chaired by Cllr Siphon Khuzwayo and characterised by singing and constructive questioning by residents of Wards 67, 68, 89, 90, 93 and 94.

Mpucuko Mrasi, of the



TENSE: The Sunday Pinetown budget hearing

Picture: SOHANA SINGH

Rates chief Toti concern

SUNDAY'S budget hearing at the Amanzimtoti Civic Centre started on a heated note, with several residents storming out after a dispute over the starting time.

The disruption set the tone for the hearing which was marred by cries of dissatisfaction from the audience, whose chief concern was the property valuations and rates increases.

The hearing was chaired by Cllr Tana Magwaza of

Umbumbulu, and drew residents from Amanzimtoti and wards 95 to 100.

Once the presentation by Christo Swart, Deputy Head of Parks and Recreation, was over, an official from the Rates Department was peppered with queries and comments.

Many budgetary issues, such as how council arrived at how much to spend on road maintenance, were not answered because officials from these departments

were not available.

"You cannot call us here for a meeting and then the relevant people do not come. Department officials need to come to the people and answer our questions. That is why we pay taxes," said Amanzimtoti's Frans Pienaar.

Another gripe was the presentation's format. "We need our presentations and documents in isiZulu. We do not understand these graphs and all this English," said Sphamandla Xulu of Ilovo.

Clermont: 'Why no door-to-door property valuations'

SATURDAY'S budget hearing at the Clermont Hall for Zone 3, Clermont, KwaDabeka, part of Kloof and Wyebank, started more than an hour late.

This was due to confusion caused by a commemoration of the anniversary of struggle stalwart Chris Hani's death

being held at the same time in a hall across the road.

The hearing started with a handful of elderly citizens, mainly from the Clermont area, but as it progressed more people arrived.

Sandile Maphumulo, Head of the Electricity Unit presented the draft budget

and his introduction was met with enthusiasm, as many present had questions about load shedding.

While expressing appreciation that the council had come to tell them about budget allocations and rates, residents said they would like presentations in simple

language on other important issues affecting their lives.

The property valuation process was discussed at length, with people asking why they had not seen anyone going door-to-door to assess homes.

The process was explained in detail, but many

continued to insist they should have been interviewed by the person who valued their homes.

Another query concerned what happens to rates concessions for pensioners, people with disabilities and child-headed homes when the owner dies.

Central: Brickbats and bouquets

TEMPERS flared at the Luthuli Hall on Sunday when residents of central Durban met Council officials to discuss the City's draft budget.

Though few in number, residents from wards 23, 24, 25, 28, 29 and 65 seemed to have a bone to pick with the city fathers, particularly over the new property valuations.

The general complaint was that the Council had rushed through the process. Berea resident Martha Lawson said this had resulted in a "flawed system and thumb sucked property values.

"We are aware that rates have to go up from time to

time, but the way our Municipality rushed through the process leaves a lot of unanswered questions. Why wasn't this done slowly and concisely, in a manner that would leave every ratepayer happy and enlightened?" she asked.

Neil McLeod, who presented the City's draft budget, said the city had been given a deadline to implement the new market value based property rates by July 2008. This, he said, was a call by the Department of Provincial and Local Government in line with the Municipal Property Rates Act. Many residents

complained that their homes had not been inspected, that aerial photography was used instead, and that values of most houses presumed based on photographs.

But Cllr Fawzia Peer said aerial photographs were taken only in areas where properties could not be visited individually because of their locations.

"In other instances the City's inspection teams had been greeted with locked gates and empty homes, and vicious dogs", Peer said.

The Council was criticised for calling the meeting at a time when many were at church and for failing to

publicise the meeting sufficiently. Residents called for an extended deadline for valuations and more consultation.

The suggestions were recorded and residents were assured that these would be taken to the City's Executive Committee for scrutiny.

Peer called on residents who felt they could not afford their new rates to discuss "various payment methods" with the City Treasury, at the Florence Mkhize building.

The budget in general was applauded as one that was in the best interest of previously disadvantaged groups.

and how they are going to use their funds. Isipingo is a very dirty place because people from many different cultures come here and they have no education and awareness of waste management," Khuzwayo said.

Waste Unit tell of plans for Isipingo

Treasury, gave a detailed presentation of the draft budget and most residents seemed pleased with the allocation of funds.

"We are very happy that

you have come to give this overview of the budget. We will also make sure that you stick to it," said Precious Makhanya of Umbumbulu. Durban Solid Waste

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share their plan

representatives were on hand to share their department's plan for the area.

"We brought DSW here today to share