

The tenth Community Dialogue was held on the 30th of August 2022 at the Touwsranten Community Hall. This meeting marked a year since the start of the forum.

This meeting was held a few days before the Flea Market and the matric dance, which meant that many people were unable to attend. Several people also indicated that they cannot come to meetings on a Tuesday. It was agreed that everyone who is part of the WhatsApp group would be consulted to see which day works for the majority of the people and that a meeting would be called shortly after the market to keep the momentum.

Sharon Appels introduced the facilitation team and explained that the facilitation team (Chandre, Ros, Morné and Sharon) works behind the scenes to make sure that meetings are well planned, reports are written and records are kept of participation. Roslynn Damons explained that the Community Dialogue is not part of the Seven Passes Initiative, it is not a church initiative and it does not replace the Community Policing Forum or any other existing structure. The community dialogue is an initiative by concerned community members from Hoekwil and Touwsranten who come together to discuss challenges faced by both communities and together find ways of building a more prosperous, safer community.

Due to a lot of people not making it to the meeting a question of whether or not to postpone the meeting was put on the table and each person in the circle got to express their view. It was agreed that the meeting would continue, and for the new participants would answer the questions: what is the Community Dialogue and how does it work. The members of the SAPS who were present in the meeting were also given an opportunity to discuss the current state of crime.

What is the Community Dialogue

In August 2021 the community dialogue started as a way to bring people from Hoekwil and Touwsrante together to discuss safety in Hoekwil and Touwsrante and how the community could be better



The dialogue started with the questions about “what made people feel safe” and “what made people feel unsafe”

The intention was to find a way to talk to each other and work together to build safe communities. From these discussions' groups were formed to tackle specific issues: an alcohol and substance abuse group, a market group as an economic development initiative and a group to undertake a skills audit

Before the Community Dialogue was formed there was very little interaction between the people of Hoekwil and Touwsrante. Since its inception, relationships have been formed and there have been improvements in communication between the members of the two communities.

One notable outcome of the dialogue is the success of the Flea Market which has been positive for those operating and provided opportunities for networking.

Importance of Dialogue Meetings



During the previous meeting some people expressed frustration with the meetings taking in the form of workshops and wanting to get to 'doing'. This came up again in this meeting. It was agreed that the dialogue is a place for us to get to know each other better, to discuss and understand what is happening and what is needed. It is where we build community. Action is taken by the groups between dialogues. Without trusting relationships, and without understanding each other well our actions will be misplaced or short-lived. We cannot move too fast because everyone needs to understand what this community dialogue is about.

Trying to fix problems without sitting down and discussing them would be counterproductive as there may be room for misunderstanding and hurtfulness. For example, shortly after the recent demolition of houses in Touwsrante, a community member from Hoekwil posted a picture of bags of uncollected rubbish and it was suggested that rubbish collection needed to be attended to. This could have been very hurtful for the people whose houses had been demolished and who still did not have a place to take their belongings. This shows that there is a need for us to have relationships between Hoekwil and Touwsrante. If we act without knowing each other, then those who are more privileged may act thinking that they know what is needed, without hearing those who are affected.



One of the important things about the dialogue is that it is up to everyone to make it work, it is not up to the facilitators.

Taking Steps to Address Alcohol and Substance Abuse

Alcohol and substance abuse has been identified as one of the challenges faced by the communities of Hoekwil and Touwsrante. A group was formed to address this, but it seems to have been inactive.

Liquor and drugs lead to violence. Members of the community are the ones who are aware of the places where liquor and drugs are sold more than the police. Liquor and drug premises thrive only as long as there is support from the community. One of the issues that the police are faced with is that even when they close one tavern another opens. These illegal taverns operate due to communities allowing them and this needs to change.

Oom Boelie and Pat Buys agreed to reactivate the alcohol and substance abuse group. It was suggested that tavern owners could be invited to a meeting where, together with community members they could decide on rules which would help regulate alcohol within the community and increase safety.

Discussion



Inviting new people:

The community dialogue is open to and welcomes everyone who wants to be part of building a safe prosperous community, this includes the ward councilor.

SAPS

The SAPS representatives present in the meeting expressed an interest in working together with the community members to change Touwsranten for the better. The SAPS said that they would utilize all available resources and there are strategies being explored to be used to deal with crime in Touwsranten. There is a need for more proactive approaches to deal with the issue of violence. The SAPS noted that there was a higher number of cases of domestic violence during women's month. But, they said that just opening cases does not solve the problem that causes household fights. To address this problem couples need support and counselling, for example from their church leaders.

There will be a general meeting for the neighborhood watches.

This will be advertised 14 days prior. Invites will be extended to those wishing to be part of the neighborhood watch. Community members forming strong neighborhood watches have been shown to have an impact on crime levels. Women have been seen to show more interest than men in being part of the neighborhood watches.

A strong neighborhood watch would assist in Touwsranten.



If the dialogue works in small communities such as Hoekwil and Touwsranten it can be exported to other communities. The community dialogue can shape history not only for these two communities but the whole country.

Way Forward

Engaging young people:

Childhood is where a lot of character formation takes place. If children that are seen as problematic and are disregarded, they continue in that trajectory, whereas if they are given a chance they could change. It is important to change the mindsets of young people. More needs to be done for the young people, such as opening a skate park that would keep them occupied and away from drugs and alcohol.



The next Flea market will be held in Hoekwil. In the next meeting the dialogue will look how the market went, and what difference there is between holding the market in Touwsrante or Hoekwil.



"One thing I'm going to do to keep the momentum of this meeting"

Getting in touch with people who were unable to make it to this meeting to check what may be the issue

Inviting more young people from both Hoekwil as well as Touwsrante

Staying Positive

Committing to consistently attend meetings

Inviting Church Leaders



The next meeting is on 14 September
5h30pm at Touwsrante Community Hall

Attendees List

Morne Heunis

Roslynn Damons

Andisiwe Makwecana

Chandre Gould

Sharon Appels

Nolan Michal

Sidney Juus

Raymond Klaasen

Walter Damons

P Theron

Patrick Buys

Bennie Boshoff

Sharon Fisher-Buys