

Pinelands Friends of the Oval Information Meeting
Pinelands Bowling Club Oval
2026-05-06

[Andrew Spencer]

Good evening, everyone. Let's see, is the mic working? Hi, my name's Andrew Spencer.

I'm a member of the group that's called itself the Friends of the Oval Working Group, and we're a group of people that all have an interest in the Oval. There are sports club members, adjacent property owners, and Pinelands residents, and we are all obviously opposed to the Pinelands Hockey Club's lease application and the development of the AstroTurf on the Oval. So I want to thank you for coming here tonight to be part of this meeting, and we really appreciate your time.

The meeting is intended to explain why we would not like this development to go ahead. For those of you that missed the information meeting that was provided by the Pinelands Hockey Club, that was on the Oval on the 18th of March. The full video of that and the transcript is available on the Facebook page of the Pinelands Friends of the Oval, so you can access that there for their input.

The Pinelands Ratepayers and Residents Association also published their documentation. During this meeting, there are clipboards that are going around, and the idea is it's a petition against the lease and the AstroTurf development. Please fill in your name and your contact details clearly if you want to object and want to be kept informed about things.

I did establish that some of the pins that we tied to the clipboards are a bit less than optimal, so sorry about that. If you have pins, then just please try and find them somewhere else. We're going to slot in questions about the various items that we're going to present after them, so you can see the agenda up there, and when we look at the comments section, we'll go around with a mic.

Just if you have any questions or comments relating to the items that have just been put forward to you, that would be great, and then we'll work on those for a while, and then we'll move on to the next items. We're going to start with just an introduction to the whole concept. Diane Smart is going to take that.

She's a practicing attorney and a longstanding Pinelands resident, and also a regular Oval user, so, Diane, over to you.

[Diane Smart]

Thank you very much, Andrew. As I'm sure almost all of you must be aware, on the 2nd of March, the city published a notice calling for comments by the city on the 2nd of April to a proposed lease, a 10-year lease with the option to renew for a further 10 years to the Pinelands Hockey Club for a large portion of the Oval fields, an area that encompasses more or less 60% of the total Oval fields. The notice describes the property as underutilized, surplus to council's requirements, and no demand exists for same.

It contains almost no information about the proposed lease, apart from the annual rental of 1,386 rands. Most importantly, the notice fails to inform the public that the city had already, in October 2023, pre-approved the building of an astroturf on the lower Oval by the Pinelands Hockey Club, subject to the lease application. The city's lack of transparency in this matter has been a source of great unhappiness amongst Pinelands residents.

During a meeting held on the Oval on the 18th of March, our ward councillor announced that a 30-day extension to the comment period would be given. On the 10th of April, a further notice was sent out by the city stating that the comment period is open from the 10th of April till the 12th of May, and a different person's name was given for comments to be submitted. As I say, for those of you who haven't seen a map, there are some behind there, and there will be one put on the screen later in the session.

But essentially, the proposed lease area encompasses the entire bottom field of the Oval, plus the side wings of the top field. In 2023, the Pinelands Hockey Club submitted a proposal to the city that included the building of a new clubhouse and paddle courts. According to the Pinelands Hockey Club, their plans have now changed, and they only intend to build one astroturf.

And that is the only part of the proposed lease area that will be fenced off and the public will not have access to. Despite requests, the city has failed to provide an explanation as to why they are proposing to lease to the hockey club an area that is substantially bigger than they need for an astroturf. This question was put to Jack Thonnisen at the meeting on the 18th of March, and the reply that he gave was as follows.

In relation to the lower Oval, that they have not as yet had a geotechnical survey conducted to establish which would be the appropriate part of the lower Oval field to build an astroturf, and they therefore need to lease the entire bottom field to give them options. In relation to the wings around the top field, the answer was that in order to ensure that their members have access from the astroturf on the bottom field to the clubhouse above the top field, they need to lease that section. It does beg the question if the general public is not going to be precluded from access, why they need to lease that section in order for their members to have access.

According to the previous ward councillor, Brian Watkins, the actual fields of the Oval have never previously been leased out, nor has access by members of the public ever been restricted in any way in the past. The land is described as a public place in the title deed and has been described as a public place in all title deeds since it was first registered in the 1920s. It is only the clubhouses that have ever been leased out in the past, and in fact the top clubhouse is currently leased out to the Pineland Sports Club, and the bottom clubhouse to Pineland's Athletics.

[Andrew Spencer]

Thanks. Thanks Diane, applause appreciated. I don't think we need to applaud on everybody, but anyway, just another comment.

The entire evening is being videoed, and we will be publishing the video and the transcript as well. So we are not live streaming, we decided not to live stream, but that will be available for distribution and also on our Facebook page. We've got a section now which we've bundled together of just individual comments from affected parties, and we're looking at those six that you can see at the top there, and we've got various representatives from those groups just to pass comment.

So for the Pineland Sports Club, we've got Graedon Boswell. Graydon is a real estate agent who's played for Pineland's Cricket Club for 10 years, and he was the PCC Chairman from 2017 to 2023, and has been involved in the early discussions about leasing on the Oval. Thanks Graedon.

[Graedon Boswell]

How's it everyone? I'm not going to speak for too long because this is quite a brief sort of part, but we seem to think that a lot of people don't understand what the Pineland Sports Club is about, how

it was established, where it came from, but just a little bit of history. So the Sports Club was formed in 1982, and just for reference, that is when hockey did come over to these fields.

Originally they were up basically where hockey places along the railway line. If you take a look there, you'll see that. Their clubhouse burnt down, and essentially they came over here.

What's interesting is they were initially offered Clyde Pinelands, but they came, according to sources, cap in hand to our club over here where we came to an agreement. Now, people need to know that this whole process, sorry, this process, but this club originally started pretty much around 1926. So Pineland's Cricket Club has basically been around for 100 years, essentially, and the clubhouse initially was first built in 1934, and obviously renovations have been done over time, but what's quite interesting is some of the history as well as it was actually the Prime Minister that helped raise funds to build the cricket club back then.

So our stance on the situation is that we are not happy with this process, obviously. A couple of the members from the club, obviously borrowing hockey, and initially this club was created to amalgamate and keep everybody together and protect the longevity of this field and these areas. So it's been pretty good up until then, and we just wanted to say on our behalf and speaking on behalf of Frisbee that the members of the sports club, we accept that hockey is entitled to advocate for its future.

We accept that hockey may want improved facilities, and we accept that hockey may feel its needs have not been properly met, but none of it justifies bypassing the sports club to get there, and that is what we really take issue to. So it's all good and well that you want better facilities, that you want to do more things, but follow the proper process to do that, and that has not happened at all, and that is why we are incredibly unhappy about the situation because of the fact that there's been no resolution that has happened. There's been no vote, and quite honestly, it's been quite a surprise where this just popped up because the last time this was spoken about with us was about three or four years ago, and then all of a sudden now in 2026, a lease application is suddenly available for hockey.

So there will be more on that a bit later, but the Pinelands Sports Club, the Frisbee, and cricket are really against this 100% due to the fact of process, and we feel it is very unfair. It's unconstitutional based on our constitution, but we've been completely ignored. So this whole process, this whole application should not have happened from the start because we did not approve it.

Thank you.

[Andrew Spencer]

Thank you. Thanks, thanks, Gradon. So that was Pinelands Sports Club.

Then one of the member sports codes of the sports club is Pinelands Cricket. Barney de Klerk, right here, grew up in Pinelands, going through Red School, Scouts, and Pinelands High School. As he said, he then ended up on the conveyor belt from Pinelands High Cricket to Pinelands Cricket Club, where he's been an active member for 46 years.

Thanks, Barney.

[Barney de Klerk]

Thanks. Thanks very much, Andrew. First of all, just a correction, Andrew.

Yeah, 46 years is a long time, but I started at Pinelands Cricket Club in 1974 doing the old school board there as a, whatever, 15, 13-year-old boy. So it's actually been 52 years. Thanks, Stefan.

I'm also, I'm the chairman of Pinelands Cricket Club and I'm also the chair of the Pinelands Sports Club. Just a few facts that I would like to tell you guys tonight is that Pinelands Cricket Club has always been on conveyor belt as Andrew, as I said, for youngsters coming through from Pinelands High School, from Thornton, from Kensington. So our cricket club gets a lot of youngsters coming from even Garden Village.

So as a clubhouse and a cricket club, we've encompassed the entire precincts of Thornton, Garden Village, and Kensington. I mean, we've got Kensington cricketers there today who live and play cricket and love it at Pinelands Cricket Club. So that's just a fact.

But for me also, it's a very, I'll give you another fact later. For me, it's a very, very sad day where the minority has a much better say than majority. And when I say majority, I'm meaning the cricketers, the community, the frisbee club, the athletic club.

Are we going back to the old discrimination days where only one code is allowed at field? For me, that hurts. I was brought up in the apartheid era.

I don't want to get too political, but the minority cannot rule the majority. It must never do that, as Nelson said. Another fact is that Pinelands Cricket Club has to have two cricket fields.

Pinelands Hockey Club have said, Pinelands High School have secured a field for us. That is misinformation. Let me tell you right now, it's misinformation.

Pinelands High School cannot guarantee or promise us 23 playing Saturdays, including the Ramadan fast in February, where we play Sunday cricket. Schools don't play on Sundays. They don't allow cricket on Sundays.

So I don't know how we're going to manage that. And let me tell you, from my heart, that's been in Pinelands for 52 years, 46 years active playing, and I'm still an active member of Pinelands Cricket Club, is that Pinelands Cricket Club doors will close, let me tell you right now, they'll close if that development goes ahead. I'm telling you right now, as long as hand on heart, it will close.

And it's been going, as Graedon alluded to, since 1926, the clubhouse, 1934. And that, for me, is not right, and we all need to object about that, because one code wants to play down there, and the rest of us can't use that field, the frisbee, the cricket, the athletic club, and the footballers, which Megan, Chilli, and myself got the soccer club involved. We've also developed a lot of cricketers at Pinelands with the CPL, the Cape Premier League.

The youngsters come and play their cricket during November, I think, for a week or two, and they develop. The youngsters under 10, under 11s, under 19s, they all play down there, and that's, for me, important that the youngsters get off the streets and play cricket at Pinelands. Every single club that I know of has two cricket fields.

If you go through all the Premier League clubs, you can go Wymer got two fields, Claremont got two fields, Providence Square, and Victoria, I mean, Ottomans, Primrose, Durbanville, they've all got two clubs. Sorry, two fields, my apologies. Bergvliet have always had one field.

They had put Esther on the Bergvliet field, then they moved to the corner of Ladies Mile and Main Road for their main cricket club. Cape Town Career Club is also a career club that's got only got one field, and they've had it since 1892, so they've just known one field. All other clubs, they had two fields, and that's why I'm saying, if we lose that bottom field as cricketers, it'll effectively close our career club down, bang.

And just at this meeting, I want to, at the AGM of the Pinelands Sports Club, I requested very politely that the hockey club withdraw their lease application, and I'm going to ask them again. There are a few members here who are hockey members, and we want to respectfully say, please withdraw your lease application for the better of the Pinelands community, the club, the Frisbee club, and the Athletic Club and the Football Club. Thank you, Andrew.

[Andrew Spencer]

Thanks, Vani. Another sporting code on the Pinelands Sports Club is the Chilli Ultimate Frisbee, and Brent, as the chair, is going to comment on that.

[Brent Phillips]

Hello, everyone. As has been said, I am the chair of the Chilli Ultimate Club. Chilli Ultimate Frisbee, I'm sure not that many people here actually know what that is.

It's a fairly new sport, especially in this country, but it's growing. And the sport itself did take a hit during COVID and really worried me, but again, the sport has been growing again. And effectively, losing even just one field on the bottom oval will also cripple our sports code.

We have a social game that we organize that happens on a Thursday. Without that extra field, we won't be able to share with cricket. There just won't be space.

So that will effectively cut off our line of new players. Social game, like I said, is incredibly important. Plus, losing a field also cripples our ability to host tournaments.

Tournaments are obviously important. It's something that our sports code relies on. We host our regional tournament.

We basically saved our national tournament two weeks ago by hosting a few games due to the rain that couldn't be hosted at the original fields. And yeah, so not being able to have eight teams play at a time will do massive damage to our ability to host tournaments. And Pinelands Oval is one of the only fields that Ultimate Frisbee actually has to play in right now.

So obviously, it's a small sport. Not that many people know about it. And basically, the only fields that we have available are UCT here and in Plumstead.

Those are the three fields that we are able to use. These are one of the only two with lights. So having this development go down would like, yeah, it would be basically a nail in the coffin for our sports code, which would be, I think, incredibly sad because our sports code, I don't know if you guys know, but it's a coed sport.

So we have men and women playing together. And it's an incredible space to grow as a human learning to play men and women together. And I think it would just be really sad to lose an entire space that fast as that.

[Andrew Spencer]

Thanks very much, Brent. Other people that are affected by this proposal include the residents who are directly linked onto the Oval. And I'd like to ask, oh, sorry, before we jump to the residents, Pinelands Athletics Club, also resident down on the Oval, Ruth Leverton has been a Pinelands resident for 33 years and a member of the Pinelands Athletics Club for 27.

She served on the club committee in various capacities for 17 years and is currently the club president. She's actively involved in the community through the Pinelands Methodist Church and through running and through the Oval community of dog lovers.

[Ruth Leverton]

Thank you very much. They say that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. And I must confess that when I read the letter put out by Pinelands Hockey Club on the 13th of March, it was a case of they were beholding themselves as beautiful.

Obviously, when you are promoting something, your presentation is going to be subjective. Our experience of this whole process has not reflected what was portrayed in that. And I have to concur with Graydon.

We feel that this has not been negotiated. It has been imposed on us. A little bit of history.

In 2016, Pinelands Hockey Club approached Pinelands Athletics Club to discuss the possibility of sharing facilities. We agreed that we would discuss, negotiate, go forward and see what could happen. We heard nothing more until December 2022 when Jack Thonnisen asked if he could address our committee meeting and came with a very grandiose presentation which showed massive development of the entire Oval area.

Our response to that was that we would commit to exploring the possibility of a Pinelands Community Sports Club in which various codes could cooperate with each other. But we emphatically opposed the presentation which included an additional clubhouse and various other things. As it stood, we remained committed to negotiating.

There was no negotiating. As I say, 2023, okay, between 2016 and 2022, the Hockey Club had been in extensive consultation with Cannons Creek and with the city, precluding all the other sporting codes. What was stated in the proposal of 2022 was that Cannons Creek had already raised and committed an amount of nine million rand to develop an astroturf.

Now, I believe that that statement was emphatically denied by the principal of Cannons Creek on the 18th of March. Not wanting to cast nasturtiums, as we say in our family, all make allegations. When something is denied that way, it calls into question everything else that is being presented.

And our position is that we find it very difficult now to trust anything that is being offered. 60% of the oval is being requested for something that is supposed to occupy 20%. Having seen the original proposals, which we are told have been shelved now, we just don't know what we can trust any longer.

We also have no idea where the astroturf will be located. In the original 22 proposal, that was right in front of the Pioneer Athletic Club house. And looking at the drawings which Andrew has made, not just of the limited space of an astroturf, but what has to go around it, and the fencing and that sort of thing.

That will encroach horribly on the athletic clubhouse, which we have leased formally and officially. We have a lease until 2031. But we have 435 members.

We don't get all 435 on a Thursday evening at time trial, but we do get a significant number of people. They simply will not even be able to get inside the clubhouse. Our time trial uses the perimeter of the field.

With the astroturf there, we will not be able to hold our time trial. We will not be able to offer the Couch to 10 programme to the community. We won't be able to host our 10 kilometre race at the end of July if the field is taken up with an astroturf.

So as with the cricket club, the impact of the astroturf on Pineland's athletic club will be enormous. And I also have to echo the importance of a totally integrated community in our developing country. Running is the one sport where everybody is equal.

There is no status, there is no colour, there is no discrimination. You cannot replace a community like that. What we have is really something very, very special, and it will be severely damaged.

The other thing is that Pineland's athletic club believes in giving back to the community. We raise funds for the Woodside Sanctuary for special needs, adults with special needs, every year at our 15 kilometre event in January. We have just forwarded to them a donation of 25,000 grand as a result of that event.

Our July-August event, 10K race, which is hosted here on the field. Last year we supported, well for a number of years we have supported the Kensington Home for the Aged. Last year we sent them 20,000 grand.

You take away the club, you take away the support for very needy causes. So our objection is that it has not been a negotiated agreement. We have had this imposed on us, to the extent that with the original proposal in 22 came a pro forma letter that we were supposed to just sign agreeing to everything, and agreeing to changing our constitution to suit this.

That is not negotiation. And we believe that the process has been flawed from beginning to end. We really do request, I want to echo the request, the Pinelands Hockey Club withdraws their application.

We're not unsympathetic to their needs. The frustration is that there are so many areas in Pinelands which could support an astroturf. It could be a positive development.

But each of those areas seems to be earmarked for something. Four years ago they were earmarked for something. And nothing has happened to develop those areas.

Can our ward councillor, can the city of Cape Town not move to allow Pinelands Hockey Club to develop something? The police sports fields opposite Old Mutual. Wasted ground.

But they're not allowed to develop. Why take away something that is so beautiful and so good, and does so much for the community and worthy causes? Why take that away for one sporting code?

Thank you.

[Andrew Spencer]

Thank you. Thank you very much, Ruth. Sorry, I was jumping the gun there earlier.

So the other interested party is residents who are adjacent to the Oval. And we have Bulelwa Ngewana. Bulelwa has over 20 years of experience in urban development.

And is a leading expert in sustainability and city rejuvenation. She holds a master's degree in town and regional planning. And has served as a board member on several organisations.

Championing sustainability, let me turn my page. Championing sustainability and urban regeneration, including being an executive director of the George Soros Open Society Foundation. Bulelwa, over to you.

[Bulelwa Ngewana]

Thank you. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I would speak off the cuff, but this aggravates me so much that I need to read what I need to say because otherwise I'm just going to blow.

I'm coming hot if you have a doubt. That's the way it needs to be. So, I bought my house, the green house.

Everybody knows it's not green anymore, but the green house. We bought our house in 2004. From my bathroom upstairs, I can see the oval every day.

When I wake up, brush my teeth, I'm looking at the oval. When I go to sleep, preparing to go to sleep, I'm looking at the oval. I witness the life, the joy, and the diversity of activity that happens there.

And now I find myself in a place I didn't think I would ever find myself in, forced to bear witness to how selfish and destructive this whole proposal is. It truly is. I'm going to start with a disclaimer.

Really, I'm not against hockey as a sport. Quite frankly, it doesn't affect me much. Until this outrageous proposal dropped, out of the blue, Diana already told you that they had a pre-approval, and we were not even consulted as people directly affected by what they're proposing.

And suddenly again, now this list thing came up, and it was the first time that I heard about even that proposal. I can only say that it is, for me, not just a list proposal, it's a development proposal. It's very clear to me.

That's what this is. How selfish is that, that one set of rights is trembled just because there's one sporting code that needs to be favoured? It doesn't make sense.

Just to be clear, I'm astonished and upset about how myopic and outrageous this proposal is. Somehow, the city, which is supposed to be an unbiased protector of rights, especially majority rights, based on the one meeting we had with them, it's very clear that they seem to be biased, confused, or non-communicative. Trust the government, my foot.

Really, honestly, we can't. It seems to me this oval is not, well, it's not, I'm sure of it, this oval is not just a piece of grass. It is the beating heart of our neighbourhood, a place where children play freely, families gather, joggers and walkers find peace, seniors enjoy an open space, and it is not only Pinelands residents that benefit from it, but also communities around Pinelands, including disadvantaged areas.

I've seen so many kids during the day that play, they come to play the sports here from Langa and from other places. I'm angry because the process itself has been muddled and unfair. Stakeholders have been sidelined, voices have been ignored, and decisions pushed forward without proper consultation.

This is not how public land should be managed. Public spaces belong to the public, and yet this proposal has treated us as object rather than partners. I am anxious because Astroturf is not harmless.

It carries health risks, harmful chemicals, etc. Are we really prepared to give up this really valuable piece of land that belongs to all who use it just for that? And let us be honest, as I say, it's not a lease process, it's a development process.

No investor puts all down nine million, which has been referenced in their proposal, without expecting some kind of return. It's very clear that this, once we let go of the first leg, this is going to become a massive development in future. As an adjacent owner, I will bear the brunt of noise, traffic, and restricted access.

My right to a peaceful enjoyment of my property will be violated, but the greater violation is against the community itself, stripping away an open space that belongs to everyone and handing it over to a select few. I'm angry because this proposal disregards the zoning of the over as a public open space. I'm anxious because once this is gone, it is gone forever, and I'm determined to fight for what is right.

That public space must remain open, inclusive, and safe. We must reject this proposal, protect our health, protect our rights, protect our future, keep the over open for us. For disadvantaged communities, we rely on it, and for generations to come, and let me be very clear as I end my comments this evening.

This is not just my fight, it's our fight together. We must stand up, raise our voices, and defend the over. Because once we lose it, we lose a piece of ourselves.

Let us not be the generation that gives away a community's heart. Let us be the generation that protects it. If this battle ends up in court, so be it.

[Andrew Spencer]
Thanks, Bulelwa.

To round off this section, I'd like to call on Michelle Kew, who's speaking as a Pinelands resident and regular Oval user. Michelle is a Pinelander, born and bred.

She was head girl at the high school ahead of me. And she has taught at both junior and high schools here. She has a strong association with hockey, with immediate family playing both for the Pinelands Hockey Club and at a provincial level.

And through this, she is well aware of hockey installations around Cape Town and the effects on the surrounding.

[Michelle Kew]
Good evening, everybody. I do realize being the last speaker, there will be some repetition, but I thought maybe this is good. It underlines, there's a core message here, so bear with me.

So as Andrew mentioned, I'm speaking on behalf of the broader Pinelands community. As I grew up here, I'm aware of its unique character and its strong sense of community. This is why we, Greg and I, like many others, chose to raise our family here.

Sorry, I am quite emotional, but it is. I speak as someone directly affected by what happens in the space. As I use it daily, and I live just one block from the Oval.

So I'm aware of the noise and lighting effects which can be generated by nighttime activities. We are aware of the proposal by Pinelands Hockey Club to construct an Astro. And I would like to say that I'm not opposed to hockey, nor to the development of an Astro.

But as others have said, not at this specific location. Pinelands is recognized as the first Garden City in South Africa, designed around open, accessible green spaces. The Oval is central to that landscape.

It is a well-used public space, serving a wide cross-section of the community throughout the day. As mentioned, formal clubs such as cricket, athletics and frisbee use the field for structured sport. There are also regular informal sporting activities, including casual soccer and cricket, as well as the traditional weekly senior soccer group.

Nearby play schools, how wonderful is that? Nearby play schools put up their tents and host activities for the youngsters. Coaches arrive to train youngsters in whatever sporting code.

But just as importantly, it supports constant informal use by community members. Elderly residents walk there daily, many with their dogs, and I see many of you here. Because it is flat, open and safe, it is a meeting place where families gather under the trees.

We saw some of the photographs earlier. Children play freely, nannies bring their charges, and people exercise throughout the day, whether kicking a ball or flying a kite. This is essential, not just for the exercise value, but also for the sense of emotional well-being that comes from connecting with other community members on a regular basis.

This everyday, continuous use is what gives the oval its value. It is a shared, flexible and inclusive space. Converting the grass into an astro would fundamentally change its nature from an open public space into a controlled, single-purpose facility.

With fencing, lighting and access restrictions, a space that currently serves many would serve one sporting code. Sorry, my mouse is very dry. There will also be increased traffic, there will be lighting, there will be noise.

And as I said, I live one block away, and I hear it in summer when there's cricket or other activities, but it's fine, it's lovely, it's on a weekend night. And every night's weekly hockey occurrence would be very, very intrusive and invasive for all of us living nearby. We believe that other locations should be looked at.

We are disappointed in the lack of transparency. And again, as we said, we are not opposing hockey or the astro, but not there.

[Andrew Spencer]

Thanks very much, Michelle. We want to offer a short period of comments or questions. I'd like to make sure that it's kept limited just to the people that have spoken and the topics that have been dealt with, if you can.

We do have another section where we will deal with more technical or further in-depth discussions about this. So if something that you've heard from these presenters raises a comment or a query from you, if you could please just put up your hand if you see it, and we'll take a few of those. Henry's got the microphone, so if you can, only the person with the microphone gets to speak.

[Ed Rybicki]

Hi, Ed Rybicki, been a Pineland resident for 38 years, and Marion told me I had to say something. There's one glaring absence here. As an academic, I've just had to fill in a conflict of interest form on something that I've just published.

People are going to invest 9 million rand into an astroturf on something that gets leased for 1,200 rand a year. That thing has to be run as a business in order to give any return whatsoever. That's a single-use business set up on public land.

Think about that. That's what I object to very strongly. Plus, my dogs would want to come and wee on the astroturf.

[Albert]

Hi, everyone. Albert. I have been a Pinelands resident for zero years.

I come from Rondebosch, but in spite of that, this Oval is one of the only spaces where I can go and actually engage with the community, have fun, speak to people outside of work. It is not just as a selfish thing that I object to the proposal, but it brings a lot of people on a daily basis. I go there twice a week, and every single time I go there, you see the amount of happiness and fun and enjoyment that the people have on these fields.

Honestly, it's disgraceful that we, as a community, would not be able to use that field were this lease to take form.

[Kate Spencer]

Hi, everyone. My name is Kate Spencer. That's my dad.

I'm 23 years old. I've lived in Pinelands for 23 years. My bedroom has faced the Oval for 23 years.

Forgive me. I'm an English major studying, and I'd like to ask everyone to take a minute to step outside of their privilege. We are extremely privileged to be able to be here.

The fact that you have had the time after work today to come here, that you are able to speak, and I want that to go to everyone, not just the Pinelanders who are opposing this, but also the people here representing hockey. Because as I've looked out of the window in the past 23 years, I have seen so many children. Children who don't have a safe space to go after school come and kick a soccer ball around or come and slide down the hill.

You have never had to fight that. What you're asking is essentially to make a pay wall for people to use the field. What you're saying is you can't use this field unless you can pay the membership.

And I think that that is terrible in this country where people have had extreme privilege to think that you can control this land with money and with fences. And I just ask you, honestly, genuinely, to just step outside of yourself for a moment and to look at your privilege.

[Dennis Lloyd]

Hello. Good evening. I'm Dennis Lloyd.

I'm the owner of a house that butts the field. So it affects us quite majorly, particularly these original plans. And I think as we're addressing the other butting owners, I think one must take cognizance of the initial plans that the hockey club lodged with the city proposing for astroturf.

I think once the city agreed to one AstroTurf, the others are going to follow. And it's horrific to look at the proposals that were submitted before. I think right behind our house, one proposal was to slap up a massive recreation centre or something.

It just introduces a huge number of other nuisances that we contend with. And the owners, I think now, it's premature now, but I'm a retired attorney, so I don't profess to know the law now. But as I understand the law, an owner of land can't introduce a new nuisance.

And the city, by allowing AstroTurf to be built, will introduce a new nuisance. So I think there may be grounds to interdict the city and the hockey club if permission is granted. But not only that, once the AstroTurf has been built, it will certainly add additional noise, the number of people, attracting more vagrants.

And I think hockey clubs are renowned at raising income from their bar. And that's fine, but not near us. That will really exacerbate the nuisance aspect.

Although I raise all these legal issues, my main concern is that if this is approved, it's terribly unfair for the rest of the Pinelands community, and particularly the cricket club and other sports entities. Because that area is exclusively used for a relatively small club. The turf will be fenced in.

I just wanted to point out the legal issues.

[Andrew Spencer]

Thank you very much. I think we're going to move on with the next section. We've got some people who are slightly looking at more specialised areas of the situation.

On the lease history, we've already met him, Graedon, is going to speak to that.

[Graedon Boswell]

Alright, I'm back. So just to give some perspective on what has actually happened leading up to this. I don't know, this could make a few people uncomfortable, but we basically put together a bit of a timeline on this whole lease process.

If you go through our emails, if you type in the word lease, it comes up about 90 times before this proposal even appeared. I was elected as chairman in 2017, and basically from then, we were already trying to get a lease going. So essentially what had happened was the lease had expired, and the city just kept on saying to us, you just carry on based on the previous agreement.

But what happened, so in 2015, we actually had a business approach us, which was with the previous chairman. And I don't know if anybody here is familiar with Claremont Cricket Club. They've got that fantastic restaurant.

Those guys wanted to open that here. But because the city hadn't sorted out our lease, they said, cheers, and went there. So that was a multi-million round investment that never happened because the city didn't have their stuff together.

Then in 2017, they said that we really want to start getting leases sorted, and we had a meeting in the town hall with Odwe Ndesi, who was basically put in charge. And he said, carry on, we're going to sort your leases out. Nothing happened for two years.

So 2019, we asked for more clarity on our lease because we had more people wanting to invest into Pinelands and into the cricket club. Nothing came of that. And then again in 2019, we had another meeting.

Mark Paltrow, who was head of the hockey, was actually trying to help us sort this lease out. So I'm not too sure what happened in between there. So we got told about various lease options, and once again, nothing happened.

Eventually, we got a lease application in. And in 2020, the city said, because we applied for IRF 321, that IRF 321 includes basically the clubhouse and the fields. That is what we were told.

So we thought, great, that sorts us out. Lo and behold, eventually, we got the lease. Only in sort of around 2022, we started getting more clarity.

But for two years, it was back and forth, back and forth, back and forth. And some people said, you can't lease the lands because it is owned basically by the people. So the lease, or sorry, Pinelands, this whole sort of precinct over here was gifted essentially to the people from Garden Cities.

So nobody can actually develop on this land based on what they did. And the city said, we can grant you a lease for the clubhouse and that area. And we asked if we could extend that footprint to look after the grounds.

And I do have the email and would happily send it around. They said, your application includes both the fields and the clubhouse. That never happened.

So we had multiple meetings from 2020 to 2022, but we still had no clarity. And then towards the end of 2022, Pinelands Hockey Club approached Pinelands Sports Club. And we were against it from the beginning because that presentation that many people are speaking about is the one we received.

And we absolutely said no. And what's quite sort of suspicious is we had several meetings in observatory with the city. And they deny that these meetings happen.

And they say that there's no minutes for these meetings. And every sporting code around this field was against it. And they still went through with it.

And we were told essentially that we need to offer up solutions. We offered up all the solutions. They basically scrapped all of them.

We felt it was just like a tick box exercise for them. And so the fields and things were not included. And then a lease is signed for IRF 321.

As I specified in 2020, we were told IRF 321 includes the fields. That is not the case. So we still had an application for fields, which has been ignored.

And hockey now has an application for field. Questionable. In 2026, we asked that hockey withdraw their lease.

So a lot of this must be questioned. And also I think something that people aren't alluding to is if this development does go through, your property values will drop. Like that's going to happen.

And no one's actually raised that issue. But what we're concerned about, this is just a few things. I was told to put in fewer things so the writing is bigger so we can all read it.

But 100 years of community use is about to be overridden if this goes through. Over 50 emails regarding the lease application and multiple objections in meetings against this process. Yet hockey's application has advanced behind our backs.

In terms of the PSC, there was no consensus, no permission, no resolution from the PSC for this to actually go forward. So we were not even aware that hockey had applied for the lease. And the start of this year, boom, here we go, lease application for the hockey.

Real question, qui bono, who benefits? As one of our residents said, nine million rand onto a piece of government land. Who wants to put nine million rand into something they'll never own?

Or get a return of? Questionable. Alternatives were discussed without us.

We've got constant emails from Jack arranging things for us, which we have not given him permission to do. But we've been told, oh no, you'll get this and you'll get that. A lot of that has not been confirmed, as you'll see shortly.

A process that does not look neutral. We have found, and I'm sure those of you who are there on the grass, that Councillor's conduct raises serious concerns about impartiality. He's not here tonight.

And I specifically remember meeting him when I was chairman of the cricket club, when initially the Pinelands Hockey Club came to speak to us and we said, get lost. He came on his own terms and said he wants to leave something behind. I'll let you try and figure that one out.

So we feel like it hasn't been transparent either. Alleged hockey meetings regarding the Astro have been denied by several parties. And I'll show you what I mean by that.

And we personally, in our emails, haven't had any further communication about this proposal since 2024. Bulelwa alluded to it. It's a dangerous precedent, especially in the property world.

As soon as you change something, you have a precedent and you can just basically continue rolling with that. So sure, if an Astro is built, maybe it gets really busy. Maybe the club grows massively.

Maybe they need to build another clubhouse. Maybe they need to build a business. Maybe they need to do extra things.

So the precedent is dangerous. And we just really question the process of how this has all happened. And it doesn't really make logical sense to essentially apply for a lease.

So they get the lease for 10 years, you know, and then they have to do all their research. But you don't understand why the research hasn't been done first. And then an application that seems feasible comes through.

So, like I said, such a dangerous precedent. And we don't feel this is a lease application. It's a land grab.

We want 5,000 square metres, but it's for 25,000 squares. And that'll just be the first bit. Because obviously if the cricket club goes under, if athletics goes under, all of that goes under, qui bono.

So we respect hockey as a sport and its members. Our concern is its process, the lease application, and the lack of a proper mandate. And here are some of the places we were told that they approached Oude Moulén.

And Oude Moulén said they're not aware of any meeting to develop an Astro. We were told that they were approached. They said they would welcome 9 million rand.

Okay? But that is not the case.

Another school was Thornton, which we were told were approached. They said they too were not approached. We are still awaiting from Pinelands High School.

So we've got that in writing, and they'll gladly put that on letterheads for us. So that is a lie, that we were told that those people were approached. This was written by Jack.

And he's got this in several of his, what is it, the Pinelands Hockey Club newsletters or whatever they're called. But you can see that it says, the letter appointed the attorney to speak. So we appointed an attorney to try to figure out our lease property and hockey through their toys out the cot.

And as you can see, it says to incorporate the two fields in the lease. So they knew that that was happening. They knew that we had a lease application in, yet somehow we were still jumped.

So we're not sure how that happens. And as you can see there, it says, Jack's words, no meeting, no verbal discussion, no resolution was done just for us to get an attorney. So he knows the process, and he ignored it.

This was the original plan that we were given. So you've got AstroTurf, you've got 140-something parking bays to be built. Paddle courts have kind of gone out of fashion, so we don't know what's going to go on there, but there you go, new sports indoor centre as well.

So that was the initial application. And I'll tell you what's also quite interesting is, when we were trying to resolve our lease and have all the plans drawn, that actual plan that you see at the back over there was drawn up by the same guy we applied to get our lease from. So we spoke to that guy, that was ignored, and now hockey is sort of going forward.

So it's all very suspicious. And as I think Ruth alluded to, we don't trust anything that has been done. So that's what's being said at the moment.

Thank you.

[Andrew Spencer]

Thank you. Thank you, Graedon. Bulelwa, are you available then to continue and speak to the relevant regulations?

[Bulelwa Ngewana]

Okay, the oval is zoned as public open space, which is OS2, under the City Development Management Scheme, meaning its primary purpose is to remain accessible for diverse community use. Leasing municipal land follows a strict process under the city's immovable property policy. And the hockey proposal appears closer to a development application than a simple lease, as I've said before, since it involves rezoning, infrastructure changes, and long-term exclusivity.

Importantly, the oval will be classified as viable land capable of independent development. So it cannot be leased informally, but through competitive tender and public participation. In terms of the zoning, the land is intended for public recreation, community access, and non-exclusive use.

Any proposal to convert it into a specialized facility like hockey, AstroTurf, will require rezoning or departure applications under the municipal bylaw. In terms of procedural steps for leasing municipal land, the city distinguishes between viable land and non-viable land. Viable land, like the oval, must be leased via public competition, tender, or auction.

Requires valuation, investigation, and disposal plan. I'm surprised that there hasn't been any studies done to date in terms of what is proposed, and yet there's approval. For me, that's already completely out of sync.

Council approval is needed before lease agreements are finalized. Since it's not, if it was a non-viable land, it would be land that is small, irregular parcels that cannot function independently. That doesn't apply to the oval.

Usually leased or sold directly to adjoining owners for consolidation. Oval does not qualify. It is a functional standalone property.

In terms of lease versus development, the lease will grant temporal rights of use, but does not alter zoning or infrastructure. Whereas in this application, they already have a plan to change this use subject to the availability of the lease, which means the city is already conflicted with its own rules. As I said, it requires a planning approval under the municipal planning bylaw.

It locks the land into a single use, reducing flexibility for future amendments. I'm not going to go to the health concerns. That's where I'm going to stop in terms of the...

[Andrew Spencer]

Thank you very much. I'm going to ask Diane to come back again and just give us some information on the engagement that we have attempted with the city council.

[Diane Smart]

So my impression of this public participation process that has been embarked on by the city from the outset has been that they are going through the motions of public participation and treating it as a tick box exercise. In order for the public to meaningfully engage on the issue, they need information. And information has been very, very hard to come by.

As already mentioned, the notice calling for comments itself provides the public with close to no information. I've been emailing relevant city role players, including Councillor Davids, with requests for information since the 3rd of March, but it's been like pulling teeth trying to get anything out of them. At the information session on the Oval on the 18th of March, the response of Councillor Davids to many of the questions put by residents who attended was that he didn't wish to answer the questions at the meeting, questions should be emailed to the city for answer.

I did email on the 27th of March quite a long list of relevant questions. To date, I have not received a response. I've followed up on a few occasions, and the response has simply not been forthcoming.

Some of the relevant questions that I asked the city in that email and that I still want answers for, and I believe that we're all entitled to answers to, is what are the current maintenance costs of the lower Oval field? They put in their notice that the benefit to the city, apart from the 1,386 rands per year that they will receive in rental income, is that they will be relieved of the costs of maintaining the Oval, and yet they are refusing to tell us what those costs actually are. What environmental impact assessments will be conducted?

Who will pay the costs of that environmental impact assessment? Who will appoint the consultants who will do that environmental impact assessment? What due diligence has the city done to ascertain the likelihood of the hockey club being able to raise the necessary funds to build an AstroTurf, which they put at nine million?

Let's face it, if the hockey club cannot build an AstroTurf, they cannot use the field for the purpose for which it's being leased, because they don't play hockey on grass anymore. So are they going to put a suspensive condition in the lease to say that if the funds are not raised within six months, the lease falls away? Have they actually ascertained whether the hockey club has got any hope of raising the funds or not?

We don't know. What we do know is that initially, the hockey club said it was going to be funded by Cannons Creek School, and at the meeting on the 18th of March, one of the Cannons Creek Board of Directors informed the meeting that the school had not agreed to fund the development. A further question that I've put to the city that I think's very relevant is, who is going to benefit from this?

It's been touted both by the hockey club and by the city as an investment in community sport. So who apart from the hockey club is going to get to use this AstroTurf? Are they going to put terms and conditions in the lease to say that for a certain number of hours per week or per month, the facility needs to be made available to other clubs or to schools for use?

We don't know, because they refuse to answer these questions. There was a strong sentiment expressed by people who attended the meeting on the 18th of March that it's ridiculous to request us to comment on a lease proposal if we don't see a draft lease. We don't know what the terms and conditions of the lease will be.

And yet the city's response is that the lease will only be drafted once a decision has been made. From an administrative law point of view, both our case law and the promotion of Administrative Justice Act and the regulations promulgated in terms of that act require that the public must be put in possession of such information as will render their rights to make representations real and not illusory. I submit that the city has failed dismally in this regard, and that in and of itself, on its own, can stand up as a valid ground to review and have any administrative decision that is made set aside.

[Andrew Spencer]

Thank you. You want to speak to it? Would you like to say?

Okay. We were hoping to get the city ombud to be present. That's Zetu Makamandela-Mguqulwa.

She was unfortunately not available, but she has been contacted. Just to fill you in, the role of the ombud is to serve as a catalyst between the city administration and its customers and as a neutral third party that represents the interests and the rights of the city's customers by holding civil servants accountable to the people, quote unquote, from Zetu. We have been in contact with Zetu and raised issues in regard to the process that's been going on.

She's aware of these issues, and she will be meeting on Friday with Yonela Gola and with Siraaj Slamang, who are both city officials that are involved with this process, neither of whom I must personally indicate are very easy to contact at all and receive any feedback from. So we're going to move on from, did you want to say anything else, Marion, with it? Sorry?

Right, we will be consulting with Zetu on Monday directly. Okay. So we'll get feedback on that, on our information channels.

I'd like to call on Shaun Adendorff, who will have a chat on the heritage aspects of the Oval. Shaun is an architect and heritage practitioner with qualifications in industrial and organisational psychology. He's the chair of the Pinelands Heritage Advisory Committee, which is a subcommittee of the Pinelands Residents and Ratepayers Association.

Thank you, Shaun.

[Shaun Adendorff]

Hi, everyone. Yes, so I stay in Uitvlugt at the bottom there, in the little thatch house with the statue in front, which a lot of people know about. And I sit not only as a practising architect in the area, but also I sit on the ratepayers subcommittee, which I'm the chair of, which we look after all the old buildings and the heritage protection overlay zone of Pinelands and make sure that development is in terms of the guidelines, which I was one of the authors, which is Table of the City.

So for those of you who don't know how heritage works, there's the National Heritage Resources Act, Act 25 in 1999, and they set a series of guidelines on how to manage heritage resources. And they have put these guidelines down in terms of a series of gradings, grade one, two, and three. Grade one and two are national, and grade three is provincial.

The city will administer grade three, and so will Heritage Western Cape. So they're two arms that will look at any proposal that happens within a heritage area. Pinelands up till New Way, and this whole area is under what they call a heritage protection overlay zone.

And the reason it's a protection overlay zone is because of the garden city. I fought very hard to define why it's protected, and it is that the garden is more paramount than the dwelling. So all of you who stay in this area, we try and make sure that the garden and the greenery is more important than the house itself.

And even though there are houses that are significant, we value the open space and the environment. So when we're assessing plans, and unfortunately we haven't seen any plans that have come through for this proposal, so I can't comment on the proposal, but I can give you a broad overview of how we would assess it. So we would look at the open space.

When I was asked by Marian to have a look at this, the site is graded 3B, okay, in terms of heritage significance on its own. So in terms of grade three, which is what the city would look at, there's grade A, B, and C. A is of high significance and generally has buildings on it.

So a lot of the old thatch houses, et cetera, those are grade 3A or 3B. In terms of the oval, it's grade 3B, not because of what it has on the site, but because of what they would call social significance. And social significance is one of the criteria that the Heritage Resources Act defines, and they define it as the spatial character, the cultural landscape, the public memory, and the social value.

So those are the four criteria that the officials will assess this in terms of its heritage significance and its social significance. So when you look at it, they're looking at the openness, the accessibility, the permeability, and the everyday public use of the space. So all of you have spoken about how it gets used, all the functions that happen there, and those are all part of the considerations of should something happen on that site, would it significantly change the character of the space?

Okay, so one of the things that I want to say to you is that if you're going to object and you're going to put your objections through and you're going to use heritage and social significance as one of the objections, heritage doesn't mean that it can't change, okay? Change can happen. The question is, does the intervention materially reduce the heritage significance of the space?

So you've gotta ask, is the Astra going to change the heritage significance, and does it diminish the openness, the accessibility, and the communal function? So those are the criteria that the city will look at in terms of the Heritage Environmental Management Department as well as Heritage Western Cape when it goes there. And so there are two avenues that if a plan gets submitted, which it will have to get submitted, theoretically the city should follow its due process, and so even if they grant the lease, there would still have to be a planning process that would still have to happen.

There'd be open consultation under those plans, and you would be able to object both at Heritage Western Cape level and at city level as well on those two departments. I just want to just go through here, okay? If you're going to look at the integration and the critical design considerations of it, they're going to be looking at maintaining public movement around the oval, retaining running and walking loops, continued dog walking, preserving visual openness, minimising visual intrusion, and preventing the sense of privatisation.

So those will also be some of the criteria that they'll be looking at. Fencing and openness will be one of the biggest things that not only will the officials look at, but also from our planning perspective in our internal PRA committee, we'll be looking at what the impact is, what fencing they'll be putting up, if they are putting up fencing. So we'll be looking at all that kind of infrastructure as well from a planning point of view.

But even if they do do that, there'd have to be characteristics of that it doesn't impact that visual connection, so they'd have to be permeable, they'd have to be able for people to move through the spaces, et cetera. I was just saying suggestion positions for objections. It's not as simple as just going, I don't want it.

You've gotta understand that when you're fighting the city, it's an argued thing around all the guidelines and what is permissible around what can happen there. So if you're going to argue due process, you've also gotta argue that there's gotta be a set of processes that happen, not only from the lease, but what happens after that if the lease is granted. So when you start looking at your

objection, you've gotta also say that if the process continues, we've also gotta follow due process continuing, which will also give you another bite if you lose this round.

And so that bite is to say, well, how can we determine what is actually going to get built and where it's going to be positioned on the space, how's it going to look, what are we going to fence, et cetera, et cetera. So you're going to be arguing maintaining public movement, sorry, yeah, public accessibility, landscape permeability, visual openness, circulation routes, informal recreation, and the integration into the broader heritage landscape. So those would be some of the things that I'd be looking at in terms of your arguments on what you'd look at.

But ultimately, what you're going to be considering is social significance is a serious argument that the officials have to take on board. And you need to argue it in such a way that, and a lot of you have argued it very well, but it needs to be very structured in terms of the impact of how closure of a space is going to affect that significance, how visual impact is going to be restricted, the change of nature of space. So by putting it in a certain space where it doesn't allow access, doesn't allow people to be able to move, those are really important arguments to put down.

In terms of its significance, as I said, you're arguing a grade 3B in terms of its social significance and its standing. All right.

[Andrew Spencer]

Thanks very much, Shaun. Having a look at the environmental impact, we've got Professor Harro von Blotnitzt, is a professor of chemical engineering in the Faculty of Engineering and the World Environment at UCT. He leads research and teaching in energy and industrial systems research.

His academic interests span the multiple challenges of sustainable development in developing countries with publications in the fields of environmental systems, analysis, renewable energy, waste management, and sustainable consumption. Thank you, Hara.

[Harro von Blotnitzt]

Thank you very much. Now, first, you want to acknowledge all the speakers who've been here this evening, and it's clearly an issue that's moving you here in Pinelands very deeply. I come from Woodstock, I don't know this space, and this popped into my inbox only yesterday on a look for somebody could say something about astroturfs.

I can't say much about astroturfs either, but I think why I'm here is that you might end up having a big patch of plastic in the middle of a garden city, rubber and plastic, and that surely needs to be studied properly. It's not been said tonight, this is not my expertise, but these astroturfs are known as urban heat islands. They do heat up very significantly.

The UCT one, we've had colleagues who've done aerial temperature sensing of our campus on a warm day, and our astroturf for the soccer down there on middle campus really stands out as the hottest patch that we have. So in a warming world, you want to be thinking hard whether you want a patch that really heats up very strongly. I'm mainly here about the plastic.

My very first job straight out of university was on a factory in Sasolburg making 100,000 tonnes of it a year. I moved on from that to do studies in plastics recycling in Germany for my doctoral thesis, and I've been an academic at UCT for a long time. In my inaugural professorial lecture in 2014, I did raise the plastics issue, the question of a one-way flow from industry through society into the environment, and that agenda has really grown very strongly over the last decade.

In my lecture, I don't think I used the word microplastics. That's really moved up very strongly, and colleagues in health sciences would be by now quite worried. This stuff's been found all over in our bodies, in our hearts, in our brains.

And so what you're looking at here is a large patch of plastic with abrasive use on it, and every time the wind or the water go over it, a large swarm of microparticles will come off it. And so that's just something to think about. This will just manifest as dust in your homes, but it's a particular type of dust of which the science is not yet sure what it ultimately does to it.

There are many, many other sources of plastic, but I think all in all, we have to ask that question increasingly. How are you using the stuff? Why are you using it?

What happens to it? And so from all that's been said tonight, it really sounds that a proper study would need to be done very much from questions of process, of community, of heritage, of regulations, of zoning, but also of environmental impact. And so I would encourage you to insist on your right to have those proper consultations and studies done.

Thank you.

[Andrew Spencer]

Thank you, Prof Harro. Just to round off this section, I'm going to ask Stefan Britz, who's a stats lecturer at UCT, and has been a member of the Pinelands Cricket Club since 2014, including 10 years on the committee, and currently is the vice chair, just to have a look at the potential future developments. Thanks.

[Stefan Britz]

Thank you, Andrew. And seeing as how I am last on the agenda, Andrew, I think we should take this opportunity to thank you and Wendy and Diane and Marian, everyone that's been involved in the Friends of the Oval Group. We appreciate your efforts.

Thank you. Thank you. This one might be slightly redundant, considering everything that has been covered so far, but let's just leave you with a visual image of what is being proposed at the moment.

So, this is the entire lease area, or the area that's not showing up there. The area that is being applied for is obviously embarked in red. There we go.

So, it has been alluded to earlier, and Diane, I think, articulated it particularly well, that this flank running up the top there, so this is obviously not with North at the top, this is looking at the top over here at the bottom, or to the left, rather. Again, the explanation that was given as to why they need that flank at the top was for their makers to not have to cross public land in order to access their own astro at the bottom. To be quite frank, as you can sense, that's an insult to our intelligence, quite honestly.

It is worth noting, though, that that does creep just on the top left corner right to a parking lot. I don't think it takes a lot of imagination to figure out what the potential there could be, with the road going all the way around there. This is just another look at the same representation.

Let's rather move on to the proposed locations. So, this is as received from the latest Hockey proposal. Here it is now orientated.

I'm not a geomatics lecturer, so I can only tell you that that is probably North, with a pretty high probability going up there. Again, the position still needs to be determined following a geospatial survey. So, this is a couple of potential placements on the lower field.

So, as you can see, regardless of where it is positioned, it will be very close to the abutting properties. And, as someone that spends many, many hours, I mainly play on the bottom field. I'm not good enough to play on the top field that much.

I do sometimes feel a little bit bad standing there at the edge of the boundary, encouraging my bowlers with all of my might, with a house 20 meters away from me. So, if any of you reside in those properties, mea culpa, I'm sorry. But, I can only imagine if I were to stand there with a shrill whistle being blown every couple of seconds.

I honestly would not have the heart to do that to the adjacent residents. This, thank you Andrew for putting this together, is a rendition, what's the word? A rendering, a possible artist's rendering of what it could look like if it were positioned in one of those four positions that we saw previously.

So, what we see here in the previous one is just the field itself. But, of course, you cannot just play hockey on a piece of astro without any fencing around it. So, you need some barriers to stop the ball, basically.

And, you have some boundary around that of at least three to five meters. You have some higher fencing behind the goal posts and fencing all around the astro. And, what hasn't been included there is, of course, space for the spectators.

Any possible bleaches, any warm-ups, none of that. So, this is the absolute minimum that you are looking at. And, Andrew, I think you said you got it from the current designs of Pinelands High School Astro, Constantiaberg Astro.

All have those that dug out there at the top left. But, again, I mean, going back to this, and I don't want to harp on that for too long, because the initial proposal was shown from the 2022-2023 proposal with the initial idea of the football field. The paddle courts and a potential sports club, or a clubhouse, rather, should I say, also being possibly squeezed in to wherever you can imagine around there.

So, the rest is just other visual representations of the same. It's more of an aerial view. So, I think the takeaway here really is that, regardless of where it is being placed, it will severely affect all surrounds, regardless of where it is placed.

It will affect Pinelands Athletics Club, as has been articulated. It will obviously affect cricket and frisbee. It will affect the space currently being enjoyed by the public.

And, again, I think we need to ask ourselves, is that the legacy that we want to leave behind in this garden city? So, we'll leave that up as the final lasting image. Andrew, I think over to you.

[Andrew Spencer]

Just to talk to some of those images, they are taken from actual astrofields, and I see that if anybody is wanting to use those, they need our permission, because the models are generated by us, and they cannot be used anywhere else. Please, if you wish to use those pictures, you need to ask our permission. The fields, it's a copy, the image that's down on the ground is a copy of the Pinelands High image.

The floodlights are the typical floodlights that would be used. The boundary fences are the typical boundary fences that would be used. For example, in the Constantia Hockey Club in Bergvliet, there's a five metre fence all the way down the side road to prevent the ball striking passing traffic.

And they would have to have something like that as well, near parking areas or residence areas. The player dugout, it's not a dugout really, it's a shelter, is typical. And there are no stands that have been drawn there, so the addition of spectator stands would also be an issue.

And the gap between the ball stop fence, which is in the junction between the red surface and the cement surface, is then the first fence, and there will be another fence, of course, for access. Something similar to the palisade fences that you probably see around the clubhouses to provide security, because it is unlikely that this fence, this area, will be just open for anyone to walk onto at any time. There will be a fence, and obviously between that palisade fence and the edge of the field is where the spectators will stand.

So you can expect a minimum of three metres around there, but that fence could be anywhere. So that's just further comments on that. Again, we just want to offer an opportunity to direct any comments to the speakers or to the information that has been generated in this past section.

So, Henry, if you can hand out the mic, thanks very much.

[Steve Schoemann]

Interestingly, in that last drawing, if you can bring it back up, there's nothing there about light pollution. So what's that lighting going to do, and how's it going to affect the residents around there? Has that been taken into consideration by the hockey club?

And also, on the right-hand side, there's a road that goes up. Are they going to sublease that out to the people who've got garages on that road for access, or is that going to be blocked off as well? Thank you.

[Andrew Spencer]

Just speaking to the lighting, we had a wonderful comment on March the 18th by someone that said, oh, but the lights are a thousand lumens, as if this was some sort of figure that we all understood or made sense, and it's absolute rubbish. Floodlights do spill. LED floodlights, so spill.

There is no lighting that is square cut of shadows from a 15-metre-high mast.

[Marian Jacobs]

Good evening. My name's Marian. My role on the Oval is to walk next to a dog walker and to hand out treats to the dogs.

So I had a question for Sean. You indicated that you are—and I think I know that— you are representing the PRRA subcommittee on heritage. So having heard what you heard tonight, how does that translate into action by the PRRA?

We've had difficulties in engaging with the PRRA, inasmuch as we've had difficulties with engaging with the city. And it leaves us feeling extremely frustrated. So I'm so glad that you came tonight and you told us how to do things and how we should object and complain, and you're going to be helping us to do that.

Thank you.

[Andrew Spencer]

Are there any other comments?

[Terry Thornton]

Hi. I'm Terry Thornton. I'm a member of Western Province Cricket Club.

So I have a lot of experience with hockey, et cetera. You mustn't underestimate the crowds that come to watch hockey on a weekend. Because Premier Hockey draws a big crowd, and you have First Division ladies and men.

It's a very big crowd puller, which could affect the tranquillity of the place. And I'd also like to say the cost of ASTRO is very high. The ones at Western Province Cricket Club are half-owned by Rambush Boys High School.

And that shows the amount of money these people must— there must be a backer somewhere along the line. And the nine million could be to build the one, but they have to be replaced every five or six years as well. So it's a big investment.

So I think there is a hidden agenda behind this all.

[Andrew Spencer]

Thank you very much for that.

[Peter Meisner]

Hi. I'm Peter Meisner. My house and pool feature prominently in every one of these pictures here.

I'm pleased to say the pool was cleaned the day that picture was taken. But that being said, and jokes aside, friends and community members, I am quite stymied by the size of this development when we were told, well, ASTRO Turf will only take up 20% or something of the field. That being said, and with all due respect to our cricketing community, our runners, and everybody who uses it already, we already have a massive problem in managing the noise, the light, the crowds, particularly now with the mutual soccer guys coming through as well.

So all I'm saying is we don't actually even manage that very well, with all due respect to everybody involved. And I have a collection of soccer balls, cricket balls, if you want. If you come and ask for them back, you might get them back.

But the point being that if we're struggling to manage it with our current structures, our current management committees, et cetera, et cetera, how much more so will this be? And I know that the jacks of the world would immediately retaliate and say, well, now if we do it professionally, we can run that properly. I don't accept that.

So just so those who do know what's happening in the community, I'm very worried about how we object to this. Sean, thank you for your comments, but many of us already have objected, so now I'm not too sure if we must square our objections and do it again, or can we get together and do a single well-structured type of document. Thank you, Andrew.

[Vera Niess]

Hi, good evening, everyone. My name is Vera Niess. Until last year, I didn't really know what happened on the Oval on a daily basis, but then I joined the Couch to 10 with Pilots Athletics Club, and I was amazed at the activity on the field, particularly between 5 and 7 p.m. in a weekday. And when I heard at the meeting that was out there that one of the reasons why they'd like to develop this is because the field is underutilised, I could hardly believe my ears. And it makes me wonder whether they've actually been there, or how can you propose that and use the argument of underutilisation? So perhaps the people who are here from Pinelands Hockey Club this evening can tell us, you know, have they sat on that field of an afternoon, particularly in the week, over the weekends?

Oh, well, there are lots of different organised activities happening. So I'm just wondering if it's out of ignorance that they thought it was underutilised.

[Sean Adendorff]

I just wanted to ask the committee, I heard that you'd engaged with Riad, but have you, because we're a subcommittee, and the stuff that I look at here, yes, definitely needs engagement, and I'm surprised that our committee hasn't seen this. The only reason I saw some of this was because I've known Matthew since he was this big, and I saw his Facebook stuff. But have you engaged with Desray, who's the chair?

I copied her in in the writing. So, yeah, that should be engaged. But it's public open space, and the Pinelands ratepayers are what they call a registered interested and affected party.

And so they are actually mandated to comment on this. So I can talk to Desray around that and see, but she would need to actually write in terms of being an interested and affected party.

[Andrew Spencer]

In regard to that, I spoke to Desray within hours of receiving, as an adjacent property owner, the email which first raised this to the attention of non-sporting bodies, and I see that some of the sporting bodies are even shocked at how late they were informed about the proposal. So Desray has been in the loop since the very first notification, and Pinelands Ratepayers and Residents Association published the Pinelands Hockey proposal as part of their email that they sent out regularly. They also published a brochure regarding the 18th of March meeting, but they have made no engagement and no publication of anything relating to objection-related activities.

So they have not pretty much acknowledged that in any way, which has been a surprise, to say the least.

[Diane Smart]

I was quite shocked about the fact that the PRRA did not notify its members in any way about this proposal. The first notification that I'm aware of came on the 17th of March, bearing in mind they've known about it since the 2nd of March, and at that point in time, comments closed on the 2nd of April. That communication was in the form of publishing the hockey club's 10-page statement and informing people about the hockey club's information session on the Oval.

They were present there. They heard the overwhelmingly negative feedback from the community there. You will not see anything on the PRRA website about the Oval.

There's plenty about the liquor licence. They've been very involved with the liquor licence. They've held a survey on the liquor licence.

But they have been very stum about this. If you look at the sort of languaging, like the email that advised about the extension of the date or the new date says, the hockey club wishes to invest in Astro for Pinelands. Here's a click on this link kind of thing.

So they are not non-partisan in this process. They haven't been. Members of theirs take very partisan positions on WhatsApp groups and so on, which I don't necessarily think is appropriate for somebody who's an office bearer of an organisation that's meant to represent the community as a whole.

And they have informed, or Desiree has informed me, that they do intend to comment. They intend to comment in a way that's neither for nor against. It's difficult to understand how that can be done in a scenario like this.

And I've asked whether they are going to make their comments available to their membership, and there's been no response on that. So that's kind of been our experience of the PRA in this process.

[Andrew Spencer]
Thanks very much.

[Shaun Adendorff]
There's a planning committee which Jessica White is the head of, and I fall under that subcommittee. And in that committee there is both myself and John Wilson Harris, who's an ex-partner of Carby Fagan. So we're both heritage architects.

Plus we've got a town planner from Tommy Brummer's office. So we haven't seen this. So I'll ask her that if we should have been asked to comment from a professional planning point of view so we can put something together from our committee on that.

[Andrew Spencer]
Thank you very much, Shaun. I just did mouth. As you said, we haven't seen this.

It is quite crazy. I think all of you will have seen it on Pinelands 531 chats, on PRRA discussion, WhatsApp forum, on many communications with notices around the field, notices at the library, notices at the spa, and e-mails and direct phone calls with Desiree. And if it has not been seen by you, dot, dot, dot.

Thank you very much. I think we're going to close off the comments and questions yet. Zweli has got one. I know Zwele has got one raised.

[Henry du Plessis]
I think you'll be the last speaker. Thank you. We don't want to lose the moment.

[Zwele Ngewana]
Yes, thank you, thank you. I just wanted to add to what the gentleman said about the nuisance that is happening there. One of the other things that are happening there is after, for instance, it also affects cricket, the littering.

That is beside the noise, but the littering, they leave there and so on. And as one of the residents that are facing that they're over, it's terrible. But more than that, there's been quite a lot of activity happening.

So now one of I'm interested in is the parking, the transport, because now some of these days I'm even unable to get into my garage. People just park right in front of your garage. And when you want to go in there, they are so angry. You realize, man, they're going to beat me. Okay, thank you.

[Andrew Spencer]

As someone that's involved with another sports club which has a lease of the land, once we have lease of the land, we can set up any tarred surfaces or anything like that without consulting anyone. And so if there are requirements for extensions of parking areas, touring of additional parking areas as the leaseholder, you have likely got fairly free reign to change that without consulting the community. So maybe we'll end up with a few hundred more parking areas outside there.

In closing, we're going to just round it off with, Diane is just going to put together the closing information. But just as far as any further questions or discussion goes, please make use of the various social media comment groups that you have by filling in the form that was on the clipboards here tonight. You've consented just that we can now and again send you something via email and give you information.

If you haven't done that, please have a look out for the forms. So I'll hand over to Diane.

[Dian Smart]

Before handing over to me, the closure is going to be very brief and it's just kind of way forward, where to from here. And I'm going to have a brief few things to say. But Kurt Collison is still with us.

Thanks, Kurt. Kurt's just going to speak briefly about the possibility of formalizing some sort of Friends of the Oval structure to try and protect the Oval in the future and so forth. So he's going to have a quick few words first.

Kurt's a Pinelands resident and regular user of the Oval.

[Kurt Collison]

Thanks, Diane, and thanks very much. I just want to echo Stefan's thanks to everybody who's objected so far and also to the sterling work which is done so far by the Friends of the Oval. And I guess that leads me on to pose a question to you.

Where do we go to from here in terms of setting up some form of formal body or company, non-profit company, which will be registered as a possible NPO, a non-profit organization. Just as a formalized legal body, apart from the members, one of the important things of setting up or advantages of setting up an NPO and a company not-for-profit is it's a separate juristic entity. So in other words, it doesn't attract legal liability for its directors or members.

And it may very well be that we're moving to a point, I think, quite quickly where that might be necessary. It just also gives some form of credibility and legitimacy to what is happening and especially towards the fight to oppose the development. And I know that individuals have been doing sterling great jobs in terms of opposing and spreading the word.

But it might just be an option to register a company not-for-profit and then a further registration as an NPO to take this matter forward. Of particular importance is later down the line, and I'm certainly hoping that it won't get to this, is if the city has made a decision, the Piedmont residents are then faced with the fact of taking all of the exhausting, all of your internal remedies, is do you approach the high court and apply for what is known as a judicial review application where you ask the high

court to review the decision of the city effectively. And that might really be, having a formalized body, a separate juristic entity might be a good vehicle to oppose or to launch such an application.

So this is just food for thought and for your consideration. I think going forward at the next meetings we'll probably go into more detail about it. But certainly I think it's something worth considering.

And also in terms of just things like setting up a bank account, for example. You'd be a registered company, you can set up a bank account, there'll be governance frameworks in place, there'll be a constitution which will set out clearly the objectives of the principle, of whatever name you wish to call it. And so it does give some form of credibility and legitimacy to this noble cause.

So thank you very much everybody, I really appreciate all of your interest. Yeah, and so please just consider, as we go forward, the possibility of setting up a separate legal entity. Thank you.

[Andrew Spencer]

Thank you very much, Kurt. Diane, if you can just close off with telling people what to do.

[Diane Smart]

Yes, what to do. Okay, so you will have seen the petition floating around. If you haven't seen it and you wish to sign it and fill it in, please do.

And if you give your email or personal details, it won't be used for anything other than just keeping you informed about the outcome and any further developments relating to this lease application. But don't be confused that that is the end of it. You've signed the petition and you've done your bit.

You have to email the city with your comments, objections and alternative proposals. The closing date is the 12th of May. I suggest you get it in before close of business, because we don't know if it's like up till midnight or whatever, but don't push the envelope in terms of time.

The name of the person who has to be emailed has changed. It's now Yonela Gola, and that information is widely available. So please make sure that you get it.

And then also please copy in, cc or forward, your email to oval at ked.co.za, because we are trying to keep as comprehensive a record as we can of what is sent to the city. In your emails, if possible, give some, flesh them out a bit, give some reasons. Don't just say, I object full stop.

The city wants to see why you object. And from what I've seen of the ones that have been sent in so far, people have been fairly eloquent and good at explaining why they object. But if you're feeling stuck, Wendy has prepared a very nice little document, which just gives you some ideas that you can potentially use in your objection.

The city does also call for alternative proposals. It's not too clear if they're trying to kind of edge us into this land has to be leased out. So if it's not going to be leased to hockey, who is it going to be leased to?

But I don't think that we really need to fall for that. I mean, this land has always been a public open space. The public's always had access to it.

It's been working very well as it is for a very long time as a mixed multi-use space where everybody gets on harmoniously together. And if something's working well, why do you need to fix it? So I think it's fair enough to say that you want it to stay as is.

And lastly, it would be a good idea to request in your email that you be registered with the city as an interested and affected party. That way they're obliged to notify you directly of any decisions, new developments, et cetera. The city seems to have decided that the only interested and affected parties are the adjoining owners because they are the only ones that received direct notice, not even the sports clubs that have been using the field for many years.

But if you are registered as an interested and affected party, then you need to be directly notified.
Thank you all for coming.

[Andrew Spencer]

Thank you. Thank you very much, Diane, and thank you to everyone for coming here tonight. We really appreciate it and hope that you can carry the message far and wide.

Please note:

The recording of the meeting was transcribed using turboscribe.ai

Various corrections/additions (e.g. names of speakers) were added by Andrew Spencer.

If any errors occurred in this process, please accept my apologies. They are not intentional!