

To Chantel Erfort, Editor, False Bay Echo.

Article or Letter to the Editor:

On a cold and wet evening last Monday (12 August) a diverse group of people met at the Amakhaya Ngoku (Housing Now!) community hall in Masiphumelele. They came from the different divides of our South Peninsula suburbs, Black, Coloured and White, to discuss how they could become better neighbours to each other than is the case today.

The initiative, called ubuMelwane (isiXhosa for Neighbourhood), considered possible ways in which mental and physical walls erected between us can be broken down and replaced with a humane and more caring environment. It was noted that the mental walls were mainly in the minds of white people whilst Masiphumelele remains walled like an apartheid ghetto. The dithering by the authorities to urgently fast-track extra land for the overcrowding in Masi, and the absence of adequate facilities, including access roads into Masi was highlighted as the greatest concern.

Former Cabinet Minister, Ronnie Kasrils, also a neighbor from the area spoke of the need for civil society making its contribution to social transformation. Nosizwe Madlala Routledge, another former Cabinet Minister encouraged the gathering, speaking as the driving force behind Democracy from the bottom up.

Councillor Nicelo spoke for the broader community of Masiphumelele and said, through your presence here “we feel welcomed back to the broader society after feeling rejected for years”.

Horst Kleinschmidt, who convened the meeting, spoke of a future when boundaries had given way to a truly integrated society that abandoned racial tags and claims to the group areas as they existed now.

Those present expressed the desire to collectively tackle real and practical issues through solidarity from across the wider community.

The group was taken on a walk-about by the chairperson, Bheki Mvovo, to witness what Amakhaya Ngoku had achieved with local

private physical support and funding, though foreign funding had also played a big role.

Signed: Bheki Mvovo and Horst Kleinschmidt

Submit photo also.