

JAMMS Q&A

02 October 2019

Question: You have the greatest police in the world that do the arrests. The greatest prosecutors in the world, the greatest justice system but it is like a revolving door at the moment. I know the prisons are 40 to 50% over capacity, why has nobody said let's build more prisons?

Response from Alderman JP Smith: We have been talking to the Provincial Department of Community Safety and the Chairperson, Regan Allen of the Portfolio Committee, to start asking some more penetrating questions around what's going on in DCS. Correctional Services was struck by a court interdict some time ago around prison overcrowding. Not having enough prison cells, has resulted in the release of much larger than normal numbers of people on the street. So, when you go to the Somerset West police stations for instance, the Somerset West station commander said he had a monthly expectation of how many people he was releasing, and during the previous week, he had released 8 times more people in his police precinct.

I strongly believe that what happened with these 900 gang related murders that we've experienced this past year, which in my understanding is double the worst figure we've seen before. The year before, the gang murder figure had started to improve and stabilized. This year has been the most horrific year and I strongly believe that those prison releases have a direct correlation to this. It's weird that nobody unpacked this, so the provincial department of community safety is asking some questions about it, so that we can see if there is a statistical correlation between the two and make the point that DCS is failing the nation. You need to build more prisons but unless national government finds other mechanisms to divert people, unfortunately the interim prisons is where you will need to keep people convicted of a serious violent crime.

Question: A few doubts that I still have in terms of the cooperation between the city, the province, SAPS and SANParks. We feel as community representatives, we are not getting a lot of cooperation from SANParks. Is there cooperation? Are all arms of government including SANParks talking to each other, or are different arms of government doing different things, or does each have their own ideas and strategies?

My second question relates to the training of the rangers around Table Mountain. Are they adequately trained? Do they know the mountain? Do they know how to handle tourists, or are we as mountain guides and mountain responders going to end up having to rescue them because they don't know where they are? That's frequently been our experience with some people on the mountain.

My final question relates to general safety. I'm not talking about crime. I'm talking about mountain safety. What are the city and Cape Town Tourism doing to inform tourists and the tourism industry about the dangers of going into the mountain? What Safety Tips are given out? There's always a list of general safety tips but I'm talking about more detailed information.

Response from Mr Rashid Toefy: DDG Department of Economic Development and Tourism: We met with SANParks, I'm encouraged that they are meeting regularly at a police level and at law enforcement level. The next level of meeting is where it includes civil society, and that one is about to be formed. The forums where we hear the voices of Table Mountain Watch, but there is a lot of propriety enforcement information where they do not want civilians in conversation with them. Currently the enforcement units of SANParks, Metro and SAPS are meeting and collaborating.

In terms of training, fortunately we are busy creating this plane while we are flying, and I would like to get people like you into the curriculum, where those very rangers are being trained. We have close enough relationships with them, before they get deployed where you could come and give them a few tips or even be part of the curriculum on how to be more secure, while walking on the mountain. We can coopt you into that, and even into the Chrysalis Academy program where our provincial government is training young people. They do a little bit of mountain awareness, but we should bring people like you as professional guides onto that course.

Response from Alderman JP Smith: The staff we propose to put on the mountain are peace officers, and keep in mind that the national minister amended the powers of our peace officers recently, so that they are a lot more effective. They have the power of arrest, they carry firearms and wear bulletproof vests. They can search and seize, and we can add anything to the curriculum of their training that we think is appropriate. We can make them very multifunctional in terms of supporting mountain rescue. We've reached out to mountain rescue before and said we are keen to make them all officially disaster management volunteers, because they enjoy the legal protection. They enjoy the insurance and other benefits in terms of access to our resources.

In terms of the role of SANParks I think it's important that everybody keeps pressure on them, because the participation on the Mountain Safety Forum has not been consistent. They have not been as consistent participants as they should be. I have been pressurising the city to amend the Heads of Agreement because much of the land that SANParks manage is part of Table Mountain National Parks. It is the city's land which they manage, based on a Head of Agreement which we signed.

I'm keen to amend those Heads of Agreement and have been working to start that process so that we can implement robust minimum service levels regarding the level of rangers and other interventions they need to make.

Response from Enver Duminy: CEO Cape Town Tourism: For us as Cape Town Tourism, communication is very important. Cape Town Tourism can start adding more tips, specific things about weather, beach safety or mountain safety. I think it is important to get it from you as the practitioners on the ground, and feed that through your organisations or directly to us. We can start putting that into the bundle of information that we will share on different platforms. Whether its print or digital media. If you can send those things through to me or chat to me afterwards, I am happy to include that in all our communications going forward.

So, there are various platforms for information even before they get to the destination. We provide travel safety tips to travel trade and media globally. When someone purchases something, they have access to this. Also remember a lot more people are doing research online, so what we are asking of our members, is to take the safety tips we have and put it on your own communications platforms.

When they are in destination, we have Visitor Safety Guides or Tips, so when they get in the airport or at their establishment the tips are in there. We have regular engagements with both tourist guides and tourism products. We start sharing more tips with them to also share with their guests. This is going to require a collaborative effort. The platforms are there, but we need to add more on to it, and to also use you to share with the visitor in destination.

Response by Rashid Toefy: We just launched our Table Mountain hiking brochure. It is a comprehensive guide with safety tips and indications of the safe zones.

Question: Businesses can make a difference! How can businesses collaborate with all sectors to impact safety?

Response by Facilitator Mr Africa Melane: All business should or will want to get involved. Talk to whoever you can, to be part of the solution. Asking, how can I in my area of influence, impact safety and ensure that our visitors and citizens are safe.

Question: How do we get new information shared, not just with us here, but to the market and the industry, and to all South Africa and the rest of the world?

Response from Alderman JP Smith: The easiest way is to invite us to these different forums, I am happy to go to the individual meetings, CPF meetings, neighbourhood watch and community meetings. There's no harm in adding a few more.

Question: The CT Ambassadors, I have never seen one. How many are there? Do they wear special outfits and where are they deployed? We need a good PR Company to really push the good news stories. I would also like to suggest, maybe rebranding of the police perhaps new uniform or cars. They don't

look scary enough. The social side in terms of homeless people and street kids also needs to be addressed.

Response by Mr Enver Duminy: The Ambassador Programme was initiated 2 years ago when CTT saw the need to spread tourism across the Bo-Kaap and Central City. They are not security guards but merely tourism ambassadors spreading tourist information on the street, acting as eyes and ears on the ground. However, CTT decided to employ unemployed youth from Bo-Kaap that are familiar with the area, which has benefited CTT, because these ambassadors are familiar with the area and all the hotspots. They decided to start a whatsapp group so that they can alert each other of any possible threats. The ambassadors are wearing CTT branded t-shirts.

Response from Mr Alderman JP Smith: The City has done a lot of social development interventions to get people to safe spaces. We have a small army of outreach workers to engage with people on the street regularly to refer them to re-enter job opportunities. There are a whole range of substance abuse interventions. We have also stepped up our enforcement, because what is happening on the streets is dire. It is not just homeless people on the street, it is parolees that drive the petty crimes. Also foreign nationals, because of the lack of refugee centres. If you are feeding people on the street, you are making the situation worse. Redirect all resources to a safe space or any of the shelters.

We don't want to spend any money on rebranding, but we are doing one thing that you suggested, and that is to put our law enforcement officers in snazzier uniforms. The original pants were made of crimpolene and it is particularly unsexy uniform. We are busy looking at updating it. The new uniforms will be a slightly better looking uniform. The old one feels like the 1970's. If you know of someone who is in the fashion industry or can help us renew the shape of the uniform, please inform us. It must look better, but must still be affordable.

Question: I need a little clarity on CCID. Where do they fall in the whole city safety plan? What are the parameters and where can and can they not work? How we can engage with them regarding our security issues. What is CCID allowed to do? How can residents and people staying in the city contact CCID when there is an incident of crime?

Response by Mr Muneeb Hendricks from CCID: We have available online and numerous social media platforms. We also have 24-hour emergency numbers and opened an emergency line for WhatsApp that will react immediately. A video or voice note can also be sent. CCID reacts immediately.

Response from Mr Rashid Toefy: Two years ago, ATM crime was a big issue. The issues have decreased by having visible police. DEDAT has funded 50 individuals to be ATM safety monitors.

Question: What does that reaction involve: can your people (CCID) arrest?

Response from Mr Muneeb Hendricks: This depends on the offence, Yes, we can do the arrest, especially in the case of a robbery. Remember that we partner with the City of Cape Town, and we have law enforcement officers on our vehicles. We also have the power of arrest for other offences as well. Emergency numbers need to be sent out via email to all products.

Response from Alderman JP Smith: There are small CCTV camera installed, but what the CCTV cameras at the CBD see, 70 to 80% of the responses can be live tracked. Incidents can be recorded for evidence purposes as well.

Comment from the Floor: I would suggest that the 24-hr number must be more visible so that people know about it and use it. Please inform all your guests about the number and make sure they have it on their phones.

Question: We were all very angry when the Mount Nelson was burgled in August 2019. This was written: The Mount Nelson had the last laugh. Despite been slick operators, the robbers fled on Tuesday without the real looted. Millions of Rands worth of jewellery was removed from the displayed cabinets the previous night and stored in a secure vault until business hours the next day. The source said that the hotel locks their expensive stuff away in the evenings. That was in the Weekend August. Whoever wrote that should be.! I'm sure there is a media campaign. Thank you for keeping us informed on the radio. Who is running the media campaign because this reporter should be....!

Response from Mr Africa Melane: There is a responsibility that we in the media houses need to take. Our job is to report on the news. This can paint Cape Town in a negative way, but we should not edit our way out of it. I will get in touch with the editor of the weekend Argus.

Question: Brigadier Lillian van Wyk, you shared that you have several officials in your office. Who can we get in touch with?

Response from Brigadier Lillian van Wyk: That is correct. The officer is here. His name is Captain October. He is on the ground 24 hrs. That number is available 24/7. There are 5 different lines so you don't have to wait long. The floor manager will direct you to the first person available for your specific complaint. No long queues anymore.

Alderman JP Smith's final comments: There's a lack of appetite for reporters to cover positive incidents. Please support those vendors who want to bring the good news out. Listen to Cape Talk and support Smile radio. They are radio stations that are committed to helping.

Alderman James Vos final comments: My talk was aimed to share with you some of the new plans that we would like to implement. We can only do that with your support and with your buy in. We need to get all the basics right. Crimes certainly have an impact. The headline in the Argus certainly had a bad effect, even on our trade mission, to New York City to go and open up new markets. It was on the back of the direct flight coming from New York. It was all over their headlines. This makes it difficult for us. We need to make sure that we get to talk to one another.

My commitment is to have much more sector engagements specifically in the travel and trade space. There is a lot of businesses out there, start-ups, people that would like to get involved, and I think that is how we need to grow the tourism chain. Let's grow the depth and diversity of tourism in Cape Town so that we really make sure that we can double up on our arrivals, revenue generation and the business opportunities.

I am willing to work with all the various representatives. Tourism is only one part of many components. Destination management is another thing. Marketing is wonderful but it comes down to managing the destination in a way that is responsible, sustainable and provides much more secure and safe spaces, so that businesses can grow, specifically those in the tourism sector.

Africa Melane: There's no doubt that the sector is an important sector. You are intimately affected when we are reporting on somebody dying, somebody hijacked, or somebody being a victim of crime in the city. Let's remember that we also need to keep our own citizens safe. People in Nyanga are being killed, people in Delft, Gugulethu and Khayelitsha are being killed. Also, people in Hanover park, Mitchell's plain. People in Danoon are going through a protest action that are requiring those resources. It is frustrating when you have a visitor who is no longer coming because of what they read.

Just bear a thought of the experience of a significant part of Cape Town's population. Find out how you and your establishment can play its part in fighting crime and violence in this city.