



Ward Works Budget Interaction Between Corporators & Citizens

Two of the seven corporators of BMP, met with the members of their own wards and five other wards at Janaagraha centre recently to discuss plans of the next budget for ward works.

The Chairman of the Standing Committee of Taxation and Finance, Mr. G Krishnappa, who is also corporator of ward 36 along with Mr. B.Muniraju Corporator Ward 7 met members of wards 7, 36, 50, 54, 55, 76,78,90 and 94 on Feb 25 for planning for the next year's budget.

Mr. Muniraju, the corporator of ward 7 said that he had participated in Janaagraha earlier and he would be very happy to attend the MRM with prior information. Mr. Ramesh Ramanathan said that it was the responsibility of the citizens to work with the corporators and see that the ward is improved during his term. He added that every time the citizens meet the government they should not end up with complaints but work in a scientific manner to solve the problems of their ward.

Mr. A. Shiva Shankaran, a resident of ward 90 said that in his ward he had asked the citizens of different areas to prepare a list of what they wanted included in the next ward works budget, but only one person responded. He said that the citizens should first understand their responsibility and find out how much of the tax they pay goes back into the development of their city.

The citizens wanted to know how long a work on drain takes to be completed and whom to approach in case the work is not completed or not up to the mark. Mr. Sebastian of ward 68 said that the government should clarify where the funds are coming from when they allocate funds to works that are not in the Program of Works.

Mr. Mani of ward 50 said that the BWSSB should take into account the increase in population and thereby the additional capacity needed to ensure the flow of water and sewage when laying the pipes.

Mr.Krishnappa answered all their questions and
(Contd...Page 4)



BMP Standing Committee Chairman Mr. G.Krishnappa & Corporator B. Muniraju Interacting with Janaagrahis of Various Wards, at Janaagraha Center.

D.C. South to hold Quarterly MRM Reviews

On Feb 24, the Janaagraha support team met with the Deputy Commissioner of the south zone, Mr. Sadiq, to review the Monthly Review Meeting process.

The aim was to appraise the deputy commissioner about the functioning of the MRM process, citizens' feedback and the involvement of the various departments of the BMP. He was shown all the tools and methods with which citizens conduct these meetings.

He has said that he will conduct quarterly review meetings with the various departments on the MRM's and would also
(Contd...Page 4)

INSIDE PAGES	
Page-2	The Last Mile
Page-3	The Little Victories
Page-4	Students' Ideas
Page-5	Supraja, Ready
Page-6	Water Lines

THE LAST MILE

Last week we had a sharing of ideas and opinions between two corporators and community members. It was a very informative discussion but what was striking was the new maturity in the quality of questions that were asked by the citizens.

Highly informed with a broader perspective that went beyond mere individual grievances: how do you propose to increase the revenue collection to its true potential, how do we address work quality dissatisfaction, how

do we solve the plague of putting in one rupee for work that requires five rupees?

It is the last two that I would like to address here. There are two aspects to ensuring quality: the first is a decision on whether the tender specifications will deliver acceptable quality; following this is active citizen engagement with both contractor and engineers, while the work is underway.

I actually had the good fortune to make a difference to my own road. Chip carpeting of 4th cross: the last leg of the entire ward works process. The president of our association was looking after the implementation process of the chip carpeting to the roads in our neighbourhood.

For my road however, I participated actively in examining the quality of execution. I had discussions with Babu the contractor, Mr. Munninagappa, Krishnaswamy and Suneel of the BMP. We monitored the removal of debris from the sides before the chip carpeting, the pot-hole patching and camber correction, the correct thickness, temperature and rolling of the chip carpet layer and the final sealant coat. It was a three-day process of exploration, engagement, and enlightenment.

The engineers, the contractor, the

workers were all approachable and willing to do a good job. Babu is even willing to sign a guarantee of five years for the road! I also realized how hard they worked for so little thanks from all

pavers on the footpath, planting greenery, putting up signage barring HTV, speeding, noise etc. We are also discussing maintenance and cleaning issues, a system of neighbourhood watch, and vigil over any unauthorized road cutting. Various people are taking charge of each item.

“Two hours for your road”. That was the original promise of Janaagraha. It seemed such an audacious promise, but today it is a very real and easy possibility. Fifteen months ago we couldn't have dreamed of the kind of engagement and dialogue that commu-

nities now enjoy with the elected representatives and the various civic stakeholders.

Citizens who stayed the course despite the overwhelming demands of the task, have been the foot soldiers of this effort and it is on the shoulders of their achievements that we now have a system that allows everyone to engage, for actually as little as two hours a month, to make a difference to their city.

We have begun the process of true ownership and community-building.

Because I stepped outside of my home and embraced the road outside as belonging to me too.

Swathi

Do You Remember?

- Budget is an instrument for citizen participation
- Ward works is one item in the budget of the Bangalore Mahangara Palike Rs.50 crores allocated for ward works in BMP budget of Rs.950 crores
- Wards allocated funds based on classification of wards as 'new', 'partial' or 'old'.
- Ward corporator is the elected representative of the people, and there are 100 wards in BMP. He is responsible for the allocation of the ward works allotment/fund for various infrastructure requirements.
- Ward work campaign is divided into three phases: Planning, Contracting & Implementation

of us who finally enjoy the fruits of their labour. There were 45 labourers involved in the work and we gave them lunch one afternoon to show our appreciation. Just a gesture but it meant something to them.

In the end, I couldn't say that we have the best residential road possible. What I can definitively say is that we have a quality much higher because we got involved.

On my street, residents came out and started getting engaged with the process. They have now embarked on creating a “model” road. We are discussing putting in –at our collective expense - concrete

Collaborate

I am very happy with the work that Janaagraha is doing. Citizens should come together and participate in activities that lead to better understanding of civic issues. Collaboration is the key to ensuring that problems are solved in a way that mutually benefits both government and the citizens.

Keep up the good work

P.Sambasiva Rao
Malleswaram

Touched

I have gone through one of the recent issues of JT, where I read about “The beginning of Bala Janaagraha” in connecting education.

I am touched by your concern and the tenacity with which you get on it.

May God give you more strength.

Pramod Kulkarni
Secretary Prerana,
Raichur.

LETTERS

THE LITTLE VICTORIES

About a year ago -soon after we began Janaagraha I ran into a well-wisher but also a sceptic. As is usual with me, the conversation veered around to the idea of citizen participation and public governance.

“Good idea on paper, but frankly, Ramesh, let us see what happens on the ground”, was the response that I got, almost like the doctor in the Hindi film coming out of the operating theatre, shaking his head grimly and declaring that he didn't think that the patient would survive.

Not even twelve months later, I would like to relate two separate incidents, both of which give me enormous cause for cheer.

The first happened in our office last week, when citizens of a few wards got together with their corporators to discuss the idea of ward works, citizen involvement, the issues and problems etc.

I was amazed to see the maturity of the citizens. They were asking questions about the quality of the work, about tender documents and specifications; they were talking about how they would rather get fewer works taken up with better quality than have the money spread inefficiently across the ward; they asked about the performance of the ward as a whole, how much were the revenues, where did this come from, how many properties actually paid taxes, what could citizens do to raise these revenues; they talked of monthly review meetings in their wards.

There was very little hint of this being a typical grievance redressal meeting, where citizens heaped a pile of problems on their government. This was genuine partnership in progress, where citizens were displaying their skill in a new language.

The second happened in the inauguration of a park in Sanjaynagar. The local residents' welfare association (RMV II Stage I Block) had worked with the BMP in improving the park and their neighbourhood, and had invited me to join in the celebrations with the Mayor and Commissioner.

It was about an hour-long function, and I enjoyed every minute of it. About one-fifty to two hundred residents of the neighbourhood had gathered in the shade of the trees. I heard of a beautiful partnership that had blossomed between the citizens and their government: citizens had taken up various responsibilities in their area, some clearing debris, others taking care of stone slabs. The BMP had done some asphaltting work as part of the programme of works (POW), and also allocated some funds to improve the park. Citizens had started a street monitor system, with one monitor for each of the 10-12 streets in their neighbourhood. Another group had worked on a comprehensive garbage management system that included composting and recycling of all the solid waste in their area; this had also been supported by the BMP.

All the active citizens were acknowledged; more importantly, the BMP officials who had actively participated in this process were felicitated: the zonal Deputy Commissioner, the Chief Engineer, the Executive Engineer, the Chief Health Officer, even the Junior Engineer and

superintendent. Positive reinforcement in public.

Both the Commissioner and the Mayor talked of how they wanted more resident associations to work with the BMP and partner them in the delivery of various services. The citizens talked of how they wanted their neighbourhood to be the best in the city, and indeed in the entire country! It was delightful.

Sometimes, we are too close to ground to see that the patterns are changing. So often, we carry the patterns of the past and project them into the future. These two incidents allowed me a small window to step back and see the new patterns emerging.

As in the Hindi film, the patient will survive. The operation was successful.

There are many other patients though, where the stories are different. The message I would like to send them is: it can only happen through local champions, and teamwork both amongst citizens and with local government.

Then, the small droplets of success will convert into a torrent of optimism.



Ramesh Ramanathan
Campaign Co-ordinator

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Success

*Success is the sum of small efforts,
Repeated day in day out. With never a
thought of frustration, With never a moment
of doubt. Whatever, your cherished
ambition, Begin now to make it come true.*

*Through efforts, repeated, untiring, plus
faith in the thing that you do, you are
blessed with success.*

**(Isn't it sad that no one knows who is
the author of this apt definition of
success)**

STUDENTS SOWING SEEDS OF IDEAS

The PEC team of VOICES has been very busy during the last month working with college students from various colleges in Bangalore. Now Bangalore has many students who are aware of their responsibility in the society and the workings of the BMP, preparing them to be perfect citizens.

The students of Government Arts college, Government Science College, Mount Carmel College, Adarsha College and Maharani Lakshmi Ammanni College participated in the Essay, Speech, Poster, Painting Competitions and Mini Discussions in various parts of the city. Feb 26 was the day when the students got prizes for their participation and prowess.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Ashish Sen, Director of Voices said that we must celebrate the students and the BMP for the co-operation extended by them. We have been able to reach out to 19 colleges, he said, of which five participated actively in the competitions. He quoted his Guru Alyque Padamsee who said, "If you want to strike at the head, you must aim for the heart." Shri Sen said that the students had done just that. Sen said that at the start they had



PROOF Energy Center sponsored Students Competitions' Prize Distribution Ceremony

hoped to build a bridge with the student community but had gone far beyond and they are also learning from them. The students had sowed the seeds of many ideas and the PROOF team would take it forward.

Mr. Shivashankar, member PEC, said that this message would reach all colleges. He expressed his pleasure at the enthusiasm shown by the youngsters.

Ms. Shantha, a retired professor of Mt. Carmel College said that the students of her college were so enthused that on the day of the workshop they were

enquiring about when the activities would start in their college. Students were eager to know what was happening around them. She felt that the essays were very good and seemed to be written from the heart.

Mr. Narayana Swamy, Principal of the Govt. Arts College, said that it is important for the people to know what is happening in the Govt. elected by them. PROOF is bringing such awareness to the people. He added that with education, the students should also get a little awareness for them to become responsible citizens.

The PROOF team and the Principal distributed prizes to the students at the end of the function.

Corporators with Citizens

(Contd from Page 1)

said that the amount spent in a ward does not depend on the tax collected in that ward. He said that the BMP has to pay for water and sanitation lines and the BWSSB looks after the maintenance. Any specific complaints ---- should be addressed to the Chairman of BWSSB and the further said that all the information the citizens needed would be available on the internet very shortly. The BMP would also make the news Aarthika Darpana available.

At this stage Ramesh suggested that the BMP should use the skills of the citizens. The monthly review meeting should be conducted under the leadership of the corporator and any technical problems or the problems relating to quality of the works should be discussed with the engineering department.

Mr. Krishnappa, Chairman of T& F said that Bangalore has become famous globally and it is the responsibility of the government to provide good infrastructure. He said that the BMP is working on these issues, they have taken a Rs.1000 crore loan from the HUDCO for this.

There are many flyovers, grade separators, Rob, RuB, traffic signals, medians etc planned to ease the traffic. The 28 new wards have to be developed and the BWSSB has planned this with 3 packages. The government is doing all these according to the transparency act.

He asked the citizens to give suggestions on increasing revenue. Mr.Krishnappa said that only those Khatas registered with the corporation would be on the list of properties in the BMP area and those not registered with the corporation but registered as revenue sites would not be on the list and so the BMP would not have the accurate number of properties and the defaulters in the BMP area.

Interaction with D.C

(Contd from Page 1)

like to be a part of the MRM' s them selves, though not on a monthly basis. He has also said that assistant executive engineers who have MRM' s scheduled in their wards can be excused from attending BMP meetings.

From the Janaagraha support team the deputy commissioners of all the zones will get a monthly update of MRM's that are being conducted in their ward and an *Action Taken Report* status for all the follow up items agreed upon at the previous meetings.

We have an administration that is totally committed to enabling citizen participation. Let us continue our efforts in making participatory democracy a reality.

SUPRAJA - SET READY TO GO ...

Supraja is the federation of ward 50, formed by 5 Resident Welfare Associations - Basavanagudi Nagarika Samithi, Women's Wing of Crescent Road Association of Mohammedan Block, Vishweshwara puram Residents Welfare Association, Welfare Association of Rama Iyengar Road and MM Road Association.

Mr. Ramesh Ramanathan asked the citizens to think why they had formed the federation and what were the benefits they were expecting from this.

The citizens felt that the benefits would be many like better development of their ward, better interaction with the officials, better infrastructure development etc. Ramesh told them that those who support Supraja must run it

the demands of the growing population without the cooperation of the people. He also said that more women should participate like in Mohammedan Block.

Mr. Ramesh further assured that to solve the problems of low voltage and frequent power disruptions in the ward, 66 MV substation would be installed on K.R. Road, very soon.

Mr. N.S. Mukund of Abhyudaya shared his experiences of working for the federation. He said that the citizens should know their area and inform the government about the problems in their area. When the local government, administration and the citizens work together there would definitely be improvement, he added.

As a result of Paura Spandana in Ward 55, where the people interacted with officials of all the departments, regular monthly review meetings with the engineering departments had started and the power of the citizens could do wonders, he said.

Mr. V. Ramaraju, President of Abhyudaya said that every needs of citizens could be achieved through participation. He added that the dream of making Bangalore into a Singapore would be a reality when the entire ward worked with the corporator and the officials.

Proposing a vote of thanks, Mr. Mani said that the citizens should participate instead of complaining and draw inspiration from Ramesh.



Inauguration of Supraja - Federation of Ward 50

Dr. Vijay Kumar Biradar, Medical Officer Health, Mr. P.R. Ramesh Corporator of Ward 50, Noor Jahan Khaleel, Vice President Women's Wing Crescent Road Association, S.M. Anand Rao, Mr. Venkatram President of Basavanagudi Nagarika Samithi, Mr. Ramesh Ramanathan, Mr. S.M. Anand Rao President and Mr. Chinnaswamy Shetty Vice President of VVPuram residents Welfare Association, members of Abhyudaya and citizens of ward 50 celebrated on the occasion of launching of Supraja.

professionally. They must interact between themselves and the BMP officials in a scientific manner.

Mr. P.R Ramesh, Chief guest of the evening, said that the formation of Supraja shows the unity and strength of the ward. Through this the residents would come to know what is happening in the entire ward and not just their area. He said that the 50 year old Corporation has seen the city growing beyond imagination in population and traffic. The government couldn't keep up with

REMEMBERING DORU

"We still remember how Doru walked into our lives about a year ago. Like many others who volunteered with Janaagraha, he came into the office one morning and asked what he could do.

We didn't know anything about his background, but being a senior citizen who was also comfortable with the computer, we asked if he could handle the e-mail responses, since it required some maturity to answer some of the difficult questions.

He readily agreed, and said that he would come me two to three times a week and take care of this. As per his word, Doru stuck to his commitment and came in regularly. During



DORU - No More

this time, things were so hectic in the office that we did not have any time to even get to know him.

Until finally, one afternoon, as he was heading out, we said, "Why don't you have a cup of tea? We have not spent any time together."

It was only then that we discovered to our amazement that he was a retired Air vice Marshall, and one of the elite few to receive the Vir Chakra for bravery. We were struck by his modesty and simplicity.

We are shocked at his passing away, and feel lucky that our lives have been touched by this wonderful human being".

Ramesh

Water Lines and Underground Drainage for The New Wards

A bilateral project of BWSSB with Australian Agency for International Development (AUS AID), to prepare a master plan for water lines and drainage system for the entire Bangalore city is ready, after two long years of preparation.

Ms. Salma Sadikha of Social Development section water supply Board informed a group of 15 NGO's at Janaagraha centre on Feb 25.

One of the components of this program, funded by the Astralian Government, was community development for the urban poor. The team implemented a pilot program in 3 layouts in Bangalore – Chandranagar in the Kamalanagar Ward, Sudamanagar on the Airport Road and Cement Huts on the JC Road. The residents of these areas paid the connection costs and have been paying their water bills for the last 6 months.

In this project, 3 NGOs – Mythri Sarva Seva Samithi, AVAS and Suraksha worked with Ms Salma and a team of Engineers from the Maintenance and Works Division of the BWSSB for successful implementation of the project.

BWSSB has come up with a 3-package program for providing water and sanitary lines for the 28 new wards



Ms. Salma Sadikha addressing the NGO's on BWSSB Project.

that have come into the BMP. The works have been tendered and will be allotted to three different contractors who are experienced and of good standing. The program will be funded by BMP and BWSSB will execute the same.

In the second phase the same work will be taken up in the partially new wards. The work has been tendered for the Koramangala Slum. It will be decided in 2-3 weeks and will probably start in the first week of April. In many of the wards the work has commenced and in some areas it is near completion, according to her.

BWSSB meets the NGOs regularly, once or twice a month. All the senior Engineers and the Community Based Organisers also participate in the program.

BWSSB hopes to provide water and sanitary lines to all the citizens, particularly the urban poor with legal connections through this program. The NGOs are willing to go door-to-door, talk to people about this, get the applications filled right at their doorstep and simplify the process of applying for a connection, as the poor are scared of going to the office for the same.

She said that the NGOs should explain that the cost of the connection would be Rs. 750 per house, which is half the normal charge for a house of 600 sq ft, or less. For a house larger than this it would be Rs 1650/- which is the normal cost for all. The cost of the application is Rs 60/-.

The BWSSB would even regularise the illegal connections on payment of connection charges with one condition that the land where the lines have to be laid should be free of litigation.

What the BWSSB had done with the AUS AID program was only a model and now they want to take it to the mainstream. This is the largest project taken up by the BWSSB for the slums and they want to work with the NGOs and Resident Associations and keep the whole process transparent.

The BWSSB would remove the public taps and provide individual connections to all houses. The residents and community based organizations must seize this opportunity and bring cheers to all, the BWSSB sources say.

Q3 DEBATE ON MARCH - 15

PROOF Public Discussion of the Third Quarterly Financial Statement of the BMP at Tata Auditorium Infosys, on Saturday, March 15.

CITIZENS INTERESTED MAY CONTACT.

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