

ALGAJ'S UPDATE / NEWSLETTER

A PUBLICATION OF THE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES OF JAMAICA

MARCH 2015

UN HABITAT

At ALGAJ's Executive Meeting held on 23rd February 2015, a presentation on activities being facilitated in Jamaica by the UN Habitat was done by Ms. Hilary Smith, Implementation Partner / Consultant.

She spoke on the adaptation of the International Guidelines on Decentralization and Access to Basic Services for all (IDGBS) and also providing updates on the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP11).

In her introduction, she said the IGDBS were adopted by the Member States of the United Nations.

The purpose of the project is to assist in ensuring universal access to basic services through an assessment of current governance structures; and to devise



guidelines on how to improve current decentralization efforts.

Empowering local governments – those closest to where services must arrive. Local Authorities have the responsibility of designing and implementing local development plans for making basic services available to all.

She said the UN wants to work with local authorities

through a steering Committee set up by ALGAJ.

The first meeting of the Steering Committee is planned for 16th March 2015 at a venue to be named in May Pen; starting time 10:00 a.m.

SLUM Definition:

Household of individuals living under the same roof in an urban area who lack one or more of the following:

- 1) **Durable housing** (a permanent structure providing protection from extreme climatic conditions);
- 2) **Sufficient living area** (no more than three people sharing a room);
- 3) **Access to improved water** (water that is sufficient, affordable and can be obtained without extreme effort);
- 4) **Access to improved sanitation** facilities (a private or public toilet shared with a reasonable number of people); and
- 5) **Secure tenure** (de facto or de jure secure tenure status and protection against forced eviction).

ST. ELIZABETH PARISH COUNCIL AWAITS NEW BUILDING

Councillors at the St Elizabeth Parish Council should have new accommodations for their regular meetings by Independence celebrations this year.

This was revealed by Chairman of the St. Elizabeth Parish Council

and Mayor of Black River councillor Everton Fisher during the monthly meeting of the St. Elizabeth Parish Council on February 12, 2015.

Mayor Fisher said work on the building, which has been on hold since

2011 because of lack of funds, should resume "very soon".

"The immediate aim will be to complete phase one, including the council meeting room, an office and bathroom facilities on the bottom floor of the planned

two-storey building", the Mayor said.



BLACK HISTORY MONTH, REGGAE MONTH AND JAMAICA DAY

The month of February was an eventful month at the St. Catherine Parish Council, where Black History, Reggae Month and Jamaica Day were considerably highlighted.

On Friday, February 26, the three observances culminated on a pleasing note.

Members of staff were challenged to creatively pen something on one of the three categories mentioned above.

See what these entrants had to say: Kayvia Weir says..... **Jamaica Day means 'Jamaicanness'. It is a day set aside for us as a nation and people of many different backgrounds to join as one in**

celebrating together; it is all about the land we love. It is a day we should highlight our parishes, national symbols, historical sites, figures, arts and crafts, culture, scenes, food and diverse types of entertainment...."

Celia Webster says**"Reggae emerged as a unique form of music in the late 1960's. Bob Marley and the Wailers and other legendary Musicians in Jamaica has made reggae music a prolific genre which is now being played and**

recorded in other countries. Reggae is as Jamaican to our country as R&B is to America....."

The day ended on a positive and encouraging note where all entrants received a token for participation courtesy of His Worship the Mayor, Councillor Norman Scott.



ST. CATHERINE TSUNAMI DRILL EXERCISE

The St Catherine Parish Council in collaboration with the **ODPEM** conducted the 'first of its kind' Tsunami Drill exercise in Old Harbour Bay, St. Catherine on Thursday February 26, 2015.

The drill was executed with over 25 local and international response agencies, including media houses. The St. Catherine Parish Council Emergency Operations Team, Councillors and other volunteers were also

out in their numbers.

A host of participants from within the immediate Old Harbour Bay community and environs also participated in the event. It was a moment of "dropping everything and running for dear life". A bride for example left her husband at the altar to save her life.

School was in session at the Old Harbour Primary School and which was the assembly point for refuge, debriefing and evaluation, subsequent to the

exercise.

St. Catherine Parish Council Disaster Preparedness Unit continues in its effort to help **YOU** to be prepared and stay prepared.



Clarendon Rural Safe School Bus Programme

Thousands of high school students in the parish of Clarendon are today benefitting from the Clarendon Rural Safe School Bus Programme. The programme was officially launched in May Pen on February 25.

Speaking at the launch last Wednesday (February 25) Transport Minister, Dr. Omar Davies, lauded the initiative for its significance in providing safe and affordable transportation for high school students in the parish. While highlighting the multi-agency approach taken in implementing the system, he said the Clarendon Parish Council must be commended for taking such an interest in education.

Mayor of May Pen, Councillor Scean Barnswell reported that the service has seen significant improvements in school attendance and punctuality at beneficiary schools.

The Mayor says the system represents a marked improvement in student commute in the parish as students are now travelling in comfort and benefitting from disciplined driving, courteous operators and lower fares.

Some three-thousand-five-hundred students attending seven high schools currently benefit from the programme.

The pilot phase of the programme which was rolled out in September 2014 involved

high schools in the Greater May Pen area and Phase 2 was extended to schools in the southern section of the parish on February 9, 2015. The implementation of the programme was steered by the Clarendon Parish Council and its operations are supported by the Transport Authority, along with the Police, the Jamaica Urban Transit Company and some twelve local rural stage carriage operators.

The Sigma Corporate Run/Walk

KSAC is very proud to be an enthusiastic and committed sponsor of this venture. The Sigma Corporate Run/Walk is the Caribbean's largest road race and the KSAC is very pleased to be a part of this event.

The event was held on Sunday, February 22, 2015 under the theme, **"Save Our Children, Save Our Future."** The essence of the theme is to save lives and help to improve the quality of life for our Jamaican children who are suffering from illnesses.

The event was used as a means of spreading various messages and information about the KSAC through

dissemination of brochures and pamphlets among other promotional materials.

It was also used as a means of integrating members of staff on all levels and in each department as part of the process of improving staff relations and camaraderie as well as improving the Corporate image of the KSAC.

As we continue encouraging cooperation and integration among members of staff, we will further motivate members of staff to participate more fulsomely in these outreach activities.

"Save Our Children, Save Our Future."



JAMAICA DAY CELEBRATION

The Kingston and St. Andrew Corporation (KSAC) participated in several activities as part “Jamaica Day” celebrations under the theme ‘Celebrating Jamaica: Celebrating Regional Friendships from Boukman to Bolivar’.

The Corporation coordinated a Flag Raising Ceremony on the outskirts of the Council’s Municipal building in observance of Jamaica Day.

The ceremony was chaired by the Town Clerk Mr. Robert H.P. Hill,JP with the participation of staff members and the reciting of the Jamaica Day Proclamation by Her Worship the Mayor of Kingston, Senator Councillor Angela Brown Burke, JP.

Councillors and members of staff proudly converged to celebrate our country and our rich and diverse cultural heritage.



Jamaica Day National Celebration at the Norman Manley High School

The KSAC has a rich and diverse cultural heritage, dating back to 1923 when we became a body corporate as a result of the amalgamation of the parishes of Kingston and St. Andrew, and by virtue of Law 3 of 1923 the two parishes were merged into a single Municipal Unit.

Since then, at least two of our National Heroes were elected to the KSAC Council. Kingston, specifically downtown Kingston, is the cradle of Jamaica’s cultural development. For many of our artistes and artists, the City was both their inspiration and the subject of many of their works.

It is therefore not surprising that the KSAC was represented and formed part of the national celebrations.

Her Worship the Mayor of Kingston brought greetings on behalf of the Council and staff of the KSAC.

The KSAC pays due respect to the Minister of Education and his Ministry for continuing this very important tradition, because we also believe that the greatest joy and vocation in life, is to use our talents to assist in the struggle for greater freedom and liberation of those communities and those persons who continue to suffer the indignity of rejection and poverty.

We look forward to continue playing our part in making future Jamaica Day celebrations as successful as those in the past, and to promote this rich tradition that has converted us into beacons for the oppressed around the world.

HELP US...HELP YOU!!

St. Ann Parish Council 'kicks off' 2015 Town Hall Meetings in Parish Council Divisions.

(St. Ann's Bay Jamaica) (March 3, 2015) The St. Ann Parish Council has commenced its new slate of Town Hall Meetings for the year 2015. Residents of the Lime Hall Division, more specifically the Steer Town Community last Thursday (February 26, 2015) came out to air their concerns about social issues affecting their community and possible solutions to be explored by the Parish Council and the various agencies that were present. Despite the area now being considered a volatile community due to the recent spate of crime and violence, the turnout on the part of both representatives from the various agencies and members of the wider community was commendable.

Concerns from residents ranged from issues with the now dissolved Operation Pride to Roads being constructed through the China Harbour Engineering Company as well as issues relating to crime and violence plaguing the community. Residents openly expressed their concerns and looked to the representatives from the various agencies for informed opinions and answers. Town Hall Meetings are big on the agenda of the St. Ann Parish Council in keeping with the whole thrust of the Local Government Reform Process. Agencies present at the meeting included: The Jamaica Public Service, Housing Agency of Jamaica, China Harbour Engineering Company, Jamaican Foundation for Lifelong Learning, HEART Trust NTA, Jamaica Constabulary Force, the Urban Development Corporation, The National Water Commission, Social Development Commission, the Parish Development Committee among others. Officers of the St. Ann Parish Council and Councillors from other Divisions were also present at the meeting. Also in attendance to lend support was Member of Parliament for North East St. Ann, Mrs. Shahine Robinson who openly commended the Parish Council for the initiative to strengthen the Participatory Governance Framework.



Councillor for the Lime Hall Division and Chairman of the meeting Mayor of St. Ann's Bay Desmond Gilmore explained to residents the importance of such gatherings and the need to fully understand that government and governance are mutually beneficial relationships and people must view Community Development and by extension Nation Building as part of their personal affairs. He stated that as the decision making body in the Parish, the Council relies on the assistance of the wider community to make informed decisions/policies and to execute in the best interest of the people. The Council will be visiting the various divisions in the Parish to convene these meetings throughout the year.

The Partnership between Portmore, Jamaica and Hagen, Germany continue to be a success and of great benefit to the residents of the Municipality. One component of the Partnership involved two (2) three month Exchange Internship Programmes which ended in December 2014. This programme was made possible through the ASA Kommunal South-North Programme and funded by the *Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany through Engagement Global*.



Acting Mayor, Cllr Leon Thomas and his team committed to the task – Tree planting along Municipal Boulevard

During the German Interns, Lisa Nielen and July Fuchs, visit to the Municipality of Portmore, they were engaged in a number of activities which sought to increase the awareness of students and the general public about Climate Change and its impact as well as actions that they can take to adapt and to mitigate against the effects. In addition, the two Interns have participated in a Tree Planting Programme implemented by the Portmore Municipal Council and spearheaded by the Acting Mayor, Cllr. Leon Thomas.

Portmore Climate Change Adaptation Programme

Tree Planting and Public Awareness Activities

Public Awareness sessions

Selected students of the Waterford High and the Greater Portmore High Schools were engaged in presentations on Climate Change and its effect on October 10, 2014 and November 28, 2014 respectively.

Students actively participated in activities that sought to bring out ideas as to how the schools collectively and individual student can contribute in reducing CO₂ in the atmosphere.



Tree Planting Exercise

In the Month of November 2014 the Council embarked on a major tree planting exercise along the Municipal Boulevard where sixty (67) Poui Trees were planted. These trees were not just planted to provide shade but there are numerous other benefits that is expected from this venture such as but not limited to provision of clean air, fighting global warming, control noise pollution and enhancing aesthetics. In addition, the Council also participated in tree planting activities at the Greater Portmore High, Waterford High and the Gregory Park Primary School

In Photo above: Students from the Greater Portmore High School engaged in Presentation

Local Government Reform Update March 2015

CURRENT STATUS

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Recognition of Local Government in the Constitution – **tabled in Parliament on September 30, 2014,**

Debate closed February 10, 2015. 90 day waiting period, prior to voting in House and Senate.

Promulgation of Strategic Laws:

- **Local Government (Unified Services) & Employment Act having passed through the draft Bill review stages (CPC/MLGCD) is now with Attorney General – follow-up reveals that review is not yet completed. (NO CHANGE)**
- **Local Government Financing & Financial Management Act having passed through the draft Bill review stages (CPC/MLGCD) is now with Attorney General – follow-up reveals that review is not yet completed. (NO CHANGE)**
- **Local Governance Act – Parts 1 - 5 (of 9 parts) received from CPC, further Drafting Instructions issued upon review, currently being reviewed by Consultant.**

Promulgation of National Building Bill - **Legislative Committee process complete.**

- **Establishment of Municipal Court – follow-up process with individual Councils as to implementation of Day-in-Court continues. To date 4 Councils are using the facilities for Day-in-Court arrangements.**

LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Execution of a LED programme in collaboration with stakeholders including the Caribbean Regional Local Economic Development Project (CARILED)

– **implementation ongoing in the six pilot Local Authorities.**

Project implementation and management for the identified Projects.

Business Improvement District Workshop held on February 24, 2015. Site Visits conducted for potential Bid Initiative in KSAC, St. Catherine, Portmore, Clarendon, Portland, St. Elizabeth & Trelawny.

DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL PROCESS

- **AMANDA system Installation - All LAs completed**



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