



Picture by Nash Narandes:

With the Weekend Witness Maritzburg Marathon only a week away and thousands of runners and their families about to descend on the city, this is the view that, unless someone does something about it, will greet the finishers as they charge down the home straight in Geere Street. Tearing his hair out is Regimental Sergeant Major Ben Tarr of the Carbineers. "I try to keep our base clean and the verge around the Drill Hall looking neat and we have this overflowing skip right next to the entrance" said Tarr. John Hall, Race Director of the Weekend Witness Maritzburg Marathon is scratching his head to try and find solutions to many questions relating to the route, lighting, and appearance. All things that were a function of the Msunduzi Municipality in the past and should still be.

"The Mayor announced, at our media launch at the end of January, that the City management realised the importance of major sporting events to the City and that the infrastructure would be in place to serve the community and showcase the Capital City. Yet I don't even know if there will be a traffic officer on duty to assist in the safety of all road users, runners and motorists alike. There appear to be crews cleaning gutters within the city but the packets of rubbish are left on the uncollected on the sidewalks and then they burst open and we're back to square one" said Hall.

Asked what the solution might be, Hall responded "We're pleading for the citizens of Maritzburg to assist us by driving extra carefully and exhibit patience on Sunday Morning, 27th February, if they are anywhere near the route. We would be grateful if everyone would come out of their homes along the route and show support for the runners and give a really warm welcome to our thousands of visitors. I'm arranging to get a portion of the route cleaned and, maybe, if each householder just took care of their verge and gutter, we can, for a while at least, be proud of our home town."

That is all very well, but the race organisers and private citizens can do nothing about the potholes, lack of working street lights and missing manhole covers. "We have always had a wonderful relationship between the City, especially the Traffic Department, and ourselves. I can only hope that a solution can be found to whatever grievances the officers may have and that they do not continue holding sporting events to ransom. We're all volunteers who give a huge amount of time at no little cost to ourselves and we just want the people who are paid to do their jobs to do them to the best of their ability and the good of our citizens and visitors" pleaded Hall.

Anyone wishing to volunteer assistance with the event can e-mail info@pmb42.co.za. More information about the race and the route can be found at www.pmb42.co.za.