



## Citizen's initiative Bankastraat

**Proposals concerning citizen's initiative Bankastraat from the Mayor & Aldermen to the council committee were discussed at a public meeting with the City Districts Committee on 17 February 2009 Klokhuis Community Centre.**

Questions, questions and yet more questions. Members of the City Districts Committee visiting the Archipelbuurt fired one question after another at alderman Peter Smit. The subject was the burgerinitiatief, supported by more than 1,200 Hague residents - especially those living in the Archipelbuurt - to improve the safety and quality of life on Bankastraat. Questions too, about the council's policy for implementing the proposal made by the initiative takers.

Promises from the alderman came thick and fast, but he held to the central reservation solution for the transition from Aletta Jacobsweg to Bankastraat: it will form a simple but unsurpassable barrier and its effect on driving behaviour will be assessed after one year. The area around the fountain on Bankaplein will be extended by two metres so that traffic cannot race straight into the narrow section of Bankastraat.

The alderman is however blocking road markings along the whole length of Bankastraat to delineate cycle lanes. This brought an avalanche of questions from the Districts Committee members. Apparently the effect of similar markings on Frederik Hendriklaan has been negligible. So according to Smit this would not be the solution for Bankastraat either; even though scientific research suggests otherwise. The numerous

Committee members who had flocked to the Community Centre have given the alderman plenty of extra homework to do before the city council meeting scheduled for 5 March, when a decision on the initiative will be taken.

The real litmus test however will be the wide section of Bankastraat. Initially the alderman swept aside almost all of the initiative's proposals for a safer and more pleasant wide 'Banka': especially a central reservation along this section of Bankastraat, which he said would cause problems for the fire brigade and hamper the emergency services. Under pressure from the Districts Committee members, in particular Bart de Liefde who happens to be a local resident, and from initiative taker Willem van Gijn, the alderman, however, agreed to give the matter further consideration. Van Gijn argued for simple adjustments to improve road/traffic safety and the quality of life. He was quite rightly complimented for his lucid and professional presentation.

Afterwards everyone was satisfied, but a sense of uncertainty prevailed about whether the most important aspects of the proposal for a safer and better Bankastraat were yet within reach. According to the initiative takers the burgerinitiatief was "threatening to miscarry", but thanks to all the questions put by the members of the City Districts Committee, the chances of a positive outcome are more likely. This we will know on 5 March, if the entire council committee rules on the citizen's initiative.

BERT KREEMERS *working party traffic*

## Gardens sought

**The Hague Open Garden Weekend will be held again this year. Last time a number of enthusiasts from the Archipelbuurt took part in this very special 'garden route' and we are looking for more.**

On 6 and 7 June 2009 it is the open gardens weekend Struinen in Haagse Tuinen (Rooting about in Hague gardens) again. Garden enthusiasts can get to take a peek in a selection of city gardens - large and small. Due to the enthusiasm of visitors and garden owners alike, this weekend, first organized in 2004, has always been an extremely popular and inspiring event.

Do you have an interesting garden that you would like to throw open, then contact Yvonne Oudshoorn: 070 - 360 57 35 or visit the website: [www.struineninhaagsetuinen.nl](http://www.struineninhaagsetuinen.nl)

If you prefer you can send a letter to Yvonne Oudshoorn at Alexanderstraat 18, 2514 JM Den Haag.

[www.struineninhaagsetuinen.nl](http://www.struineninhaagsetuinen.nl)

### Have you received it yet?

Our community boasts a wonderful website, [www.archipelbuurt.nl](http://www.archipelbuurt.nl). And now there is a digital newsletter too. You no longer have to browse for the local news, you receive it automatically. The e-letter is based on the Latest News column on our website, which changes regularly and is linked to the full story on the relevant webpages. The e-letter allows you to select the news that interests you with a click of the mouse. Simply register by sending an e-mail to: [secretariaat@archipelbuurt.nl](mailto:secretariaat@archipelbuurt.nl). Currently only in Dutch but if enough of you ask we will also launch an English version.

News from

## the Working party Urban Planning

### **What does the council want?**

Council policy covers among other things the density of urban development, high-rise and urban habitats. A policy, incidentally, that is not always consistent and hardly recognizable in the separate manifestos of the coalition parties.

### **What does our working party want?**

The basic starting point for our working party's activities is the preservation of the character of and the quality of life in the neighbourhood. These are naturally conflicting interests. This is what we have to contend with as a working party. And in addition the financial means to take up arms are limited.

### **New development in Surinamestraat**

Project developers too usually have more interest in high-density development than preserving local character. The results of discussions between the working party and project developer are rarely acceptable to both sides; it is a question of compromise.

A good compromise was actually reached with the developer Q Vastgoed on the project in Surinamestraat. This was thanks to the neighbours, residents and the lobbyists Mr. Vroom & Mr. Nieuwenhuys.

### **Redevelopment of Willemspark School Frederikstraat**

The opposite was the case with the complex of six apartments in the inner courtyard at the rear of 14 Frederikstraat. The Lobby Group Willemspark II has initiated an appeal procedure against the issuing of a building permit.

### **Willemspark School**

The Haagsche Schoolvereniging (The Hague School Association) has submitted plans for the redevelopment of its building in Frederikstraat, namely the Willemspark School. The height of the present school located in the enclosed courtyard is well over 3 metres; the height in the new plans is 9 metres! These plans too involve a more massive construction. A working party representative was at the presentation of these plans to the Welstandcommissie (Building Regulations Committee). The Committee rejected the plans outright: the area into which the two projects have to fit (the school & apartment complex) was deemed "completely unacceptable".

### **Redevelopment in Prinsevinkenspark**

Mr. De Greef will be presenting the new plans that the project developer submitted to the council to our working party in March.

### **Zoning Scheme Archipel/Willemspark**

The council will be amending the current Zoning Scheme (dating from 1982) this year. Presently the Scheme encompasses Archipel & Willemspark II but the amended version will include the area around Plein 1813 (Willemspark I).

In due time the working party, in conjunction with all those in the neighbourhood, will be taking a critical look at the new concept.

For further news: regularly check Latest News column on the homepage.

TIM DIKE

## Community



## *in a state of flux*

There have been a number of burglars and confidence tricksters at work in the neighbourhood during the

last few months. To keep up with their movements and activities check out the advice offered by the local

police service by browsing under Local information/police on the local website [www.archipelbuurt.nl](http://www.archipelbuurt.nl).

# TRAM 9

There have been several reports in the press about changes to the tram 9 service. Out of the blue came the idea to submerge the tramline running along Koninginnegracht in an underpass at the busy junctions with Dr. Kuiperstraat, Javastraat and laan Copes van Cattenburch. However if this is done it will mean that the underpass will have to start at the Dierentuinbrug (opposite Houtweg and Nieuwe Uitleg on Koninginnegracht) and only surface again at Sumatrastraat. What happens to the tram stops? Will they be in the underpass too and be reached by steps or a lifts? Is there space and are there funds to do this? Or will the stops be relocated along the route at surface level at points that might not necessarily be the most logical. It also begs the question: how does this tally with the fact that this is a conservation area. There was also the idea to relocate the route along Raamweg, but then it would have to go completely underground. Considering the chaos it would cause to accomplish such a plan, this seems highly unlikely.

## *Peak hour service*

Another point concerning route 9 is the introduction of extra rush-hour services between Central Station and Madurodam. A good idea it would seem. But already during peak times, tram 9 runs every 5 minutes in both directions. If this is not properly synchronized, there could be a tram at the busy junctions every 2.5 minutes. So with the extra service this could become every 75 seconds. Taking into account how long each tram takes to cross each junction, there would be almost no time for the traffic lights to change colour to allow the road traffic through; unless they are made to wait. Another reason why the CentrumRing should be rerouted to Professor Teldersweg!

## *Terminus loop*

There is enough space at Central Station for the trams to turn and there are already are stakes in the grass around the Homomonument at the Wittebrug that are evidently for the terminus loop there.

B. Feenstra



## STREETS HAVE THEIR SAY

**It is the turn of Soendastraat, Kerkhoflaan and Ary van der Spuyweg in this issue, which means every street in Archiel & Willemspark has now had its say. This initiative has taken seven years to complete and started with Madoerstraat. It taught us that news can cover the neighbourhood but not necessarily uncover the real life stories of the residents themselves, this is done on at street level.**

We are calling it a day and instead of concentrating the face of whole streets, we will from now on take a look at the faces behind the individual facades. What sort of interesting stories will we find there?

### Ary van der Spuyweg

Now to finish off the remaining the streets, the first of which has two “Ys” and the odd one out among all the other “Indisch” names. Ary van der Spuy (1781-1868) was a schoolmaster, mathematics teacher, surveyor and forester. He surveyed the Haagse Bos as part of a 10-year plan to fell the whole area. The maps he made were put to good use in 1819 during the reign of Willem I, when he was given the chance to bring his ideas to fruition when the plans by another were rejected. So a forester along aside the Scheveningen Woods is not so odd after all.

### Kerkhoflaan

After the modest dimensions of the forester’s street, which got its name in 1950, a grand avenue with two rows of trees. It is one of the oldest streets in our neighbourhood, dating from 1830. Not surprising, because at that time burials in and around churches were forbidden. Originally, it was just a sandy track. The municipality did not hurry itself in offering the Catholics wading through the mud a proper road to their last resting place because the Municipal Cemetery, at the other end of the track, could be reached quite easily from the Kanaal.

### Soendastraat

Finally, Soenda-, or Sundastraat as it was spelled from 1879 to 1922. Here we are once again on familiar ground: the Indonesian archipelago. The Great Sunda Islands make up the largest part of the archipelago and include Sumatra, Java, Borneo, Celebes, Banka and Billiton, while the Little Sunda Islands include Bali, Lombok, Sumbawa, Flores, Sumba and Timor. Sunda Strait is also an important sea route offering passage between Sumatra and Java and uniting the Indian Ocean with the Java Sea. Just shows how a modest street can have great credentials.

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# 15 Soendastraat

**Soendastraat is also home to Stichting Steinmetz/Compaan, a residential home for people with a mental handicap. The attractive property houses 17 apartments, a dining and recreation hall, a kitchen for the night supervisor and an office. Residents are mostly between 50 and 80 and the Florence Foundation is closely involved in their care. There is a regular bus service ferrying the residents to the doctor, hospital, day trips to families, etc. Half are away somewhere during the day.**

### Archipelbuurt

The premises in Soendastraat is the Steinmetz Foundation’s showpiece: beautiful building, beautifully renovated and in a beautiful neighbourhood. Do the residents enjoy leaving here? The shopkeepers are very kind but unfortunately that is as far as it goes. A second

bench will be installed on the street at the front of the building shortly and hopefully this will encourage more interaction between the residents and the community.

### Volunteers needed!

More contact is certainly needed and members of the community are invited to the monthly “Smulavond” (tasty get-together) where residents, family members and the community can regularly enjoy meals from different cuisines together for €7.50. There is a great need for volunteers who are prepared to take walks and go on day trips with the residents, or help out with odd jobs in the home.

For more information contact Mr. Nenne van der Meer at 070 331 76 08 or [n.v.meer@steinmetzdecompaan.nl](mailto:n.v.meer@steinmetzdecompaan.nl)



## : young people talk about nature & climate

A book was recently published by local residents Karen Kommer, native Haagse photographer, and Fritz Griffin, US author/architect.

In the book entitled Green Lips (English & Dutch) 28 youthful Hague residents of various nationalities give their views on the major world issue of our

time - Climate Change and its impact on the Nature and what they can do. They also talk about and have been photographed in their favourite outdoor spot. It makes good reading.

The book was presented to Alderman Henk Kool (also a local resident) in December and is available in bookshops.

For more information visit [www.griffinkommer.com](http://www.griffinkommer.com)

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Contact [linda@archipelbuurt.nl](mailto:linda@archipelbuurt.nl)