

Public Eye

July 2016 | Issue 43

Free---for Private Distribution

Newsletter of Nepean Sea Road Citizens' Forum

**NSRCF will hold its
Annual General Meeting
on Sunday 7th August
at 11:30 am
at Tahnee Heights Hall
1st floor.**

We invite all concerned
citizens to join us.



Mr. Nelu Gidwani

has been a mentor, guide, fierce advocate and a stalwart resident of NSR and the Forum. For over more than a decade, he has worked tirelessly with government, municipal and traffic authorities to demand the best for our road. Spearheading the NSRCF, Mr. Gidwani has won accolades from citizens on the street and city authorities for his effort and dedication to improving not only NSR, but also the living standards for all those on it. With this issue, we applaud the work, dedication and forthrightness with which he has led NSRCF to make NSR a street to be proud of!



Striving for better standards

An Exclusive article by Mr. Nelu Gidwani

The scintillating city of dreams, Mumbai no longer is the apple of our eye. Home to 15 million+ people, her infrastructure, services, culture and bonhomie seem to be deteriorating faster than a 1950's building in the monsoons!

While the larger city-wide issue of a lack of responsibility and accountability is severely lacking in her administration, let's turn our eyes to Nepean Sea Road, where a majority of the country's elite live, yet fail to gain respectable, basic public services for themselves.

The Nepean Sea Road Citizens Forum has over the years been working with multiple levels of government, civil and municipal administration however our efforts are often met with a lackluster response, letters go un-headed and follow-ups frustrate us. In a bid to work with the authorities that are, we as citizens have held forthright – demanded what was due to us and made sure we got the best from our tax money. Yet of late, it's disheartening to know that little is being done to work in parallel with citizens. Vested interests, political patriarchs and moneyed maestros are ruling the street and working for personal benefits rather than the common good.

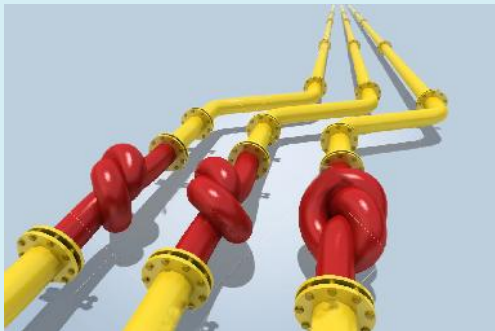
In the paragraphs below, we outline the few key areas in which NSRCF has strived to improve, yet has failed to make an impact. We've been at this for a few years, many of these issues have deep rooted problems that we have tackled tenaciously, yet at the end of the day disappointment does seep in when the will to improve a society is defeated by the aversion to progress.



The BMC should start their “Swachh Bharat” drive here!



Peddaling for pavements.
NSRCF has endeavoured to create and maintain our pavements enabling a safe and healthier lifestyle for citizens.



Up in Gas!
A lack of coordination among authorities has left NSR sans gas.

Infrastructure:

The lack of basic planning, foresightedness and implementation of infrastructure services such as a metro line, a fire station, municipal market and public toilets have been way laid and suggestions fallen on deaf ears of the municipal authorities. Development Plans, which are drawn up for a 20-year period, are delayed and riddled with errors. Neither are our elected leaders often able to plan, decide and implement infrastructure projects in a timely manner, nor are the civic authorities whose posts are transient able to be motivated to change their Wards due to the “system”. As a result, a few citizens and NGO’s cry themselves hoarse, but little is done to improve the state of affairs. In this regard, while the Forum has literally walked up and down the streets multiple times with and without the powers that be, a lack of unanimity between municipal departments, coherence in community and dignity in getting a job done properly have been cogs in our wheels of seeing NSR develop into a neighborhood of prestige.

Slums:

On Nepean Sea Road, 55 percent of the population lives in slums, 3 of which are on the rocks and 2 on terra firma. While, we acknowledge that they too need to be given a respectable standard of living, a solution has to be sought in preventing illegal encroachments from expanding and taking over open spaces and creating sanitation setbacks. Civic authorities need to discourage illegal structures from sprouting new shoots and taking root, a balance in society needs to be maintained; not proliferated for political gain.

Open spaces:

The proposed coastal road is expected to enter Nepean Sea Road in a tunnel through Malabar Hill, planned and promised to be below Priyadarshini Park and then hug the coast all the way to Worli and beyond. We sincerely hope that the plan does not change and the promise of the tunnel being below Priyadarshini Park is kept; otherwise one of the largest parks in our area will be converted to a construction site. Regardless of where or how the road meets the land (which is yet to be ascertained), the one lung that NSR has, must be preserved at all-cost.

But one aspect of the plan that concerns us a great deal is an entry /exit ramp planned near St Stephens Church. Where is the space? Those familiar with the area will know the traffic chaos that exits today. Can one imagine what will happen if an entry/exit ramp to the coastal road is added at this spot? While NSRCF alongwith professional engineers, and activists have suggested alternatives that are more environmentally friendly, cost effective and will cater to larger population traveling around the city, the proposal has been ignored and one that aggravates rather than solves our issue of mobility for all is being implemented.

Hawkers:

While the Forum has worked hard with the BMC to remove illegal encroachments on our pavements, tenacious hawkers refuse to leave. Under an RTI, NSRCF has been informed that there are 11 licensed hawkers on the road, yet in reality there are many who continue

to squat, some who use hazardous and illegally procured gas cylinders, and even one that claims to pay property tax! It is rumored that a few have political patronage. The Aarey stalls, albeit under the pervue of Aarey have made multiple extensions and are far larger than permitted. We suspect that some official establishments also supply electricity and daily amenities to some hawkers and encroachers.

Gas:

As part of its up gradation project, in 2010, Mahanagar Gas Limited (MGL), which has just got listed on the BSE, laid gas pipelines from St. Stephens' Church to the Petit Hall complex. It's now been six years and citizens of NSR are yet to get their last mile connectivity. While the ball is passed between MGL, the traffic police and BMC for permission to dig up the rest of the road and lay pipelines, those that have been under our road for the past six years are rotting. While piped gas is available for citizens as close as Cumballa Hill, there is definitely something stinky about this game.

Maintenance:

Making sure the smooth functioning of the road, her beautification, smooth flow of traffic and the removal of trucks in the area have both been a frustrating and never ending job for NSRCF. Working together with the BMC and Police has meant constantly trying to implement simple, yet effective ways to keep our road hassle free. On several occasions, the Forum has worked on removing the construction trucks that illegally park on the road and enlist in nefarious activities, yet due to political might they always return. While getting the road to be laid with mastic was a mammoth task, her beautification is a constant struggle; nonetheless we are probably the only road in Mumbai sans potholes! Our citizens too are to blame as several are recklessly parking in the middle of the road and on pavements with no care or consideration for fellow citizens.

Way forward:

Ultimately however, there has to be a solution and that solution has to come from the administration and those in charge. Government departments need to work in cohesion, not pass the buck from one to the other, they need to claim ownership and responsibility. As citizens we demand accountability and service. All citizens have to demand their rights and it should not be left to a handful who cry themselves hoarse.

As we have emphasized on numerous occasions its numbers that give power and power ensures attention and service and will result in improvements of standards. Hence all citizens should lend their weight and voices. We should reclaim the city we all call home. It's been an endless journey for NSRCF to improve the state of the street for all her residents. There are miles to go before we sleep, just as long as we're not in bed with the enemy!

Stand up!

Help us reclaim our road.

Become a NSRCF member today

Send us your comments,
interact with our governing council
and stay updated on news on the street.

To send us an email write to

office@nsrcf.in

or visit our **website- www.nsrcf.in,**
or like our **facebook page** we already
have 1,100 likes!!



Taking things to task; NSRCF governing council work closely with the BMC to improve our locality.

Edited by: Nazia Vasi
Asst. Editor: Mukul Mehra
Asst. Editor: Aazaz Khan
Designer: Shriya Khan

Registered address:
Nepean Sea Road Citizens' Forum
c/o "Urvashi" (Society Office)
66, Nepean Sea Road, Mumbai 400006.

Printed By:
Sangeeta Print Art, Dadar, Mumbai

With best compliments from



GREATSHIP (INDIA) LIMITED
Global Energy & Offshore Services

