

Maurice Smithers



Current positions
 Director: Yeoville Bellevue Community Development Trust (YBCDT)
 Treasurer: Community Policing Forum (CPF)
 Adviser: African Diaspora Forum (ADF)
 Ex officio: Yeoville Stakeholders Forum (YSF)

Bio details
Born: 1951 in Graaf Reinet
Family Status: Divorced, living with partner, 2 children
Lived in Yeoville: Since 1978
Current job: Full time activist

YBCDT
 "You can't address all the huge array of problems in this area on a voluntary basis. It's too much. So you need some kind of fulltime capacity that's why I set this thing up".



© Mkwazizi 2011. Maurice in his YBCDT office, Rocky Alley, where he produces Yeovue News, local weekly newspaper.

Vision
 "The main thing is to come up with a vision for the area, one that will give some reasonable hope of an economically and socially suitable future for the area. Where you will have a reasonably stable community"
 "It is not about going back to Yeoville 'as it was'. It is about embracing what Yeoville is today: a multi-cultural, African area, but making it sustainable and managed."

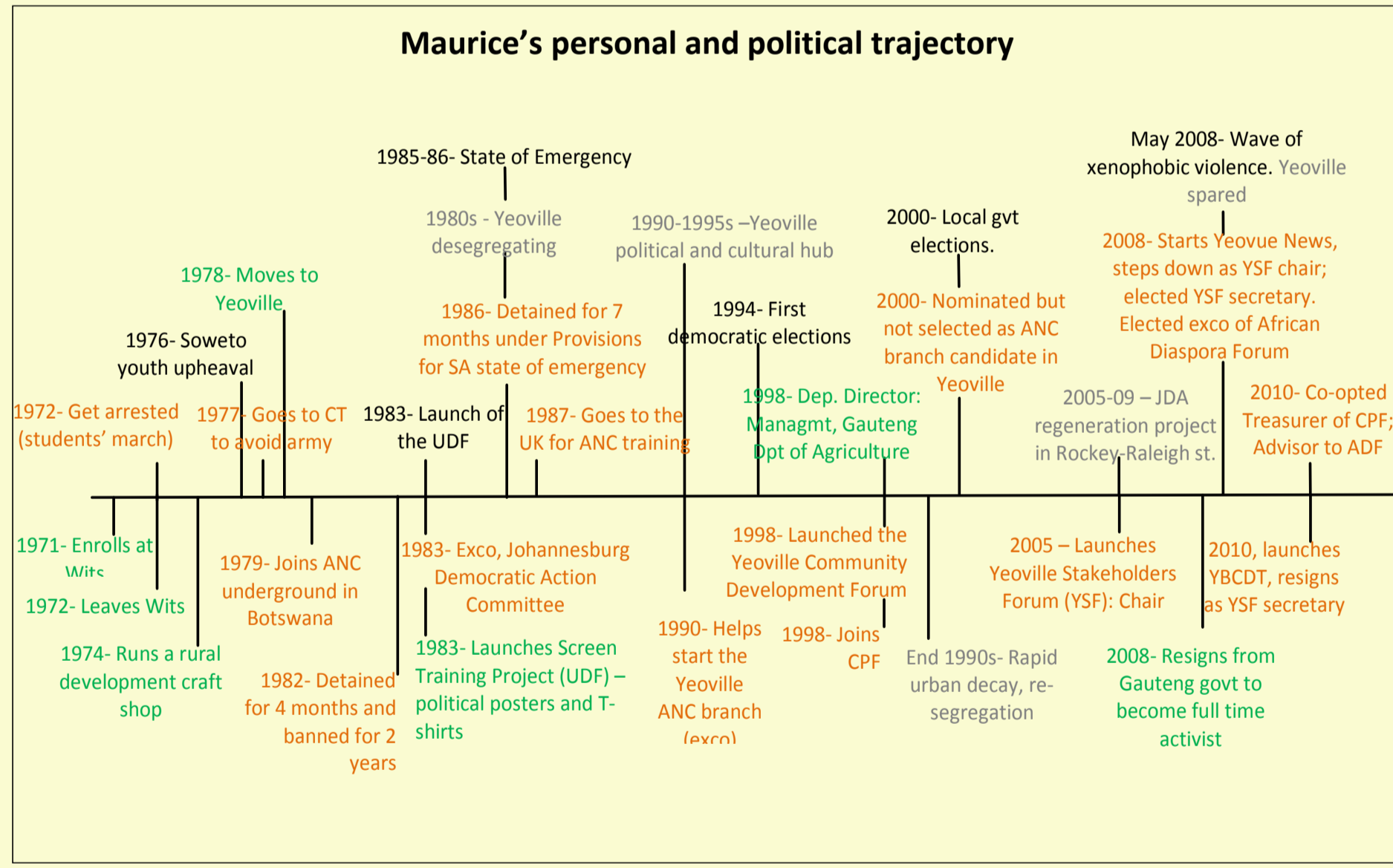
"[When I fought against apartheid], my wife's friends would say 'why are you giving up your life for the Blacks?' I said, I'm not doing this for the Blacks, I'm doing this for me, because I don't want to live in this kind of world. Therefore I want to do something about it, and so my involvement in Yeoville is exactly the same".

Being an activist in Yeoville
 "I don't see myself as a service organisation. I do community service, it's actually a service that government should be offering, but isn't. So I can't charge the community for it.
 I am an activist. I engage in what I believe are community building, community empowering, community capacitating activities. And also in a broader programme to promote development in Yeoville so that it becomes a sustainable, viable and desirable area to live in."

Fighting Liquor Abuse
 "I get the government gazette every Friday by email. I look to see if there is anything for Yeoville. You have to monitor that stuff, to identify where the people are wanting to do something in the area, which you might not necessarily want.
 When did you last look in the classified of a newspaper? Nobody does. There is this theoretical ability for people to be able to have a say over what's happening in their community, but in fact it doesn't happen. We have opposed about 20 liquor licenses so far. And many times we have actually succeeded."



Yeovue News 4(33), 1/09/2011



One month in the life of Maurice (August 2011)

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Morning .Councillor Induction Mtg .Admin work .Office work Afternoon: .Yeovue News	2 Morning .Admin work .Mtg: Chief Whip of City Council (Metro Building) Afternoon: .Academic Seminar (wits) .Yeovue News	3 Morning .Admin work .Office work Afternoon: .CPF Empowerment committee Evening .CPF mtg (CPF office)	4 Morning .Admin work .Mtg re: Africa Week organisation, with other stakeholders Afternoon: .Mtg: cultural organisation .Mtg: American researcher	5 Morning .Admin & office work Afternoon: .Yeoville studio mtg .Mtg: Councillors	6 Morning .Full trust mtg (YBCDT) Afternoon: .Ward 67 Public Mtg (Rec centre)
8 Morning .Admin & Office work Afternoon: .Mtg: Researchers on political T-Shirt Printing .Yeovue News	9 Morning .Admin & office work Afternoon: .Yeovue News	10 Morning .Admin work Afternoon: .Mtg: Rec Center Manager .CPF empowerment committee Evening .Visit to friend/ activist in hospital	11 Morning .Admin & Office work .Mtg with DED, Informal Trading Afternoon: .Housing Yeoville walking tour (for Wits)	12 Morning .Admin & office work .Mtg: Yeovue News advert Afternoon: .GDS workshop (Growth Dpt Strategy) (City Council)	13 Morning: .Mtg: Trust Finance Committee
15 Morning: .Admin & Office work Afternoon .Yeovue News	16 Morning: .Admin work .Mtg: wife of Irish Amb. Afternoon .Mtg: Head of library services Academic seminar (Wits) .Yeovue News	17 Morning: .Admin work .Mtg: MMC for Dvpt Plan. & Urban managmt (CoJ) Afternoon .Mtg CPF -empowermt committee Evening .Mtg CPF Executive	18 Morning .Admin & Office work Evening .YSF General meeting (St Aiden's) Sector 1 Crime Forum Meeting (St Aiden's)	19 Morning .Admin & Office work .Mtg YSF Chair Afternoon: .Mtg Wits researcher .Mtg Yeoville Studio	20 Morning: .Breakfast with local activist / friend
22 Morning .Mtg with Property Owner and CPF re: Hijacked buildings in Yeoville .Mtg: Director, Co-operative for Resource and Education (CORE) (community survey) Afternoon: .Mtg: consultant re: funding options .Yeovue news	23 Morning .Admin work .Mtg: researcher (Japan) Afternoon: .Yeovue News	24 Morning .Court - support for CPF member .Schools-donating books Afternoon: .Mtg: Property owner re: Hijacked buildings in Yeoville .Mtg: Foundation for Human Rights re: funding YBCDT activities	25 Morning .Admin work Afternoon: .Buying cameras for project Mtg: Yeoville Studio	26 Morning .Admin & Office work .Mtg: CORE Comnty survey Afternoon: .Office work	27 Morning .CPF support .Mtg: Library to plan for a reading room
29 Morning .Admin work .Mtg: MMC Dvpt Planning .Mtg: Father Neo (Anglican Church) Afternoon: .Yeovue News .Mtg: Sports Ground Issues	30 Morning .Admin work .Mtg: Yeoville Studio, organize local tours Afternoon: .Yeovue News	31 Morning .Admin & Office work Afternoon: .Court (support for CPF member) .Mtg, CPF Empowerment committee Evening .Mtg: CPF executive			

Working with councillors ?
 "The previous councillor, for 10 long years, just didn't seem to see the value in working with me and civil society structures. She saw us as working against her when we were all working towards the same thing - a better Yeoville Bellevue. Now the current councillors recognize that we've got knowledge, experience, a history. They can come into our offices and we can give them information. Which means they can do their jobs better. And they recognize that. That's why they pop in, they know we're going to help them, they know we won't chase them away. And I think that's marvelous!"

© Mkwazizi 2011. Maurice hands over food from his house to homeless people, in exchange for them doing some community work (e.g. cleaning the street). Maurice's house is almost a second office!

Trade-offs
 "I was a director in government, earning R54 000 a month. I had nearly done 10 years in government. If I had continued for just another five years I would have ended up with a better pension and medical aid for life. But I couldn't do it, I could not miss this opportunity to work full time for Yeoville. But it is risky, as I am financially unprepared for old age."

