

**Response to memorandum from Maiphumelele Community members  
delivered to South Peninsula Sub Council on 14<sup>th</sup> February.**

28<sup>th</sup> February 2017

1. The City of Cape Town does not use party politics when it comes to service delivery. We are however the democratically elected Government in the City. We are a caring City and go above and beyond the national standards when it comes to provision of basic services. Masiphumelele wetlands is provided with basic services.
  
2. The City of Cape Town abides by the rule of law. Illegal land invasions will be dealt with by our anti land invasion unit. All structures in Masi wetland are recorded and building in an area which is, by their own admission a wetland and unsafe environment, is irresponsible and the people encouraging these illegal invasions should be ashamed of themselves. As explained to the leadership that attended the meeting with the Mayco member, Ms Xanthia Lindberg, the interdict allows the City to demolish illegal structures on all three portions of land which form part of the wetland in collaboration with SANPARKS and Province.  
  
The City is not obliged to provide alternative land.
  
3. There are homes in the wetland without electricity. We are in the process of addressing this as best we can but the reality is that although they might not want to admit it now, it is still nevertheless a hydrological wetland and there is a substantial safety risk involved with electricity in waterlogged areas. We are guided by the national guidelines for Safety when dealing with the provision of electricity and we are not able to provide electricity in an area which is below the high water flood plain.

Previously we did attempt this but it is now illegal to do so. We are now investigating alternative methods for provision of energy to see whether this is a viable option for the wetland area below the high water flood line.

Where infill was done in the C and D section after a fire in May 2011, it displaced the water deeper into the settlement in other areas. In fact, in winter we are called regularly to deal with flooding.

4. The development of phase 4 which is currently in progress, has been underway for some 8 years. This started shortly after the land was acquired. The community organizations have been involved in a steering committee representing various established organizations. This is a development of some 227 houses in the first phase and internal roads and services should be completed by July 2017.

These organizations include the sporting codes, The wetland squatter forum, Isequalo backyarders forum, The Amakhaya Ngoku committee, and representatives from formal housing. The members were duly elected and provided the minutes of their meeting and attendance registers at the time. They also have seconds who attend frequently. It is clearly then representative of the community and always has been.

Regular public meetings have been held over the years for report backs. Unfortunately, it appears that the protestors and the organisers might not be beneficiaries of the development for whatever reasons and hence some protests. There is a process around the confirmation of beneficiaries and this process is currently underway and needs to be authenticated by Province under the National Dept Housing policy.

5. The community liaison officer was one of a number of names from the Sub Council data base randomly selected who were interviewed by the contractor and then was subsequently employed. This is part of the contract and not an issue the community is involved in or should be.

In his role as the Chairman of the wetland squatter forum and as a pastor in the area, he is well respected by the community and was chosen for this reason.

The Sub Council does not select the CLO. There is no process that will benefit all the people in the appointment of a CLO as it is a job for only one person.

6. The two soccer fields built were part of a process that resulted from the fact that their current field at the time in Masi, had been resurfaced many times at great expense and was again unusable. The sports association were desperate for more fields as we currently have 16 soccer clubs within the immediate area. The fields built at Noordhoek for soccer, and rugby were not sufficient for their purposes and they are managed by a committee of users.

Once again the community were part of the process. There was a feeling that the area should be used only for housing but the established community reiterated that they had been promised the fields and they deserved the opportunity to have fields close by to train their young people in various sporting disciplines. There are also netball courts.

7. I am repeatedly told which community members I should deal with to the exclusion of others. However, I must point out that I will work with anyone that wants to work constructively in Masi. Everyone has a right to approach me and visa versa. I work with registered, recognised structures, elected, within Masi, by the people of Masi. All structures are invited to join the Sub Council database and these organizations are then kept informed and invited to meetings.

I have been working in the community for over 20 years and have established contacts and embrace all attempts by the community when it comes to improving the quality of life for the residents, and relationships with surrounding communities. We serve the entire City and not any particular party. We run it professionally and care for all our people notwithstanding the political affiliations. People are people and are respected equally.

8. We do not force people to squat in the wetlands. In fact, we spend a lot of energy assisting those people to become aware of the environmental and health constraints. The reality is that people have grabbed opportunities and built illegally. Others have sold these structures on illegally. We have done audits and are now actively preventing further illegal land invasions. I

understand their desperate desire to come to the City, but Masi is over populated and this now poses substantial risk to residents. Shack farming has become the norm where residents rent out space in their back yard to earn an income, exacerbating the problem.

The sanitation issue is an ongoing problem. We plan with the information we have. Attempts to do a social survey last year were derailed by the community. The wetland area is below sea level and we are constrained by what we can do there. We are piloting a project of raised ablution blocks above the canals because of the lack of space, which will allow us to gravity feed directly into the sewer system. We will provide wash facilities and they will be well lit and have janitors. This should help stop the vandalism, theft and cleansing problems. The project should start next month. This should eliminate much of the pollution from night soil which is inadvertently ending up in the canals instead of into the Sewage system.

The instruction from the Province to the City in respect of the cleansing of the wetland has been closed.

The Province failed to take into account, as explained to your delegation last Thursday at the Mayco members meeting, that the Action Matrix developed to deal with sanitation and waste water issues, the cleaning of the canals, and solid waste removal in Masi, was developed by an intergovernmental working group of which they were part. Maintenance of the canals is also covered by the matrix.

In the meantime, a low flow diversion has been constructed to divert polluted water from the canals. Daily dumped waste is removed on weekdays. The deep cleaning of the canals is done mechanically quarterly and the reeds cut annually by hand to allow free flow of the water. The ramp walls have also been repaired.

Each structure gets two bags a week refuse removal and the containers are cleared twice a week. Litter picking takes place seven days a week. We intend to implement green bins into the informal area by end of June as a pilot to see if it helps to contain the ongoing litter problem. Illegal Dumping is also collected on a weekly basis.

Our water pollution and environmental health department respond to every alleged incident of pollution and health complaints.

Joint education and awareness campaigns have been held with the residents to educate them on proactive actions and interventions they can take to minimise pollution of the stormwater system.

The toilets in the wetlands, as well as those in other informal areas within Masi, continue to be cleaned and unblocked regularly.

After negotiation with the community, the erection of the new proposed boundary fence requested by the Dept of Environmental affairs, was stopped. This was to address the concerns of safety in the event of a fire.

It must be pointed out, that to drive the City's Jobs agenda, all contracts that the City awards in the Sub Council have to use local labour and this is extracted from the local data base of unemployed people.

A positive outcome of the meeting is the proposed MOU between the community and the City, which will be drafted in order to clarify roles and responsibilities of both parties.

I look forward to a constructive positive engagement at these regular meetings which will follow.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. Purchase', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Signed

Alderman Felicity Purchase

Chairman

Ward 69 Ward Councillor

South Peninsula Sub Council 19