Soshanguve Gardens Township Development_Minutes of the Public Meeting held on 25 April 2018

Time: 18h00

Venue: Kgomotso Secondary School, Soshanguve Block DD

The meeting was attended by over 100 participants, mainly from Block DD in Soshanguve, which is the area adjacent the proposed Soshanguve Gardens Township site (see attendance registers attached as Appendix A). The meeting was chaired by the convener of the meeting, Councillor Charles Masemola of the City of Tshwane Ward 88.

In his opening of the meeting, Cllr Masemola indicated that there was only one agenda point for the meeting, which was the Soshanguve Gardens Township Development project. Cllr Masemola introduced Mr. Mashudu Siphugu of Lambeu Consulting and Training Services (Pty) Ltd as the Environmental Consultant working on the project who will then present on the project and answer questions and comments that the community members may have about the project.

Mr. Siphugu started off by thanking all in attendance for attending the meeting and also indicated that the purpose of the meeting was to appraise the community about the proposed housing project that has been planned for the open site that borders the Soutpanspruit. He indicated that the proposed development was by a private property development company, Instratin Properties (Pty) Ltd, who are based in Woodmead, Johannesburg. The proposed developers are in the process of acquiring the land parcel, and they wish to put up a Social Housing development, which will have about 41 double storey blocks of townhouses, with a total of 891 housing units, some being 1 bedroomed, 2 bedroomed and 3 bedroomed units. The housing units to be developed are for rental only, as provided for by the Social Housing Scheme.

The proposed Soshanguve Gardens development will trigger 'listed activities' that require Environmental Authorisation before they could be undertaken, and the public meeting was part of the public participation process required as part of the Environmental Authorisation application process.

Mr. Siphugu further outlined that several Specialist Studies, including Ecological Assessments, Heritage Impact Assessment, Aquatic Assessment, and Traffic Impact Assessments have been conducted with the view to identify potential impacts that the proposed project would have on the environment, and also determine the appropriate mitigation measures that will require to be implemented in order to minimize or eliminate the severity of the identified impacts associated with the project (details of the identified impacts on the environment have been captured comprehensively in the presentation that was read during the meeting, and will not be presented in this report).

However, below are the main issues associated with the proposed development:

- The site has a number of sensitive Marula trees, and these should not be destroyed or moved without permission from the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF);
- The wetland vegetation on site should also not disturbed, and there should therefore be no construction activities in the wetland area;
- Alien invasive species on site should be removed and a plan to prevent them from reestablishing be developed and implemented;
- There is a portion of the proposed project site that is used as an illegal dumping site, and this will be eliminated once the area is developed;
- No heritage resources were found on site, besides the recent past stone walling observed towards the southern side of the proposed project site;
- The Soutpanspruit which run adjacent the proposed project site, and create a border on the eastern side, has been impacted upon already through pollution and disturbance of river banks and extra care should be taken during construction to ensure the integrity of the river does not deteriorate further;
- The proposed Soshanguve Gardens development will not result in major traffic impacts that will require major road expansions in the next five years. However, traffic signal will be required in 2023 at the intersection of Welcome and Mokhethle streets;
- All the Specialists Studies concluded that the proposed development should be supported, provided that mitigation measures raised are implemented.

Mr. Siphugu in closing outlined that the process forward is that the Draft Basic Assessment Report (BAR) for the project will be compiled and exposed to 30 days commenting period by all the registered stakeholders, including the community that had gathered in the

meeting, government entities such as GDARD, DWS, DAFF and the City of Tshwane Metro. The comments received will then be incorporated into the Final BAR, that will then be submitted to the Competent Authority (GDARD) for decision. There are provisions for appeal against the decision of the Competent Authority. Mr. Siphugu indicated that his assessments did not reflect any red flags and major negative impacts associated with the proposed development and as the Environmental Assessment Practitioner for the project, he will recommend that the proposed project be authorized.

Mr. Siphugu then invited participants to raise questions and/or comments, and the following were raised:

- How will the developers ensure security of residents?
- How will the proposed development impact on value of the neighbouring properties?
- The site for development of Soshanguve Gardens has been set aside for a Golf Course, if there are now changes bondholders should have been engaged about that to give their consent;
- What are the social impacts associated with the proposed township development?
- What are the estimation on the labour that will be required and what percentage will be youth?
- How will the development influence crime rate in the area?
- Why was the project information board so small and not placed at a conscious position?
- The project notice board was not supposed to be put up before consultation with the residents in the area, a meeting to engage community members was supposed to have been held first to appraise residents about the proposed project;
- The proposed development will bring in thugs and drug dealers to the area, and the residents are therefore opposed to the project;
- The anticipated economic benefits associated with the project are welcome, but it appears the proposed project will divide the community, as the proposed project is received differently by different sectors of the community, which is regrettable;
- The community should have inputs on how the vacant land earmarked for the development would be used, it is inappropriate for the community to be dictated upon;
- It was mentioned during the presentation that other identified stakeholders include the Municipal Official, Department of Water and Sanitation, Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, etc. However, those stakeholders are not represented in the meeting, and this creates doubts as to whether they will indeed be engaged;
- The proposed housing development is exploitative in nature as it will provide rental residential units. Community members need to own properties and not rent forever; and
- The development is not supported and it must be stopped.

The meeting was disrupted as responses to the above issues raised were about to be presented, and no responses were provided. However, the table below has captured responses that would have been provided to the issues raised.

The meeting closed abruptly at 19h30.

Issues	Responses
1. How will the developers ensure security of residents?	The developer will ensure that the proposed development is securely fenced off from the other residential properties, and access in and out of the proposed development will be controlled through high level biometric system manned by a credible security company. Residents in the proposed development will also be appropriately screened before they could be approved to live in the development to ensure that no dodgy individuals live in the property.
2. How will the proposed development impact on value of the neighbouring properties?	It is not anticipated that the proposed development will have any impact on the value of the neighbouring properties. It is understood that the value of properties are influenced by a myriad of interactive factors, and it is not anticipated that the type of new residential establishment into the area would alone influence the value of neighbouring existing properties.
3. The site for development of Soshanguve Gardens has been set aside for a Golf Course, if there are now changes bondholders should have been engaged about that to give their consent.	The site for development is land in private ownership, and the proposed developer is not aware that the land is set aside for establishment of Golf Course. It is understood that the site is zoned for high density residential development.
4. What are the social impacts associated with the proposed township development?	There are some social impacts that have been identified and outlined elsewhere in the presentation as follows: • It will also result in decrease of crime rate in the area since the project site is a potential hiding place for criminals in the area, when developed that crime haven will be eliminated; • Other negative social issues such as increase in prostitution, resulting in increases in sexual transmitted diseases such as HIV and AIDS are associated with construction phase of similar projects; • When completed, the proposed development will improve the quality of life of the residents through provisioning of decent accommodation.

5. What are the estimation on the labour that will be required and what percentage will be youth?	In a similar project implemented by the proposed developer in the North West province, the labour force had about 300 people at the peak of the development, with youth making up about 50% of the labour force. It is anticipated that the proposed project will use similar labour force.
6. How will the development influence crime rate in the area?	It is anticipated that crime will be reduced during both construction and implementation phases of the project. It has been established through interaction with some community members that criminals use the vegetated site as a hide out place after committing criminal acts in the area. The project will lead to the site been cleared of vegetation and this would result in low crime rates in the area.
7. Why was the project information board so small and not placed at a conscious position?	Three (3) information boards have been affix in different locations around the proposed project site, in line with the Public Participation requirements of the 2014 EIA Regulations (as amended). The boards affixed on site are 84 X 60 cm, which is almost twice the size of the stipulated size of the information boards prescribed in the EIA Regulation (60 X 42 cm).
8. The project notice board was not supposed to be put up before consultation with the residents in the area, a meeting to engage community members was supposed to have been held first to appraise residents about the proposed project.	The information board is meant to invite potential stakeholders to participate in the public participation process, and it should be affixed on site early enough to alert stakeholders.
9. The proposed development will bring in thugs and drug dealers to the area, and the residents are therefore opposed to the project.	Response to this has been captured in #1 above.
10. The anticipated economic benefits associated with the project are welcome, but it appears the proposed project will divide the community, as the proposed project is received differently by different sectors of the community, which is regrettable.	It is indeed regrettable that the proposed development is received differently by different sectors of community. The developer is prepared to implement whatever measures that would mitigate significant negative impacts associated with the project.
11. The community should have inputs on how the vacant land earmarked for the development would be used, it is inappropriate for the community to be dictated upon.	The said land earmarked for development is privately owned, and zoned for residential development, as proposed by the proposed developer.

12. It was mentioned during the presentation that other identified stakeholders include the Municipal Official, Department of Water and Sanitation, Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, etc. However, those stakeholders are not represented in the meeting, and this creates doubts as to whether they will indeed be engaged.	The identified stakeholders mentioned will be given opportunity to comment on the draft Basic Assessment Report (BAR), in line with the provisions made in the 2014 EIA Regulations (as amended), and their inputs will be considered and incorporated into the final BAR before it is submitted to the competent authority for decision.
13. The proposed housing development is exploitative in nature as it will provide rental residential units. Community members need to own properties and not rent forever.	The proposed developer wishes to establish a Social Housing development, where residential units are only for rental purposes. The developer's view is that their proposed development will enhance the quality of lives of the residents through provisioning of affordable rental units.
14. The development is not supported and it must be stopped.	Noted.