

# **Executive Mayors Report Back: Council Meeting**

## **23<sup>rd</sup> February 2017**

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**Ward 2 Forum**  
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23 February 2017

## **COUNCIL MEETING: THURSDAY TUESDAY 23 FEBRUARY 2017: ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR**

Speaker , thank you; herewith my statements and communications for this meeting:

The migration phenomena in Theewaterskloof poses financial and non-financial threats and challenges to the municipality. It threatens infrastructure, bulk services capacities and institutional abilities of towns and especially Grabouw.

Migration, and the need off people to find a place to stay, was the primary cause of the recent illegal land grabs. Many invaders in Grabouw are so-called "incomers". The need for housing opportunities and subsequent land grabs creates tension in communities and between invaders and the municipality.

In Grabouw it is unfortunate that the department of Public Works failed to take this matter forward. The Acting Director Development and Mr Stan Wallace had a meeting with officials of the department yesterday. Municipal concerns were raised and discussed and we are hopeful that the process is back on track.

A survey/audit had been done on the land and the shacks have been numbered. The next challenge is containment and a proposal is being prepared for the consideration of all parties. Theewaterskloof funded and managed the survey because the department of public works did not respond. Recently settlers illegally occupied Farm 39 of the National Department of Rural Development in Greyton.

This confirmed the increasing housing crisis in Heuwelkroon, Voorstekraal, Greyton, Genadendal and Berea.

The municipality, community and other stakeholders is trying to find solutions for the crisis but the availability of land and funds for civil services and top structures remains a challenge.

The key challenge is to obtain the cooperation of the department of rural development.

A process plan, which will determine how the cooperation of other stakeholders will be obtained, is currently being developed and negotiated. TWK cannot resolve this challenge on its own.

Last year, the illegal land grabs coincided with the local municipal elections in Theewaterskloof. It became clear then that political interventions influence the actions.

Subsequently I am sceptical about the situation in the Greyton/Genadendal-area and I trust that politics is not driving the current land grabs.

Housing is an emotional matter and to misuse it for political gain is dangerous. I appeal to all parties not to politicize the housing crisis and to work together to overcome the challenge.

Everyone in this council chamber is aware of the water crisis in the Western Cape. I want to make it clear that this is also a Theewaterskloof crisis. The perception that Theewaterskloof is not a water scarce area is wrong. Most water sources in the municipal area is under pressure and some is running dry. We must preserve water and next week we will consider implementing phase 3 water restrictions. We will also aggressively police the situation and those who violate the water restrictions will be fined .

The Minister of Finance announced that MMC is no longer a prerequisite to employ directors and subsequently we appointed acting directors in the technical, development and corporate directorates. People without MMC who is fit for purpose can now be employed as municipal managers and directors.

The fact that MMC is no longer a minimum requirement for certain positions gave us an opportunity to spread the net wider to find the right people. Accordingly the selection committee decided to re-advertise the vacant position of Municipal Manager.

As soon as the consultation process of the new organisational structure is completed it will be brought to Council. The administration is ready to refer this to the Restructuring Committee and to the LLF where after it will come to a Council Workshop for consideration and hopefully also approval.

I believe the new structure will align the municipal focus with key challenges and threats. It took time to develop the structure and many frustrations emerged but we had to follow all the processes.

Compared to the previous government, public complaints directed to the office of the executive mayor escalated hand over hand. I realise that our administrative capacities are limited but we need to respond to the queries and complaints. I meet with concerned citizens almost daily and we must answer their questions. I urge administration to deal swiftly with the matters my office refers to you.

I referred to the institutional capacity challenges the municipality faces as a result of the migration phenomena and the land grabs. The fact that we had to manage the municipality without a municipal manager and permanent directors is not the result of bad governance.

The National Minister of Finance insisted that people in these positions comply with MMC. We received excellent applications for the position of the MM but most did not meet the MMC requirement.

I have on numerous occasions requested provincial intervention to appoint a temporary MM. We did not receive sustainable support and to prevent a full scale institutional capacity melt down we had to implement a consultant in the office of the MM.

We cannot put matters on hold. Until we have an MM and fulltime directors and for strategic purposes we will maintain the services of the consultant.

Thank you.

Councillor Christelle Vosloo

Executive Mayor: Theewaterskloof municipality 24  
February 2017