

## **Ward 2 Forum Comment on the:**

**Theewaterskloof Municipality Press Release dated 10 February 2017**

# **Housing Protests**



**Ward 2 Forum**  
SERVING THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER

**Ward 2 Forum Comment on the TWKM press release, dated 10 February 2017, and issued on 13 February, on the Housing Protest in the Ward 2 Area.**

The Ward 2 Forum welcomes the communication by TWKM and recognises the importance thereof to allay misunderstandings, perceptions and rumours. It has however on many fronts fallen short of achieving this in the past, thereby significantly contributing to the problems.

The Press Release highlights issues, in respect of housing, that have given rise to the current impasse within the communities of the Ward 2 area and elsewhere in TWKM, which have been allowed to build up over many years and which have recently resulted in violent demonstrations in Greyton.

The problems arise from 2 entirely separate and unrelated causes. Firstly the migration of farm workers mostly from the Eastern Cape, often for seasonal jobs that do not come with permanent local housing. Secondly, growth of the local population has been significantly underestimated during 2 Census assessments, by a factor of over 2.

It saddens us that the opportunities over the years to achieve a viable solution have been missed. To illustrate the statement the following comments arise from the document:

- 1) It only makes mention of certain selected factors and ignores all the internal challenges that have largely contributed to the situation;
- 2) Although Farm 39 does not have to offer to provide land to help resolve the problems, they did so. TWKM responded in such a way that they had to withdraw their offer at the time;
- 3) Land transformation has been managed by TWKM in such a contentious manner that there has been a series of litigations by both sides, culminating in the Houwhoek Agreement of 2007-2008 that became an Order of Court, resulting in TWKM and their Consultants basically forfeiting any responsibility for future participation in resolving the issues;
- 4) It uses the Census figure of 9,500 persons in Ward 2, whilst the actual population figure is closer to 23,000. This has led to a gross underestimate of demand;
- 5) Political instability at TWKM during the last year caused management to evade the looming crisis and culminated in the sudden "resignation" of 2 TWKM Directors and the reinstatement of the previous Municipal Manager as consultant to the Mayor's Office;
- 6) The Dept. of Rural Affairs became, in 2009, the Dept. of Rural Development & Land Reform;
- 7) The press release mention that the Dept. of Rural Development & Land Reform and the Transformation Committee both declined to meet with the protesters is wholly incorrect. A meeting scheduled for the 31 January 2017 was cancelled to facilitate an information session with the Dept. of Rural Development & Land Reform representative Mr Beerwinkel, prior to a full meeting with all the role-players. This meeting took place on the 8<sup>th</sup> February 2017.
- 8) The Press release fails to make any mention of the important and required distinction between the housing need for "beneficiaries" (legitimate recipients of land on Farm 39, as determined by the Act 94 of 1998) and those migrant farm labourers that are unable to secure accommodation on the respective farms on which they work.
- 9) The Press Release also omits to acknowledge that the RDP housing process in the past failed to ensure that houses were correctly allocated to families in need and on the official TWKM housing list.

- 10) The Ward 2 Forum has, since 2010, requested that a full audit be done on the housing allocation for both Farm 39 & Heuvelkroon. This has been ignored. Many house recipients either do not live in the area or are currently renting their RDP houses out to others.
- 11) The statement that TWKM confirmed the extended housing need in the Ward 2 and will address the need without delay, is inaccurate and irresponsible;
- 12) The statement that TWKM can intervene on Farm 39 without the permission of the Minister of Rural Development is contentious and surely an error. If not, then presumably the same would apply to any other farm, especially if the people concerned worked, or used to work on them?
- 13) To only suggest that TWKM must provide housing for 50 families, with no mention of family size, when the whole issue relates several hundred families is absurd and dangerous;
- 14) There is no mention of the Community Committee – so no official communications route and transparency for the future – essential to contain this issue, by keeping everyone informed;
- 15) The formal statutory Ward Committee structure is being completely ignored during this whole process. There has been no communication to the broader community by our Ward Councillor, no feedback from the community is acknowledged by TWKM and no contribution to the current IDP was permitted by TWKM for organisational reasons.
- 16) The situation seems to be summed up in the current IDP (2016-17) where it states in section 6.4.2.9 that “No forward planning has commenced due to the following reasons – budget constraints and delay in finalizing the Transformation agenda from the Community.”
- 17) The housing issue in the TWKM area will never be resolved unless the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), Local Economic Development (LED) & Rural development strategies are aligned and structured toward achieving a sustainable and proactive Socio-Economic objective.

We must trust that the reorganised TWKM really does intend to resolve these problems as urgently as possible. Ward 2 Forum will do what we can to assist this process, in particular by providing the opportunity for community/municipality discussion and communication.

*Ward 2 Forum*

**Ward 2 Forum**

**14 February 2017**