

Minutes of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) meeting with ward leadership of ward 24 for the proposed construction of Mageza Mall on portion of erf 10 000, Pietermaritzburg and portion 1 of erf 456 Pietermaritzburg to be consolidated together, within Msunduzi Local Municipality, KwaZulu – Natal held on site on 6 January 2022

(See attached attendance register)

Introduction

BM Mthembu introduced himself and Mr Ngcobo to the ward 24 leadership as environmental assessors. He explained that there was initially some confusion in terms of boundaries between this ward 24 and ward 23 of Cllr Phungula. The verification was done, and it transpired that the ward was falling under ward 24 of Cllr Nkabini.

Cllr Nkabini introduced himself as a ward 24 Cllr. He introduced Mr Shezi as one of the BEC ward leaders, and Reverend Gwabaza both from ward 24. He explained that although the ward committees were still not constituted but they were likely to form part of the committee as they are leaders and active in community issues in the ward.

Opening

The meeting was officially opened by Mr Mthembu at 11.23. The ward Cllr indicated that he was keen to meet the developer at some stage before the commencement of construction so that issues of possible benefits to the community could be discussed. He explained that communities always have expectations for jobs and the like in such projects.

Apologies

No apologies were recorded.

Presentation of the project.

Mr. Mthembu gave a brief background of the project, and that the background information document (BID) was already sent to Cllr Nkabini.

Mr Mthembu explained that the project was done by a private developer who wanted to construct Mageza Mall comprising an anchor shop, hardware, food outlets and hardware.

Presentation of the EIA process

Mr Mthembu then presented the EIA process to the meeting. He indicated the exact location of structures on site as per the preliminary layout. The site is zoned general industrial and was in the process of being rezoned to commercial to accommodate the proposed development.

Mr Mthembu then outlined the purpose of the EIA, and the importance of the public participation process in particular. Mr Mthembu explained that the EIA process is based on Environmental Management Act of 1998. He then explained what the environment entails in broad terms emphasizing that the idea was to balance social,

economic and environmental aspects in decision making for the benefit of the environment and community. He explained that the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs was the Department responsible for the issuing of the Environmental Authorization. He explained that the EAP was not the one authorising the project, but remained independent in terms of the assessment.

He explained some of the potential environmental impacts on site, and the methods used in assessing the possible environmental impacts. He further explained that the need for the project is also taken into account when making a final decision.

Mr Mthembu further explained that a water use license was to be obtained from the Department of Water and Sanitation due to the proximity of the project to the watercourse.

Mr Mthembu further touched on the importance of heritage objects on site. In this regard KwaZulu – Natal Amafa and Research Institute was going to be engaged regarding heritage related issue.

He also touched on the availability of services on site like electricity, water, sewerage, and stormwater and refuse collection. Mr Mthembu indicated some of the identified stakeholders for the project, which included Msunduzi Local Municipality, Amafa AkwaZulu Natali, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, Department of Water and Sanitation, Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environmental Affairs – Forestry Regulations & Support (DFFE), EDTEA and members of the public. Each of the identified stakeholders was expected to comment from their perspectives. Mr Mthembu explained that the project was already advertised in the Witness and Echo dated 18 November 2021. The advert comprised both the EIA and water use license.

Mr Mthembu briefly touched on the timeframes for the assessment process, and the appeal process once the authorisation was granted.

Comments

The ward Cllr emphasised that communities need to benefit from projects that are rolled out in their areas.

Response: Mr Mthembu responded by saying the developer has also registered his commitment to ensuring involvement of locals wherever possible, especially in terms of jobs that are likely to be created by the project.

Comment

They registered their support for the project. They indicated that they would like to meet the developer before the construction phase of the project.

Response: Mr Mthembu thanked the ward leadership for their attendance.

Comments

The ward Cllr promised to explain the current unfolding assessment to the ward at any given opportunity.

Response. Mr Mthembu thanked the Cllr and indicated that after the meeting he was going to erect the site notices on site.

The ward Cllr then requested Reverend Gcwabaza to bless the project site and pray for the project. The prayer was conducted on site.

Closure

In the absence of further questions and comments, the meeting was officially adjourned at 12.11.