

**PRE-APPLICATION MEETING MINUTES – MEETING HELD BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS (EDTEA), APPLICANT – THORNVILLE SQUARE HOLDINGS (PTY) LTD AND MONDLI CONSULTING SERVICES**

**Project Title: Proposed Construction of Thornville Development “The Square of Thornville” to include Fuel Service Station, Retail Centre with anchor shop, line shops, restaurants and gymnasium on Portion 104 (of 30) of the Farm Leliefontein No. 1175 at Thornville, within Msunduzi Municipality, KwaZulu – Natal**

**Meeting Venue - Virtual Meeting**

**Date: Tuesday, 31 January 2023 at 10:00am**

**1. Opening and Introduction**

BM enquired if the Department or the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) was to facilitate and chair the meeting. SJ confirmed that BM could facilitate the meeting.

The meeting was officially opened by BM at 10am, and all attendees introduced themselves.

Attendees:

- Shawn Janneker: EDTEA (SJ)
- Sphelele Makhwasa EDTEA (SM)
- Anelisa Mhatu: Mondli Consulting (AM)
- Brian Mthembu: Mondli Consulting (BM)
- Mbuso Madondo: Thornville Square Holdings (Pty) Ltd (MM)
- Mthoko Zungu: Thornville Square Holdings (Pty) Ltd (MZ)
- Thulasizwe Thabethe: Thornville Square Holdings (Pty) Ltd (TT)

**2. Apologies**

SJ registered an apology for his colleague from EDTEA, Ms Nombasa Kama.

**3. Purpose of the meeting**

The purpose of the meeting was to open the lines of communication amongst the parties involved i.e. the Department, Developer and the EAP. To ensure that the parties understand the intentions of the project from this initial stage.

SJ registered an apology for the delay in holding the pre-application meeting, which was attributable to the challenges the Department was experiencing with

internet. He acknowledged that the meeting is supposed to have happened already.

#### **4. Project Description / Site Location and Alternatives / Landownership**

BM handed over to the Developer party to outline the project description. MM gave a broad picture of the development projects planned for the greater Pietermaritzburg area, and how this project fitted in the scheme of things. He touched on the N3 expansion, and the development expansion that was moving away from the city centre. Thornville is seen as the area that is strategically located viewed from the latter perspective. Thornville is seen as a new node, based on the number of households, schools and businesses that have been built in the area in the recent past.

The proposed development is likely to be beneficial to the whole Thornville neighbourhood, R56 including the travellers to and from the Eastern Cape, and the whole precinct.

MM highlighted the activities that are proposed for the Centre, which includes the service station, retail centre with shops, restaurants and gymnasium. MM indicated that they were already in discussion with a few anchor retail chains who have shown interest in the node. They are also in discussions with potential investors and tenants, and the latter stakeholders seem to be satisfied with square metres likely to be on offer. MM confirmed that the land was owned by Mr Zungu.

BM indicated that the site was the only one available to the developer, however the EAP will explore alternatives within the site itself, taking into consideration a small portion of grassland as reflected in the Msunduzi Environmental Management Framework (EMF). The biodiversity study is currently underway, and will take all possible alternatives into consideration.

BM projected the preliminary site development plan (SDP), which showed the exact location of the proposed structures on site.

SM wanted clarity on the exact location of the site. The co-ordinates were furnished to him. He then confirmed that he managed to locate the site.

#### **5. Need And Desirability of the proposed development**

BM highlighting the issue of jobs, the alignment with Msunduzi integrated development plan (IDP) and Spatial Development Framework (SDF). He touched on the expressed commitment by the Developer to uplift the locals.

The proposed development is aimed at decentralizing economic activities from the Pietermaritzburg central business district (CBD) to the outskirts of the city.

The Centre will provide shopping services closer to the people of Thornville and the surroundings.

## **6. Identified Listed Activities**

The activities below were identified by the EAP as most likely to be triggered by the proposed development:

- Listing Notice 1, activity 14 which speaks to the storage of dangerous goods on site. In this case fuel and gas.
- Listing Notice 1, activity 27 which speaks to the clearance of an area of 1 Ha, but below 20Ha. The size of the site is 2.8Ha, and it is anticipated that the development footprint might exceed 1 Ha.
- Listing Notice 3, activity 12 which speaks to the removal of 300m<sup>2</sup> of indigenous vegetation in KZN, in an area that is classified as sensitive. This is in the context of the small portion of the grassland as highlighted in the Msunduzi EMF.

SJ added that the following activities needed to be looked at as well:

- Listing Notice 3, activity 4 which speaks to the widening of the road - wider than 4 metres with a reserve less than 13.5 metres.
- Listing Notice 3, activity 10 which speaks to the storage of dangerous goods in containers with a combined capacity of 30 but not exceeding 80 cubic metres of areas with sensitive environments like watercourses and protected areas.
- Listing Notice 3, activity 18 which speaks to the widening of the road by more than 4 metres, or the lengthening of a road by more than 1 kilometre.

BM thanked SJ for highlighting these activities, and confirmed that the EAP was to scrutinise them to ascertain their applicability.

## **7. Identified Interested And Affected Parties**

BM stated that the following Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) were already identified:

- KwaZulu – Natal Department of Economic Development, Tourism & Environmental Affairs (EDTEA)
- Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife
- KwaZulu – Natal Amafa and Research Institute
- Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS)
- Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DFFE) (Forestry Regulations & Support)
- KZN Department of Transport (KZNDot)

- Msunduzi Local Municipality
- Umgungundlovu District Municipality
- Department of Mineral Resources and Energy.

SJ requested that the Fuel Retailers Association be added on the list, and BM confirmed that they will be added.

### **8. Engineering Services on site (water, electricity, sewerage, access, stormwater and waste management).**

All required services are available on site, however the issue of sewerage will be explored with the Municipality in order to establish the disposal method that will be used by the proposed development.

MM indicated that in their engagement with Msunduzi Municipality it transpired that there were plans for the node in question with regards to sewerage services. He indicated that a road that is branching from R56 past the site was to be upgraded. He further indicated that it would appear there is a plan for the sewer line that will run in the vicinity of the site coming from Willowfontein connecting Mpumelelo area (France). It would appear the site will be within a connecting distance of this proposed sewer line.

### **9. Screening Tool / Specialists Studies**

BM indicated that most of the studies are underway based on the national screening tool. He confirmed that the following studies were at an advanced stage:

- Terrestrial Biodiversity Assessment.
- Wetland Study.
- Socio-Economic Impact Assessment / Feasibility.
- Geotechnical Study.
- Traffic Impact assessment.

Any study highlighted by the screening tool and not conducted, will be the subject of a detailed motivation to be submitted to EDTEA.

A topographical survey was already conducted for the site. The Planner who will rezone the site is already appointed. The stormwater plan will also be compiled.

### **10. Public Participation Process**

The public participation will be conducted in line with the EIA Regulations, Regulation 41, and Chapter 6 of the EIA Regulations, 2014 as amended.

The process will include, site notices, newspaper adverts in both English and IsiZulu, and the circulation of the draft report for a 30-day commenting period as stipulated in the EIA Regulations.

The Developer has also commenced with the consultation of policy makers popularising the project. It will be assessed whether the public meeting is required.

## **11. Recommendations from EDTEA**

SJ emphasised that issues of compliance and enforcement with regards to the site need to be in order. He also emphasised the issue of clearly outlining the need and desirability of the proposed development, market demand and alternatives.

SJ also emphasised the issue of green designs and climate change to be highlighted by the project. He touched on issues relating to lights and water harvesting as examples.

BM confirmed that the EAP was not aware of any pending issues of compliance with regards to this specific site. It has been explained to the Developer that the project cannot commence until an environmental authorisation is issued.

MM confirmed that the project was to take issues of climate change and green designs into consideration. He highlighted that some of the investors have raised these issues e.g. use of solar, type of material to be used, water harvesting and buildings with natural lights.

SM requested that the draft report be in the form of both the hard copy and soft copy put in the USB. BM confirmed that this will be done on submission of the draft report.

## **12. Way Forward and Closure**

BM checked if any of the participants had anything to add before he outlined the way forward. There was none.

BM indicated that the environmental authorisation form was to be lodged in the next few weeks, once the minutes were circulated to attendees and confirmed and signed off by the Department.

BM confirmed that the public participation process was to proceed with speed, inclusive of the circulation of the draft report to stakeholders for comments. Any comments received were to be incorporated accordingly; and the final report submitted to the Department. BM emphasised that the Department has 107 days to take a decision after receipt of the final report.

BM was to circulate the minutes to all attendees for corrections and confirmation as the case may be.

In the absence of further inputs, the meeting was officially adjourned at 11:15 am.