



Date: 11/2/2020

To: Liesbeek Leisure Properties Trust

CC: Premier of the Western Cape
National Heritage Council
President of the Republic of South Africa

Reg: Colonial Development of the Liesbeek/ Black River Heritage Site

As the Democratic Federation of Indigenous People we are disturbed at the events that are unfolding regarding the River Club Redevelopment by Liesbeek Leisure Properties Trust in Observatory Cape Town. As the events unfold one cannot help but be gripped by a sense of Déjà Vu as this is like history repeating itself once more. The Liesbeek and Black Rivers converge in a tranquil setting that has been the ancestral land of Indigenous People for centuries and was occupied by the Cochoqua and other indigenous groupings. The land in question has a historical value as well a value that speaks to the rights of the Indigenous People to own, and manage, or develop their own lands, and futures, in keeping with their values and not the mercenary values of commercial developers. The current thrust and the accompanying dynamics are reminiscent of colonialism and its incestuous child apartheid.

When the colonials came here they promoted the idea that they brought development and then took away our lands and developed it at the expense of our lives, our values and our lands and now we hear the same kind of developers making the same empty utterances and this in direct relation to our lives, our values and our land.

This goes further and we see the developers buying consent, and spreading division, within the ranks of the Indigenous People in order to take both their rights, and their lands, and again this is reminiscent of colonialism and apartheid. The strategy of divide-and-conquer is seen now in all its nakedness, this as the mercenary figures within the Indigenous People, are bought to front for the colonial developers in order for the developers to gain a semblance of legitimacy and credibility.

As indigenous People we reject both the strategy and those who serve as front men for the colonial enterprise that is shrouded in the mantle of "development". The creation of a false narrative-of-consent is a contemptuous exercise and not in keeping with the ethical framework of listening to Indigenous voices but rather manufacturing voices that appropriate the voice of the Indigenous People whilst at the same time serving colonial ends and interests.

On another note one cannot but note the racial overtones that are both explicit and implicit in the development. Once more Indigenous Rights and Values are seen as lesser than colonial or white values and can be bought sold or traded yet this would never happen to white or colonial heritage sites. Is this also a case of déjà vu and history repeating itself and Indigenous Rights nothing more than a commodity traded in, and on, by mercenary colonial developers out for a quick buck even at the expense of the sub human Indigenous people?

The Responsibility of Government in terms of Restorative Justice

In relation to the above the government of the Republic of South Africa has a responsibility to ensure that justice to the Indigenous people is served and served meaningfully. The government post 1994 implied and undertook to engage in restorative justice and the continued silencing of Indigenous voices and the appropriation of their voices by colonial type developers if not in keeping with both the letter of 1994. 1994 spoke of reconciliation and nation building and this act by the developers is neither restorative justice nor is it redress rather it is a continuation of the colonial enterprise. We hold to be true that the colonial enterprise has to be stopped and true nation building and reconciliation needs to happen but that cannot happen in an environment of deceit and exploitation.

Government cannot be a bystander or observer because it is mandated to protect heritage sites of the indigenous people and it cannot facilitate a process of further colonization even under the rubric of "development".

The role and responsibility of the National Heritage Council

The National Heritage Council in keeping with its mandate is charged with looking after Heritage sites and we are perturbed that it seems to be failing in that respect this as it stand as observer rather than

ensure that any dialogue is fair transparent and open. If the situation is being manipulated by the colonial developer, or the developer has engaged in fronting, then the NHC is duty bound to remedy the situation or it becomes an inherent part of the problem rather than a solution.

We demand that the NHC steps up to the plate and fulfills its mandate, and obligation, to engage in the protection of the Liesbeek/Black River Heritage site, and ensure that a transparent process is engaged in, and this by legitimate role players, and stakeholders, and that the Indigenous voices, and concerns, are not sidelined and the people themselves marginalized and silenced. The NHC is well aware that the proposed Liesbeek Leisure Development is part of the Two Rivers Urban Park and as such is a heritage site that must, as a matter of form, be protected. In light of the afore we place on record that the NNC needs to start being an objective party not a disinterested observer.

As the Indigenous Collective we:

1. Reject the false narrative by people fronting for colonial developers
2. We object and reject to the fronting itself as its as unethical and unjust as fronting under BBBEE
3. We reject the appropriation of Indigenous Heritage sites
4. We reject the commodification of Indigenous Lands
5. We reject the continued cultural genocide visited on us in the name of "development"
6. We reject to the divisive strategy of the developers

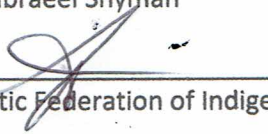
This being said we demand the following:

1. The heritage site should be left as a heritage site
2. The Indigenous People themselves will decide on its future
3. An honest and truly representative consultative process is formulated
4. The voices of the legitimate Indigenous structures are listened to
5. The artificial structure constructed by the developer be dismantled

As Indigenous People we say, an injury to one is an injury to all, and this, though happening in the Western Cape, affects all Indigenous People throughout the nation. This heritage part of a greater shared heritage and an important, and integral, part of collective history and consciousness, and cannot be traded for gain by one party or another.

Thanking you

Rassool Jibraeel Snyman


Democratic Federation of Indigenous People SA