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The Chairperson & Committee
Observatory Civic Association
Observatory

I fully support the Observatory Civic Association in challenging the City of Cape Town's decision to grant the River Club property owners the right to:

- alter the land use zoning of the River Club property,
- build on a floodplain below the 1:20 year flood zone,
- alter the drainage of the old Liesbeek River by filling in the river course,
- remove the support for habitat of the river,
- increase the risk of flooding upstream of the property,
- erase the historical and cultural sense of place for First Nations people,
- develop without a proper understanding of hydrological data and analysis of the whole Liesbeek catchment,
- develop without due consideration of alternative options and 'no-go' alternative,
- impact on rights of future generations for short term gain.

The decision of the City of Cape Town to override scientific advice is irrational, anti-scientific and anti-democratic, in a country that claims to be led by the best available science. This has multiple consequences for Cape Town's futures, in the following respects:

- Given the increased amplitude of drought and flood events due to climate change and which are exacerbated by sea level rise, the risk of harm to life and property and ecology is heightened, not lessened. This is folly.
- The development will make more difficult the enforcement of environmental advice elsewhere in the city, at a time when following the best available environmental science management advice has never been more crucial.
- Apartheid spatial reparations require careful spatial planning in the interests of the City as a whole, to repair both ecological and economic harms built into the City's design since the 1600s, in which the Liesbeek River has been a central player as a boundary line between wealth and poverty. Amazon's well-documented brutal conditions of warehouse work does not show it to be a tenant capable of contributing to apartheid reparations: the labour conditions will add to precarity and brutalisation of people (and therefore the climate of violence) not lessen it, and will take over local businesses owned by citizens. The well-documented nett effect of mega businesses like this, is the impoverishment of a city, as profits leave the city and local businesses are forced into closure. Planning that is capable of apartheid redress must foreground dignity, ecological wellbeing, and land restitution.

I offer my commitment and support to the OCA in bringing the matter before the court.

Yours sincerely

Prof Lesley Green