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City of
Johannesburg



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Office of the Town Clerk
Kantoor van die Stadsklerk
JOHANNESBURG

Our Ref. } 51/4/47
Oms Verw }
Your Ref }
U Verw. }

Please ask for/Sprek asseblief
Mr./Mnr. Pearson.

25 JUN 1958
URGENT
90/1/31
NATIVE AFFAIRS DEPT.

MANAGER, NON-EUROPEAN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT.

ACQUISITION OF LAND ON DIEPKLOOF NO. 9, JOHANNESBURG
DISTRICT, FOR NATIVE HOUSING PURPOSES.

I append, for your information, copy of a letter dated the 16th June, 1958, Ref. No. 51/313(N)(2), received from the Secretary for Native Affairs, P.O. Box 384, Pretoria.

I confirm that Dr. Eiselin will receive the Council's deputation on Thursday, the 26th instant at 11.00 a.m., Pretoria and that you will phone the writer about transport arrangements.

14. 2. 58

[Signature]
DEPUTY TOWN CLERK.

1. With further reference to your letter No. 51/4/47 of the 2nd April, 1958, in the above connection, I have to inform you that, after careful consideration of your Council's representations for the acquisition of that portion of Diepkloof which the Crown Mines Ltd., is now prepared to release, the Department is still of opinion that the purchase thereof by the Natives Resettlement Board would be preferable as the land in question is adjacent to an area already being developed by the Board.
2. The position is that, after the resettlement of certain natives from Sophiatown and Newclare in that portion of the Diepkloof area at present held by the Board, only 1,700 sites will be available for the accommodation of natives now incorrectly residing in Alexandra Township. These sites are not sufficient to clear the Township of all the natives working in the area under the jurisdiction of your Council, who must, of course, be provided with accommodation in the south-western Native Townships.
3. The early settlement of the natives in question is of paramount importance and no good purpose would be served by housing only, 1,700 families in one area and, thereafter, having to acquire other ground, with the resultant delay in its acquisition and the provision of services.
4. The question of the control of areas not contiguous or in close proximity to each other and the additional costs involved in supplying essential services to such areas are also factors which have influenced the Department in arriving at its decision.
5. The removal of all the natives living at Alexandra and working in Johannesburg to one area adjoining a native township already controlled by the Board would greatly facilitate the early clearance of one of the worst slum areas in the Union, and this would not only relieve your Council of its responsibility for the removal of these natives, but would also eliminate the present undesirable feature of large numbers of Natives daily traversing the Northern European suburbs of Johannesburg on their way to and from work.

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CITY OF JOHANNESBURG.
NON-EUROPEAN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT.

REPORT OF THE MANAGER
TO THE
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE.

* * * *

ACQUISITION OF PORTION OF THE FARM DIEPKLOOF NO. 9 -
RE-HOUSING OF ALEXANDRA SUB-TENANTS.

In considering its future land requirements for the housing of Native families employed in the city, the Department has over a long period of time, envisaged the acquisition of that portion of Diepkloof No. 9 lying to the east of the existing location of Orlando as this land is favourably situated in relation to the city.

This point is of importance because the areas now being developed are, in some cases, 16 miles and more from the city, resulting in long and costly transport factors having to be taken into account in the development of such land. It would, therefore, be not only in the Council's interests, but would also be of advantage to Native workers, their employers, and, indeed, the Railway Administration if it were possible to settle a large number of families in an area where special arrangements for railway transport need not have to be made.

Some years ago the Native Affairs Department acquired an area of approximately 251 morgen forming portion of this farm, which has been developed by the Council on behalf of the Resettlement Board for Natives from Sophiatown and a start has recently been made on the establishment of a Native township there.

The land referred to in the first paragraph of this report adjoins this latter portion, although it also adjoins the boundary of Orlando East and the position has now arisen that both the Resettlement Board and the Council are claimants for this land and efforts have been made by the Council to get the approval of the Minister of Native Affairs for the Council to acquire it.

Under cover of a minute dated 16th June the Secretary for Native Affairs advised that his Department is of the opinion that the purchase of this ground by the Resettlement Board would be preferable to the Council acquiring it as the land in question is adjacent to an area already being developed by the Board (it must be remembered that the land is also adjacent to Council-owned land).

The Secretary advises that the portion of Diepkloof now being developed by the Resettlement Board will have 1,700 sites available after the resettlement of Natives from Sophiatown and Newclare and that this is not enough to provide accommodation for sub-tenants living in Alexandra Township.

It is stressed that Alexandra sub-tenants working in Johannesburg must be provided with accommodation in the south-western Native townships.

The Secretary/.....

The Secretary advances a number of arguments in support of his contention that the remaining extent of Diepkloof 9 should, therefore, be acquired by the Resettlement Board so as to facilitate administration and also because the adjoining area is already controlled by the Resettlement Board.

The Secretary's claims for this land were considered arguable and, accordingly, a deputation waited on him and Mr. F. Mentz, M.P., together with other senior officials of the Native Affairs Department in Pretoria on the 26th June, 1958, in order to press the Council's claims for this land, which is 1,366 acres in extent, of which approximately 886 acres are suitable for housing. This on the normal density, will suffice to accommodate approximately 5,300 families, which itself will probably be insufficient to house that proportion of the 15,000 sub-tenant families estimated to be living in Alexandra Township and who may be employed in Johannesburg, so that in any event the Secretary's claims to the land on that score alone can be countered by the fact that additional land elsewhere will have to be found for the balance of these sub-tenants.

(The estimate of 15,000 sub-tenant families is made by officials of the Peri-Urban Areas Health Board but is subject to variation when their surveys are completed. It is not known accurately how many of these Natives are employed in Johannesburg.)

The deputation was informed by the Secretary that the Government intends proceeding immediately with the removal of all sub-tenants from Alexandra Township and re-planning it on a reduced density to house approximately 4,000 to 5,000 families.

In regard to the responsibility for this sub-tenant group, discussions over a period of many years, have been held with the various authorities and in a report to this Committee on the 23rd November, 1953, the Committee was advised that the Chairman and the Acting Manager, Non-European Affairs Department, had attended a meeting in the Native Commissioner's office, when representatives of the Alexandra Health Committee had been present, to consider a suggestion of the Minister that Johannesburg should either pay over the proceeds of Services Levy funds which were collected from employers of Natives working in Johannesburg but living in Alexandra, for the development of that Township, or, preferably, for Johannesburg to set aside those funds in a suspense account to be used for the purpose of servicing a special area within the Johannesburg area, for the accommodation of such Alexandra residents who worked in Johannesburg. That suggestion could not be entertained at that time for a variety of reasons, not least because all Services Levy contributions were ear-marked for the provision of services to the south-west areas, and no surplus was available.

The principle has, however, always been accepted by this Department that the Council was responsible for the re-housing of Natives living in Alexandra but working in Johannesburg, and for this reason the Manager suggested to the Secretary at the meeting on the 26th June, 1958, that it would be logical for the Council to acquire and develop the land on Diepkloof 9 and itself re-house the Alexandra sub-tenants who qualify as a straight-forward slum clearance project.

This view is reinforced by a statement made by the Hon. the Minister of Native Affairs during the course of a discussion held with Councillors and officials in Pretoria on the 3rd October, 1951. During the course of these discussions the Minister said that in his opinion the group of Alexandra residents falling under the jurisdiction of the Council and employed in the centre and south of the city, should be removed to the Orlando area.

These/.....

These discussions were within the general framework of considering the establishment of some form of regional planning for the whole of the Reef, and in regard to Alexandra Township the Minister indicated that in his view Alexandra should not be considered as a separate problem but had to be seen as part of the whole peri-urban area to overcome the weaknesses inherent in the present administration of Alexandra. He was of opinion that Johannesburg should accept the principle of incorporation.

It is further supported by a clear recommendation in the Report of the Departmental Committee appointed to consider the future of Alexandra Township and the control of Native townships and settlements dated 12th August, 1949, where in paragraphs 129 and 130 it is said that the question of re-housing the surplus population in the Township must be solved.

"It is considered that the only authority which could undertake a task of this magnitude is a large local authority such as Johannesburg."

Subsequent to the discussions referred to, the Peri-Urban Areas Health Board has, as has already been indicated, been constituted as a local authority in respect of Alexandra Township, so that the aspect of incorporation has been disposed of, but acceptance of the Alexandra sub-tenants can now be considered on the basis set out in this report, whereas this was not possible in the past because of the other heavy commitments facing the Department.

Briefly, this would mean that the Peri-Urban Areas Health Board - the authority which is now responsible (since March, 1958) for the administration of Alexandra - would be responsible for the screening of the population, the removal of the Native sub-tenant families from Alexandra and the subsequent clearance and re-building of that Township, but that these Natives would be handed over to the Council for re-housing and administration at Diepkloof.

The development of this area and the erection of the necessary housing would be on the basis of an ordinary housing scheme. The Council would apply to the Bantu Housing Board for the funds to build houses, which would be erected by the Housing Division (thus providing very necessary work for the Division) and for grants and loans ex Services Levy funds for the installation of the necessary services and the reticulation of the area.

The housing scheme which the Department proposes establishing on Diepkloof would be economic and no loss would thus accrue to the Council. This statement is obviously qualified by the fact that the Council has already agreed to regard £20 per month as the sub-economic margin, and, therefore, tenants whose income falls in the £15 - £20 group would benefit in common with existing tenants of the other townships. There is no means of indicating at this stage what percentage would fall in this group.

Secondly, rentals charged by the Council do not always completely cover the full cost of installing and operating some of the recreational and welfare amenities provided by the Council in its Native housing schemes, and to that extent the statement that rents are economic needs qualification.

It must be remembered, however, that even if the Council does not accept responsibility for the re-housing of these sub-tenants from the outset, the Government proposes handing over the administration of the various Native townships now being established and developed by the Resettlement Board to the Council, so that the Council will become liable for these aspects of administration in any case when the schemes are handed over. In reply to

a direct/....

a direct question, the Secretary for Native Affairs, at the interview referred to, confirmed that it is the intention of his Department to hand over all these schemes to the Council.

Because of its proximity to the city, no difficult problems of transport arise, and many Natives would be able to cycle to work. This factor will become even easier in future when a new direct link road between the Native areas and the city through Crown Mines, is built, and which is now the subject of a Services Levy application.

This suggested arrangement with the Government has the advantages that Diepkloof 9 would be acquired by the Council, that planning, development and administration of the townships to be established on the land would be fully integrated with the Council's existing schemes at Orlando from the outset and that duality of effort which would result from the Government or its agencies doing the work, would be avoided. From this Department's point of view it is of considerable importance that the present administrative difficulties flowing from the separate administration of Meadowlands and portion of Diepkloof by the Resettlement Board should not be extended as there are many points of difference between the rents charged, standards adopted, amenities provided and the system of administration followed between the Council and the Resettlement Board. These differences are not in the interests of the Native population, and since all the areas presently being developed and administered by the Resettlement Board will be transferred to the Council's administration in terms of the agreement entered into between the Council and the Government at the inception of the Sophiatown clearance scheme, it is important that a uniform policy be followed in these areas as far as is possible, otherwise this Department will be confronted with serious administrative problems when it comes to take over the areas.

Finally, attention must be drawn to the fact that, ignoring the Alexandra sub-tenants, insufficient land is owned by the Council at the moment to re-house Natives for whose accommodation it is responsible.

Briefly, approximately 17,700 sites are still available on Council-owned land within the Mentz Line, but 26,600 families must be provided for, leaving a short-fall of 8,900 sites, which, on the basis of 6 sites per acre, requires 1,500 acres of additional land. The natural increase of the present population is estimated to be 2,400 families per annum, needing 400 acres of additional land per year.

The only land available in the south-west areas which could be acquired is the 886 acres suitable for housing on Diepkloof 9, the possibility of acquiring 625 acres at some time in the future on portion of Diepkloof 9 North, approximately 700 acres on Albertynsville and Avalon and approximately 1,000 acres on Klipriviersoog 47, including Protea and adjacent land. All these areas, however, suffer from certain disabilities, limiting their use, so that there is very little land which is readily available to the Council, and this fact emphasizes the importance of acquiring the whole of Diepkloof 9.

In considering/.....

In considering alternative land, the possibility of extensions in the vicinity of Eastern Native Township is under investigation, but even if this proves possible, it is considered by the writer, the Director of Housing and the City Engineer that consideration should be given to the establishment of a new Native area to the south-east of the city in the vicinity of the Germiston locations now being developed at Natalspruit. That, however, is merely mentioned in passing and does not concern the issue with which this report is immediately concerned, namely, the acquisition of Diepkloof 9.

IT IS RECOMMENDED:

That the Secretary for Native Affairs be informed that in consideration of this Council being permitted to acquire the farm Diepkloof No. 9 for Native housing purposes, the Council agrees to use it for the establishment of a Native township to re-house those Alexandra sub-tenants who are employed in the areas under the jurisdiction of the Council and who qualify for re-housing.

W. J. P. CARR.
M A N A G E R.

WJPC/KS.
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