



31 August 2009

Email: newlandspool@capetown.gov.za

Re: **Comment on the Newlands Aquatic Centre Redevelopment**

Sir

Thank you for the copy of the proposal made available to us. We have summarised and discussed the salient points of the proposal with our members and have received a unanimous mandate to object to any further processing of the proposal. The key objections to the proposal are:

1. Process and scope of public participation.

The scope advertisement of the proposal has been inadequate given the value of the land parcel under discussion. The extraordinary disposal of an asset such as this land parcel demands the comment of a far wider constituency than has been targeted by these advertisements.

The advertisements which have been placed have referred our members to information which has either not been available, has been incomplete or has been furnished in such a fashion as to discourage full understanding or copying of the documentation.

It is our opinion that the time period allowed by the process is inadequate to obtain proper public participation, discussion and understanding of the full implication of the proposal.

2. Beneficiary of the process

We believe that it is wholly inappropriate for a single sporting code/body to benefit from the disposal of a City of Cape Town asset in the manner set out in the proposal. Further we question the location of such a facility should such a facility be deemed necessary or desirable the matrix of 14 venues is highly subjective and would appear to place the facility far from the most poorly resourced and more densely populated areas which are in desperate need of recreational infrastructure.

We reject, in the absence of any other proposals, that the proposed allocation of the proceeds is in the best interest of Cape Town's sportsmen and advance that it simply benefits a small group of SWIMSA members and top swimmers .

3. Management of the proposed facility

The proposal does not provide detail as to the managing entity of the new facility, beyond that it is to be SWIMSA. It would appear that SWIMSA is a sporting body and has no experience or track record of the management, operation and maintenance requirements of a facility such as is proposed. The maintenance and operational costs of an ambitious facility such as proposed will quite likely fall back onto the City of Cape Town which has already failed to adequately fund or manage the maintenance on the modest existing facility. Should the City feel the need for such a facility surely proposals should be requested from entities with a track record in the development and maintenance of similar facilities to ensure that the City is best protected against an ongoing overhead cost. This process has been followed in respect of the development of the Convention Centre and should surely guide any similar development undertaken by the City whether independently or in partnership with another entity.

4. Land Use

The nature of the proposal is on a conceptual level and as such there is limited opportunity for detailed comment around the land use aspects. The proposal however is based on the notion of developing a total building area in the order of 35 000 sqm. The proposal does not set out the detail in respect of bulk, height, coverage or the other salient aspects save some sketches indicating extensive swathes of green space. This is wholly misleading in that none of the access roadways, grade parkings and similar hardsurfacing of the site



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is shown. The parking to be provided, stated at 758 bays, would require a further 20 000sqm of space whether this be structured basements or hardsurfacing.

The heights indicated on the sketches bear no relation to the adjoining erven and it is contended that even on a conceptual level the massing shown cannot be supported.

As the scale of the aquatic facility is tied to the total developable area any reduction of the developable area will result in a reduction in the centre and a severely compromised facility.

While the surrounding community is not united on the issue of whether any development should take place on the site or precisely what form this should take they were unanimous in their rejection of scale and bulk being proposed on the site in this instance.

5. Council Branch Comments

The comments from the various Council branches are attached to the proposal, critically Environmental Resources oppose the loss of the green space and public amenities, Spatial and Urban planning oppose the proposal as out of scale and character and reinforce this with a comment on the “overbulking” of the site. Interestingly the Transport comment, while supporting the proposal, adds the caveat that a TIA will be required indicating that the potential impact of the development, its traffic generation, points of access and egress and similar concerns have not been considered given the level of information available in this proposal.

6. Alternate proposals

As ratepayers we reject the notion that the City enter into a negotiation to dispose of a valuable asset without considering any alternative options and fully applying their minds to the process which will yield the best result for the City and it's ratepayers. In this instance it is clear that no alternatives have been canvassed and it would appear from the documentation that a process to solicit such alternatives has not even been considered.

In the absence of such a proposal call, tender or other open process we reject the Council proceeding with the processing of this proposal.

7. Conclusion

We object most strongly to the Council proceeding with the processing of this application. As set out above we believe that the process is flawed, that the proposal is not sustainable on it's own merits and that in the absence of any viable alternatives having been researched the Council officials can be shown not to have properly applied their minds should they proceed with the processing of this application.

Yours

Stephen Whitehead
For the Newlands Residents Association