

TAKING LEGISLATURE TO THE PEOPLE (TLP) OVERSIGHT VISIT REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION; CULTURE, SPORT AND RECREATION CONDUCTED AT NOMOYA MASISLELA MUSEUM IN BETHAL, GOVAN MBEKI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY ON 13 SEPTEMBER 2017 – DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, SPORT AND RECREATION

1. INTRODUCTION

Section 118 (1) (a) and (b) (i) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa empowers a provincial legislature to facilitate public access to and involvement in its oversight processes. The Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature conducted the Taking Legislature to the People (TLP) event at Govan Mbeki Local Municipality from 11 – 15 September 2017.

The Portfolio Committee on Education; Culture, Sport and Recreation (the Committee) has a mandate in terms of Rule 119 of the Rules and Orders of the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature to hold the Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation (the Department) accountable through various oversight mechanisms during the course of a financial year.

As part of the TLP event, the Committee undertook an oversight visit to Nomoya Masilela Museum and also participated in the Joint Social and Economic Cluster Public Hearing to listen to the concerns of the community relating to the delivery of government services.

House resolutions emanating from this oversight visit report will be referred to the Department for implementation and report back to the Legislature.

2. PURPOSE OF THE OVERSIGHT VISIT

The purpose of the TLP oversight visit conducted on 13 September 2017 was as follows:

- (a) To assess the co-operation between the municipality and the Department in the management of the museum infrastructure and reports of vandalism at the facilities;

3. METHOD OF WORK

In preparation for the TLP visits, the Research Unit conducted preliminary visits to projects of the Department in Govan Mbeki Local Municipality.

The approved programme for the TLP oversight activities was circulated to the Committee and stakeholders such as the Municipality, the Department, Provincial Treasury, Office of the Auditor-General SA, Office of the Public Service Commission and SALGA.

Subsequently the Committee met on 04 October 2017 to consider and adopt its draft TLP report. The House resolutions emanating from this report will be referred to the Department for implementation and report back to the Legislature.

4. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

The following observations were made by the Committee on Nomoya Masilela Museum:

- (a) The museum is jointly managed by the Department and Govan Local Municipality; the tour guide is employed by the Municipality and the caretaker is employed by the Department.
- (b) The statues of Nomoya Masilela and Gert Sibande (the Lion of the East) are in the centre of Bethal town (which is just across the road from the museum). The Committee was taken on a tour of the statues, the Amphitheatre and the museum which was an enriching experience reflecting on the history of the area and the crucial roles of these struggle heroes, including Nokuthula Simelane.
- (c) The Department has fulfilled its mandate to preserve and promote arts and culture within the municipality rests with the Department by funding the Nomoya Masilela Museum, together with seven (7) other arts and culture institutions in Govan Mbeki Local Municipality.

5. PRESENTATION BY THE DEPARTMENT AND MUNICIPALITY

The Department provided a profile of the museum did not present the profile to the Committee. Instead, the Committee interacted with the Hon MEC for Culture, Sport and Recreation, Hon N Mahlangu, during the tour of the statues and the museum. Questions were raised during the tour of the museum, which the Municipality tour guide and the Department officials responded to on site. The ward councillors were in also attendance.

The following was noted from the Department's presentation on Nomoya Museum:

Background

The Nomoya Masilela Museum displays the history regarding the origins of the town of Bethal as well as its involvement in the Anglo Boer War. It was originally the magistrate's office, where people were detained in cells on the premises. Formerly known as Bethal Museum, the precinct was renamed after a student from Mzinoni High School who was gunned down during a student protest in the township.

The main building which used to be the old Magistrate's court comprises of two big halls, one used as the main exhibition area and the other used for meetings. In addition, there are three male prison cells and four female cells on the premises; there are also office blocks used for administration purposes.

The building was established in 1890 and thus has Provincial Heritage site status (more than 100 years old). It stands on an erf of 2 855 square metres.

The municipality saw the need to upgrade the museum and include local icons and their histories, who were interviewed to share their experiences and knowledge of Gert Sibande and the potato appraisals. Such icons include Gert Sibande, Nokuthula Simelane, Nomoyo Masilela and Govan Mbeki (isithwala-Ndwe).

A business plan was drafted and submitted to the Department to request funding for the project. The Department approved funding for the Gert Sibande Cultural Precinct and Regeneration of Bethal Museum, which is the only one in the District. An MOU was signed with the Municipality as the implementing agent. The regenerated museum was officially opened in 2012 and forms part of the Liberation Heritage Route.

Provision of staff

The staff consists of the clerk, cleaner and a groundsman. The Department seconded one (1) official as a caretaker of the museum. There is no qualified manager responsible for the museum. The tour guide, who was also a struggle veteran, was appointed by the Municipality.

Marketing

The Museum has established networks with other museums and government departments to market it to the public, It also has working relationship with the Department of Correctional Services, Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA) and other municipalities in the

district. The museum was showing the Nelson Mandela exhibition to the open until 31 October 2017.

The museum has also seen the establishment of the Friends of Nomoya Masilela Museum that sponsors its management.

The museum hosted the Potato Boycott Time Travel event to promote the learning, social cohesion and community building on 29 July 2017. It was proposed that this event form part of the annual activities of the museum to market itself to new audiences.

5.1. Challenges

- The museum is inadequately staffed;
- The infrastructure is deteriorating and this poses a threat to its sustainability;
- The statues in the town are vandalized by the public;
- The artefacts in the museum are not properly recorded.

6. FINDINGS

The Committee made the following findings:

- 6.1. There is no qualified manager responsible for the overall functionality of the museum.
- 6.2. The museum infrastructure is deteriorating and is in need of constant maintenance.
- 6.3. The statues of Gert Sibande and Nomoya Masilela in the centre of the town are subjected to vandalism by the public.
- 6.4. The artefacts in the museum are not recorded according to museological standards.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommended that the Department must implement the following:

- 7.1. Ensure that a qualified and suitable manager is appointed for the museum. Provide a progress report by 30 November 2017.

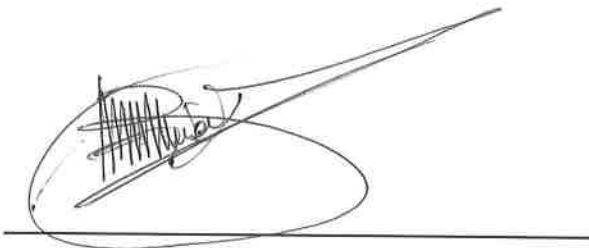
- 7.2. Ensure that the entire museum infrastructure is renovated and properly maintained; it must be declared as a heritage site. Provide a progress report by 30 November 2017.
- 7.3. Strengthen the security measures in relation to the statues of Gert Sibande and Nomoya Masilela in the town (surveillance cameras should be considered). Provide a progress report by 30 November 2017.
- 7.4. Ensure that the museum artefacts, which are assets of the Department, are recorded correctly according to museological standards and are adequately secured. Provide proof of this and a progress report by 30 November 2017.

The Chairperson requests the House to adopt this Committee report with its findings and recommendations. The Department is expected to ensure that the House Resolutions contained in this Committee report are implemented and that a progress report is submitted to the Legislature by 30 November 2017.

8. CONCLUSION

The Chairperson would like to thank the Honourable Members of the Committee for their constructive input during the oversight visit to **Nomoya Masilela Museum** during the Taking Legislature to the People in Govan Mbeki Local Municipality.

The interaction with the Hon MEC for Culture, Sport and Recreation and senior officials from the Department; the Municipality, as well as the museum staff was most appreciated.



HON. VV WINDVOËL (MPL)

**CHAIRPERSON: PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION; CULTURE, SPORT AND RECREATION**

13/10/2017
DATE