

LETTER TO SRA RESIDENTS BY MARTIN TINNEFELD

RE: Sundowner Park.

25 April 2016

Dear Residents

Sundowner Park – tier 4 park – Parks and Zoo Department – Tax payer money

I am so glad that some of the residents are making good use of their time and are getting involved in the park. It is nice to see our tax-payers money put to good use.”

Let me explain how this works (the tax payers’ money being allocated):

Parks and Zoo Department has largely downscaled their in-house staff and are more and more making use of independent contractors who have registered with the local government and/or municipality to obtain tenders. These contractors issue invoices to the relevant department at commercial rates. This is then approved by the relevant department and the contract to do A-Z awarded to the winning quote. This does not mean that the quote was the lowest, as these contractors go through a rotation on the list of available contractors on a departments suppliers/contractors. This could well mean that all contractors have been awarded contracts but one has not yet been awarded a contract. In such a case it is this contractors’ prerogative to be awarded said contract. In this case, under discretion of the relevant department, the contractors can issue a price to their liking.

If the in-house staff would do the work, this would be a fraction of the cost a contractor requires. For instance: a tree feller (commercial) costs for examples sake R4,000.00 per tree and R 1,600.00 to remove the stump and R 4,000.00 to remove the material cut (including leaves). This wood is then the property of the feller (unless otherwise stipulated) and can be re-sold at R 600.00 per bakkie load. Big Blue-gum trees each have about 20-40 bakkie loads worth of wood in them. So the contractor will receive from tax payers the quoted fee and R 12 000.00 to R 24 000.00 worth of extra income. This also includes their insurance for in case the tree damages private or public land during felling.

The relevant department has a budget per park, where each park is categorized into four levels (Botanical garden tier 1, and so forth, until our type of Park comes along, which is tier 4 park.) This means that our park is to be serviced by the relevant departments in-house staff (or commissioned contractor) four times a year. If however a request is sent through that something extra has to be done, this is then outsourced to a private contractor at commercial rates. Now the Park has a fund from which it draws. This fund is very small and often under-budgeted, as previous years not all moneys were spent and many management plans are out of date. So although they have in-house staff, which are paid, they pay taxpayers money to commercial contractors as they no longer have the capacity to handle all the issues.

Now - what is happening, is that the potential income the contractor is taking away as a profit for his efforts and against his liability insurance, is actually property of the Parks department. However, the Parks department does not have the administrative ability to cut, chop and sell this wood to

supplement their income. This means, that even if we as residents would like to cut, chop and sell this wood at no cost to the taxpayer and department, to fund the desilting of the dam (estimated R 180 000.00) and remediation of the channel from Taurus to the Dam (estimated R 60 000.00), this would not be possible. The dam will not be desilted by the relevant department. Sorry, let me spell it out (Full Stop). So how are we going to fund the desilting of the dam now? Remediation of the erosion between the dam and Taurus road?

Kind regards

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