

# MSUNDUZI ASSOCIATION OF RESIDENTS, RATEPAYERS AND CIVICS (MARRC)

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27 July, 2020

Dear Mr Duma

**Re Zoom Meeting 9<sup>th</sup> July and your email dated 16 July, 2020.**

I do apologise for the late reply to your email. I have been unwell with flu the past two weeks and self-isolating (my COVID-19 test result was negative).

At the outset, MARRC wishes to thank you for your transparent and progressive engagement with our organisation to improve service delivery in our city. We refer to our Zoom meeting dated 9 July 2020 and respond to your subsequent email on the 16 July, 2020. We acknowledge receipt thereof and confirm the following, namely:

1. **Outstanding documents:** At the meeting, it was agreed that we will receive various documents for our perusal, which included, inter alia:
  - 1.1 The Auditor-General's report for the years 2017/2018 and 2018/2019.
  - 1.2 Monthly progress AG tracking reports for heads of departments.
  - 1.3 New process plan for the IDP.
  - 1.4 Recovery plan.
  - 1.5 List of investigations being undertaken by the municipality.
  - 1.6 Management Letter: It is our understanding that although the Auditor General is the author of this document, it relates to the well-being of our city and it is in the best interest of all concerned residents and ratepayers to be privy to such documents.

We acknowledge, with thanks, the receipt of your letter of appointment from Mr Johan van der Merwe. This will help us to better understand your mandate, terms of reference and powers that have been vested in you, in your capacity as the City Administrator.

2. **Planned engagements:** We are still waiting for Mr Zimu to post the IDP and Budget on the website of the municipality, and will appreciate if this can be finalised as soon as possible.
3. **Ongoing engagements with the municipality:** As agreed, we will engage with the municipal manager and introduce him to Paul Smith from Kagiso Trust.
4. **Social media pamphlet:**
  - 4.1 We confirm that MARRC is an independent and non-political civic organisation that aims to act in the best interests of the residents and ratepayers in the city.
  - 4.2 Part of our mandate is to advocate and promote active citizenry.
  - 4.3 The pamphlet was intended to inform all residents and ratepayers of the tariff increases. The responses which we received from residents and ratepayers informed us that the majority of ratepayers were not aware of these increases.
  - 4.4 One of our mandates is to keep residents and ratepayers informed transparently on service delivery issues and related costs, which have a direct impact on them.
  - 4.5 The distribution of the pamphlet does not constitute a political agenda nor propaganda. MARRC is not affiliated or aligned to any political party or agenda and our primary interest is to secure service delivery and the required maintenance and development of the city in which we live.

We, therefore, respectfully submit that the distribution of the pamphlet should not be perceived as a breach of our good faith, trust, or good citizenry and should not lead to a breakdown in our further ongoing engagements. We intend to maintain a progressive, professional and cordial relationship with you and the city administration.

5. We humbly appeal to you to take cognizance that residents, ratepayers and businesses in the city have lost patience with service delivery and related issues. Services delivery has steadily disintegrated over the past 20 years, while costs have spiralled out of control and have become *unaffordable and unsustainable* for most residence, ratepayers and businesses.
6. Respectfully we wish to advise that our engagements with you cannot guarantee that active and passive protest action will be halted. There is growing anger amongst residents and ratepayers and these frustrations will manifest themselves in various unstoppable ways, including protest action, pamphlets, petitions, possible payment postponements, and in extreme cases, some of these frustrations may even lead to violent protests. MARRC does not advocate any unlawful or violent action but wishes to emphasize the levels of frustration of residence, ratepayers and businesses with the Municipality.

7. Whilst we will continue to engage with you and the city's administration, we will also engage with our constituencies to try to instil calm and hope of favourable outcomes.
8. Henceforth we would like our discussions to translate into tangible outcomes such as improved service delivery and visible action in the face of the crises such as the landfill crisis.
9. A primary step in this respect would be if the Municipality were to be unequivocally seen to be finally working with citizens in good faith and in a transparent manner that would allow meaningful engagement. This would entail, an acknowledging of our letters and answering questions based on our Constitutional rights as citizens, the applicable statutory and/or common law and applicable regulations, and Municipal bylaws.
10. The ratepayers must see tangible results with a sense of urgency. They would like to believe that action and service delivery will become the new currency of engagement. This has not been the case for some time. When this happens then it is likely that protest action will start to slow down.

In conclusion, we reaffirm our commitment to working with you to achieve the common objective of restoring Msunduzi to being the "City of Choice". We trust you will afford us the opportunity in this respect and we will respectfully reciprocate with assistance and support, in achieving our mutual beneficial outcomes.

Yours faithfully



**Anthony Waldhausen**

**Chairperson**

**Msunduzi Association of Residents, Ratepayers and Civics (MARRC)**

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