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How to report a municipal fault correctly

BY Earl Baillache

WARD 97 councillor, André Beetge wishes to clarify the municipal reference number.

“We are often criticised for insisting that residents obtain or supply a reference number prior to acting on their complaints or enquiries. Experience has taught us that many people don’t know what this number means or how it came into existence.”

The municipality essentially facilitates three 24-hour call centres:

* Emergency Services (031-361-0000). This number connects residents to Metro Police, the fire department and disaster management that includes fallen trees that pose a threat to life or property after hours. “There is not necessarily a reference number applicable when these services are required, but residents are urged to note the time and official to whom they



WARD 97 councillor, André Beetge.

reported their complaint for follow-up purposes.”

* Engineering (080-311-1111, *WhatsApp* 073-148-3477 or email eservices@durban.gov.za). This for all matters that includes sewage, water, roads, parks, but not electricity. A reference number will be issued comprising an initial six-digit number starting with the year (20) followed by the month (09) and then the day (18). This is then followed by a / and the sequential number of complaints registered for the day, starting with 1 at midnight. Thus a number like 200918/237 would indicate that it was the 237th complaint received on 18 September.

The reference is further confirmation that the complaint was registered on the system, as the digits after the / are system-generated.

“Noting this number for follow-up purposes are extremely important, as with up to 4 000 calls received in a 24-hour cycle, finding a random complaint for follow-up purposes is virtually impossible. It is further very often noted that the municipality’s non-response or inability to react, results from residents reporting incorrectly, not supplying correct or complete location information, refusing to supply contact names or numbers, or assuming that municipal officials know their suburb the same as themselves.

“Nothing can be further from the truth, as often the local depots are merely tasked with maintenance issues, while those responding to complaints are dispatched from the city’s central depots. Likewise where residents convey long-winded essays to express their dismay with the system, how many years this

or that problem has existed, are unclear on what exactly is the problem and what or who is expected to attend.”

“Likewise with engineering, electricity complaints are issued a system-generated reference number, but different from engineering, it does not reflect the year, day or date. The same information is required as above.

“Once a problem is reported and a reference number issued, follow-up needs to be done using the same reference number and the complaint must not be reported over and over again in the hope that it will attract more attention. Complaints are attended in sequence of reporting, so reporting the same problem again instead of following up on the original report, does no more than creating additional jobs for the same problem and causing delays for others who are also waiting in line to be served.”

The municipality is still subject to Covid-19 restrictions that has staff working staggered shifts, without a full work force which implicates on turn around times, availability of vehicles, equipment, stock shortages and so on, so a certain degree of patience is advisable.

“The municipality does not monitor social media, local or regional social media groups or *WhatsApp* groups, so reporting it to the correct platform from where the required action originates or is expected, remains essentially the first course of action. Confirming that it has been reported and quoting the reference number on these social media platforms will go a long way in reducing over reporting and speed up attendance, as different teams would not receive dispatches to the same problem.”

What is required to report a problem:

1. Name and surname of reporter.
2. Contact number.
3. Address that includes street name, number and suburb.
4. What exactly is the problem (is it fresh water or sewage, is the water seeping or gushing, is it a burst pipe or a missing clamp,

is it inside the property, on the verge or in the road).

5. What action is required, requested or expected.

* Electricity (080-311-1111, *WhatsApp* 0767912449 or email custocare@elec.durban.gov.za or eservices@durban.gov.za).

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NOTICE OF AN APPLICATION FOR AN ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION

Notice is hereby given in terms of Section 24 of the National Environmental Management Act (No. 107 of 1998): EIA Regulations 2014 (as amended) that Dan Spares cc will be submitting an application for environmental authorisation to the KZN Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (EDTEA)

Project Background:

Metamorphosis Environmental Consultants has been appointed by Dan Spares cc to undertake an Environmental Authorisation process for the proposed housing development on Erf 2954, 2955 and 2956 Kingsburgh Extension 9, Shulton Park within the eThekweni Municipality. This project was previously advertised in mid 2018, but due to the time elapsed, EDTEA have requested an updated public participation process to be undertaken.

Project description

The project will involve the development of the three separate properties, composed of, in total, 188 (reduced from previously proposed 390) double storey complexes with associated infrastructure. The building footprint will be approximately 1,2ha in total (previously 2ha).

Site location:

The properties are located in Shulton Park and the centre point of the Erf (which falls on Erf 2957 between the 3 development properties) lies at 30o04'13.33"S and 30o51'23.42"E.

EIA Process:

The proposed development has been identified to trigger Activities 19 and 27 of Listing Notice 1 (GNR983 as amended) and Activity 12 of Listing Notice 3 (GNR985 as amended) therefore the application will follow procedures of the Basic Assessment Process as specified in GNR 982 (as amended) (Appendix 1) of the 2014 EIA Regulations (as amended).

Opportunity to register/comment:

Parties wishing to register as Interested and Affected Parties (I&AP) or who have comments on the proposed development are requested to forward their details and comments to Metamorphosis no later than 14 days after the publication of this advertisement.

Comments/queries regarding this matter must be referred to:
Company: Metamorphosis Environmental Consultants
Name: Ms. V King
Tel: 031 764 7554
Fax: 031 764 7897
Postal address: PO Box 800, Kloof, 3640.
Email: admin@metamorphosisdbn.co.za

Beaches and pools to open

BEACHES and certain pools will open with necessary safety precautions.

Head of the parks, recreation and culture unit, Thembinkosi Ngcobo, said the city will be closely monitoring the situation to ensure safety precautions such as social distancing and wearing a mask are adhered to.

A total of 19 swimming pools will be reopened to the public as they have met all

the Covid-19 requirements. The remainder of the pools are undergoing repairs and maintenance.

Swimming is still prohibited and will only be allowed from 1 October. Shark safety nets are being installed by the KZN Sharks Board. Lifeguards servicing both pools and beaches are currently undergoing fitness training in preparation.