



Sub-tribe of the



13 May 2024

For Attention: Nicolaas Hanekom
Middelpos EAP
SENT BY EMAIL: admin@enviro-eap.co.za

Dear Sir

OBJECTION: MIDDELPOS HOUSING DEVELOPMENT REF NO. 16/3/3/2/F4/17/3013/24

We, the Tribal Council of the Aikonese sub-tribe of the Cochoqua strongly object to the rezoning and the proposed housing development on PORTION 3 OF FARM KLIPRUG NO. 282. We base our objection on the following premises:

1. Alienation of land that was the original or first habitat of the indigenous Cochoqua Khoi
2. Threat to the Cochoqua's Conservation Project in collaboration with the West Coast National Park that aims to preserve and rehabilitate the unique Saldanha Peninsula bioregion.

A. ALIENATION OF LAND

1. Due to the disturbed nature of sites in the portion of land that is earmarked for the housing development, that can be attributed to the early phases of colonial farm settlement it is difficult to identify archaeological sites of significance.

However, it is confirmed and evident from:

- *the middens and graves that was discovered in close proximity of the proposed development site; and*
- *the probability that is always mentioned in EIAs for housing developments in the proposed area, that unmarked Khoisan remains may be exposed or intercepted during excavations for building foundations, and services, where burials have been previously encountered.*

that the endemic Cochoqua Khoekhoe had original or first habitat of this area, and therefor this site deserves a high rating in terms of heritage significance and archaeological impact and should rather be declared a protected area.

2. It is our opinion that increased marginalisation, poverty and inequality are already threatening the livelihood of the First Nation Khoisan communities and will soon become critical if real opportunities for spatial and socio-economic integration are not forthcoming.
3. We find the expansion of non-indigenous residential development projects into traditional living space of the Khoekhoe areas appallingly offensive, disrespectful, and insensitive to both,
 - a) the history of dispossession and humiliation experienced by the original inhabitants of this area during and after colonialism,

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- b) as well the resurgence of the Khoisan to reclaim and restore their heritage, access to land and cultural assets.
4. As far as housing developments is concerned it seems like if the Saldanha Bay Municipal Council and the Western Cape Provincial Government is giving preference to people from other provinces at the cost of thousands of indigenous backyard dwellers from Khoisan descent and is not connected to the realities of the local dynamics and history of and hurt that was caused by the dispossession of the Khoi and San during the colonial era, an era that was the outcome of multiple complex processes in a long historical trajectory of dispossession, the methods of which included outright coercive force, treaties, cattle theft, forced sales and abandonment and alienation of our traditional grazing land and kraals where we lived while the colonialists made sure that they destroy all forms of social organisation, institutions of leadership to induce us into servitude as servants and farm labourers. The rezoning of public land to benefit non-indigenous peoples is not fair because this is land that really belongs to the marginalized impoverished first nation, and that land should have benefited them to move back onto land that historically belong to them, and we consider this development as insult to our ancestors whose bones are buried in this land.
 5. We are saddened by the decision of this council to perpetuate the systematic displacement of the Khoekhoe from their traditional habitats and livelihoods and are pushed back to barren and marginal fields within local economies to be reduced from owner -gatherers to wage earners or encroachers, and that with no effort or prospect of rehabilitation. With the burgeoning volume of Khoi and San revivalist movements in recent years, a queer belief is gaining strong currency among the Khoi and San people. This belief holds that the Western Cape government is taking all initiatives to ameliorate the socio-economic plight of our tribal populace. Therefore, the Youth of the Aikonese Cochoqua Tribe is adamant that they are going to start claiming all sites with a heritage footprint of the Khoi since they deem such a step as necessary to reclaim and restore our cultural heritage and its assets. (Annex 1)
 6. We rather want to urge the SBM local government to come up with an affirmative plan based on restorative justice in terms of the Spatial Integration goals of national government that make restitution or reparation and rather accept a proposal by this Tribal Council that aims to re-establish Khoekhoe villages (kraal-establishments) to blend in and be integrated into the post-colonial developments that are already established at Jacobsbaai etc. Because of its proximity to the Swartriet Nature Reserve the farm Kliprug and its subdivisions have been identified by the Tribal Council as the ideal site for accommodating a Khoisan Cultural Village.
 7. The proximity of Gonnemanskraal is the other motivation for this location for our kraal-establishment idea. We have reason to believe that Gonnemanskraal has been one of Gonnema's 17 kraals (Gonnema is the renowned Paramount Chief of the Cochoqua that fought in the 17th century against colonial imperialism).
 8. The lack of consultation with the Khoi Tribal Council about the alienation of this land is perceived to be offensive and disrespectful by the Aikonese Tribal Women's Movement and as indigenous women representing the Khoisan they are strongly opposed to any means of housing development on this land and demand that proper dialogue and negotiations be done with the Aikonese Cochoqua Tribal Council to preserve this land. (Annex 2)

B. THREAT TO COCHOQUA'S CONSERVATION PROJECT

The bigger Kliprug farm and the adjacent areas is a major national and global conservation priority, since a significant number of threatened plant species are unlikely to be found anywhere else in the country and thus in the world.

We therefore have approached the West Coast National Park to lobby through Department Fisheries, Forestry and Environment (DFFE) with the Department Public Works, the West Coast District and Saldanha Bay Municipality to demarcate and rezone the area outlined in yellow in *Figure 1* below for the establishment of the **Cochoqua Cultural Heritage and Conservation Park**.

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Figure 1: Proposed area for Cochoqua Cultural Heritage and Conservation Park

It is thus very disturbing that the Municipality arbitrarily and without consultation embark on housing development plans that can harm the sustainability of the environment before we could propose to them.

This catalytic conservation project aims to:

- a) Establish a Khoisan Cultural Village that will offer a unique, meaningful experiential, immersive cultural tourism experience. The idea is to replicate the Golden Gate Basoto Cultural Village Concept that are drawing thousands of tourists and is growing in popularity internationally on an annual basis with spill over benefits to local tourism establishments and operators. This area in figure 1 is rich in historical, Khoisan cultural, archaeological, and paleontological resources.
- b) Preserve and rehabilitate the unique Saldanha Peninsula bioregion.
 - i. The site lies within what may be termed the Saldanha Peninsula bioregion. This bioregion has a distinct flora and fauna, and a particularly high number of locally and regionally endemic plant species, as well as plant Species of Conservation Concern (SCC) (Helme & Koopman 2007).
 - ii. The proposed area lies within the Fynbos biome and the Core Cape Floristic Region (CFR). The latest data from the Red Data Book listing process undertaken for South Africa is that 67% of the rare or threatened plant species in the country occur only in the southwestern Cape, and these total over 1 800 species (Raimondo et al. – 2009). It should thus be clear that the southwestern Cape is a major national and global conservation priority and is quite unlike anywhere else in the country in terms of the number of threatened plant species.
 - iii. The proposed site covers a large area of Saldanha Flats Strandveld that is regarded as endangered on a national basis (Rouget et al. 2004; DEA 2011).
 - iv. Saldanha Granite Strandveld is listed as an Endangered vegetation type (DEA 2011), and the coastal form in the area between Jacobsbaai and Danger Bay supports an unusual assemblage of species that does not occur elsewhere.
 - v. Two faunal SCC have been recorded from the proposed site area (Rose's Rainfrog (*Breviceps rosei*), – SW coastal endemic, and Black Girdled Lizard (*Cordylus niger*) – Near Threatened), and a further six reptile SCC may occur (probably in low numbers) - the study was conducted by Mr Nick Helme of *Nick Helme Botanical Surveys*.
 - vi. He further identified large terrestrial birds (e.g. Blue Crane, Ludwig's Bustard), commuting wetland birds (e.g. flamingo spp., waterfowl, shorebirds), and birds of prey (e.g. Martial Eagle *Polemaetus bellicosus*, Verreaux's Eagle *Aquila verreauxii*, Jackal Buzzard *Buteo rufofuscus*, Black Harrier, African Marsh Harrier *Circus ranivorus*, Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*, Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus* and Cape Eagle-Owl *Bubo capensis*) that are also prevalent in this area.

Tribal Greetings,

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Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'A. Maart', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Aikonese Cochoqua Khoi Tribal Council
under authority of Paramount Chief !Khaesen Maart

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