



GORINHAQUA CULTURAL COUNCIL



Toa Tama !Kham's Ge

Heritage Western Cape
Protea Building
Greenmarket Square
CAPE TOWN
8001

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To Whom It May Concern

!Gai tses

I herewith place on record the support of the Gorinhaiqua Cultural Council for the River Club Development proposal, which will be located within the broader Two Rivers Urban Parkway corridor.

Our support, as a custodial Khoi Indigenous Council, follows a pathway of engagements with several spheres of government, Chapter 9 Institutions, State entities and the private sector.

Our support for the project does not come lightly, as the area under consideration for the proposed development is a most sensitive location both in terms of its ecology, as also its deep heritage significance.

Our support for this project has been extensively pondered and is primarily a strategic act of indigenous cultural agency where we, as an integral part of the Khoi and San resurgence, act in our own interest to secure a legacy for us and for seven generations into the future for which we are responsible.

As a cultural council it is without any doubt a most critical factor that the proposed development is located within an area which indisputably is part of the terrible history of our land, which caused the foundational peoples of that area to be put to the sword, dispossessed of their historical land, dispersed into the margins and subjected to a cultural and social genocide.

This is the corridor that represents the pathway of the assault of 28 February 1510, when the Portuguese militarist, Francisco D'Almeida, sent his troops inland to steal livestock and abduct woman and children from our indigenous settlement, located close to the proposed development area. Consequently, this resulted in one of the most successful anti-colonial battles in Africa, known as the Battle of Gorinhaqau, in which D'Almeida and a large contingent of his forces died on the shores, close to the estuary of the confluence of the Black and Liesbeek Rivers.

The proposed development area is also most sensitive because it falls within the framework of a Heren XVII letter of authorisation of 1656, granting the governor of the then Fort, the right to usurp the lands of the Peninsular Khoi for the benefit of the colonists who were co-travelers of Jan van Riebeeck.

Needless to say, this act of aggression against the foundational indigenous peoples sparked the First Khoi-Dutch War of 1659-1660.

There are numerous other points of historical significance, but it suffices as reference here to note that it was the dispossession wrought on the Khoi peoples who historically were the custodians of this place that was once paradise, which is only now, 25 years into democracy, grudgingly recognized.

The significance of this area and the adjoining Oude Molen site, is that it has been the subject of intense engagement between ourselves and numerous senior state officials, including but not limited, to Premiers of the Western Cape government, Provincial Ministers of several Western Cape government administrations, Mayors of the City of Cape Town, the Chief Land Claims commissioners, several ministers of the National government and even the apex of governance, namely the Presidency.

We have also engaged several entities of the State in connection with this broad area and have been relentless in our efforts to bring cognition of our excised narrative within the ambit of our national culture, political, social and economic narrative.



All our efforts in this regard have fallen on deaf ears, have been subjected to ridicule and, or bludgeoned with the arrogant silence of invisibility, which means being treated as never having spoken and not worthy of being heard.

It is this very phenomenon of always being trivialized, never being acknowledged and always having to contest the distortion, lies, obfuscations and the extremely disturbing fact that our narratives have been excised from the national story, our claims to recognition, restitution and restoration being relegated to the back burner and our essence as the descendants of the foundational peoples of this land being ransacked by mercenaries of all stripes that has caused us to draw a line in the sand.

This line in the sand we have drawn follows a very clear and signposted pathway, which includes sentinel events in which we have played a very definite role, including the National KhoiSan Consultative Conference in Oudtshoorn (April 2001) the World Conference Against Racism in Durban (September 2001), and, pertinently, more than two decades of engagements, meetings and workshops with the departments of cooperative government and traditional affairs, the department of Arts and Culture, the Department of Justice and the department of rural development and land reform. Issues related to this site have also been specifically raised in the context of the Kimberly 1 and Kimberley 2 summits between national Khoi and San leaders and top representatives of the South African government.

At a personal level, matters related to the searing histories of our people have been the subject of significant coverage in the print and electronic media where I have served at senior level in many local and international newsrooms. This also specifically includes my tenure as editor of both the Eland and the Eerste Nasie Nuus/News, which are the only fully-fledged newspapers ever to be published that were exclusively dedicated to the issues of recognition, restitution and restoration of South Africa's foundational peoples

Breaking the cycle of invisibility

A thoroughgoing assessment of what has occurred in these long, drawn out and disconcerting engagements with the principal players who are bound by international law and the South African Constitution to end the discrimination against the descendants of the Khoi and the San is that no one listened with intent and that not one of these entities cared to act definitively to break this cycle of abuse.

What emerges is a pattern of delay, of placing in abeyance that which must be resolved with urgency, and a complete lack of the political will required to break the logjam. Our view therefore is that rather than place our destiny in the



hands of those who have no interest in our future or the future of the seven generations to come, for which we bear responsibility, we now, in our own interest, have elected to exercise our own agency.

As Steve Biko stated many years ago: “Blacks are tired of standing at the touch line, watching a game that they should be playing, blacks want to do things for themselves and by themselves.”

For us, it is therefore appropriate to state here and now, that the Khoi and the San, particularly those in this Peninsula, whose forebears bore the most severe blows of colonial aggression, are refusing to hand over our destiny to others. To paraphrase Biko, in our context, we are saying the Khoi and San are tired of standing by the touchline watching a game that we should be playing.

It is with the knowledge of having been trivialised, silenced and bludgeoned into invisibility that we as the Gorinhaqua Cultural Council, have elected to directly engage the entity involved in the proposed River Club Development. What we have discovered in the process of this engagement, specifically with Mr Jody Aufrichtig, is that the developer has been open, empathetic and attenuated to our concerns, which were placed on the table in a frank exchange of views.

Through this process, two pertinent results of the discussions, over a long period of time, have persuaded us to take a position in support of this proposed River Club development.

The first is that we believe that the developer has grasped the intense pain that has been associated with the bludgeoning of our narrative. As such, this developer, unlike any other government, corporate, or social entities with which we have engaged, has made a firm commitment to ensure that the footprint of the Khoi and San’s history of resistance, and its modern day resurgence is incorporated into the development plan.

Of the many commitments that the developer has made, a most significant commitment has been to allocate an area in the centre of this development, which is of great cultural significance to us, to be earmarked for the building of a World-First International Indigenous Media and Communication Centre.

In doing so, the developer, unlike any other government department, has honoured one of the central planks of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) which calls for indigenous peoples to have the capacity to record, report on, as well as print and broadcast matters and events of concern to them.

As a veteran journalist with more than 30-years experience in the local and international print and electronic media, this will be the realisation of the dream we have fought for throughout the resurgence, which is to tell our own story, to train our own people and to ensure that our voices find traction within the South African Nation and in the community of indigenous people around the world.

The second point that has swayed us to give our unambiguous support to the development proposal, is that both at the level of the ecology of the area – which the developer had committed to cleaning up and indigenising – and in terms of ensuring that the spiritual and cultural symbols of the Khoi and the San finds resonance within the proposed development plan.

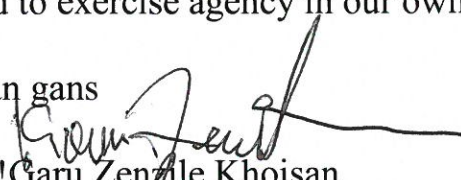
We have arrived at this position after much consideration and consultation with many of the senior indigenous leaders and their councils in the Peninsula, as also with prominent national leaders of the Khoi and the San. Among these we can clearly cite Khoi elder statesman, K'bia Hennie van Wyk, chief of the Gorachoiqua tribal council; Chiefs John Jansen and Tania Kleinhans-Cedras of the Cochoqua; High Commissioner Aaron Messellaar, of the Griqua Royal council, and Chief Cecil le Fleur, chairman of the National Khoi and San council.

We are aware, without a doubt, that there will be detractors, including those who believe that indigenous people stand diametrically opposed to development and are best served by being relegated to an anthropoid fetishised state where they roam perpetually in antiquity without the tools to navigate the modern world.

Others, for their own reasons, will try to maintain the area as a golf course and the riverbanks as rustic, undeveloped spaces, where women and children can be attacked at will.

Our position is that they are entitled to their views, but we must emphasise that indigenous people are not the perpetual children that the colonist and colonial mentally would have us be. On the contrary, it is our view that such paternalistic notions must by themselves be put to the sword, because we, the ones who had been at the frontline of fighting for recognition, restitution and restoration, have elected to exercise agency in our own interest and our progeny.

Kei gan gans


Chief !Garu Zenile Khoisan

(On behalf of the Gorinhaiqua Cultural Council)