

Push PE waterfront plan, urges Mtati

Former Percci chief executive and Port Elizabeth business consultant Odwa Mtati has called for greater pressure to be put on Transnet to partner with other port stakeholders to help transform this key asset into a state-of-the-waterfront.

By Guy Rogers 25 Nov 2010

The proposed waterfront will be the subject of a public meeting on Friday on the Port Elizabeth port and its development possibilities.

Former Cape Town Waterfront Company chief executive Derick van der Merwe will address the meeting.

The Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality and Percci are at the forefront of a campaign to remove the fuel tank farm and the manganese ore dump from the port.

Transnet has committed to not renewing the petroleum agencies' lease of the tank farm when it expires in 2014, but it has made no public pronouncements on the manganese ore dumps' lease.

Furthermore, although the parastatal has expressed interest in the Port of Ngqura as a recipient for the tank farm, it has made no commitment in this regard, or on where the manganese will go, if and when a commitment to move this stockpile taken.

Lack of communication hampers planning, progress

It was this lack of communication that was hampering planning critical for the sustainable development of the city, Mtati said.

The lack of communication from Transnet was typical of a monopoly, but it could be challenged if enough voices, both put and leadership, acted in concert and spoke out strongly enough, he said.

Besides the lead taken by the city on the matter, the project has been also been identified by Eastern Cape Economic Development and Environmental Affairs MEC Mcebisi Jonas as one of the department's "critical projects."

Besides its penchant for non-disclosure, Transnet furthermore has a very different vision for the port even when the tank farm is moved. It has stated that even when this happens it will not necessarily accept a waterfront development. It has mooted, instead, a car terminal.

However, it did not need to be either-or, said Mtati.

"The car terminal can be built upward as opposed to sideways and that will leave the rest of the land still available for the waterfront.

"What we are calling for is for the three main role-players, the municipality, Transnet and Southern Ports, the company which also owns a section of the harbour, to look beyond personal interests and work together for the success of the city.'

The meeting will be at the Algoa Yacht Club at 10am tomorrow, 26 November 2010.

Source: *The Herald*

