

Minutes of the Meeting of Executive Council held on Tuesday, 22nd June 2021 at 9.30am in the Council Chamber

Present: His Excellency the Governor (Dr Philip Rushbrook)
The Hon Chief Secretary (Mrs S O'Bey)
The Hon Financial Secretary (Mr D L Richards)
The Hon Attorney General (Mr A T Cansick)
The Hon C G Buckley
The Hon C R Beard
The Hon A A Green
The Hon L A Henry
The Hon D F Thomas

In attendance: Clerk of Councils (Mrs C C Johnson)
Head of Corporate Support (Mrs C A George)
FCDO Development Representative (Mr D Rodgett)

OPEN SESSION

109.1 Welcome

The Governor welcomed all to the meeting advising that Executive Council would be sitting in planning mode.

109.2 Development Application - Proposed Development of Trade Winds Ocean Village (ExCo Memo 34/2021)

The Chief Planning Officer (CPO), Mr Ismail Mohammed, was in attendance for this item of business.

The Chief Secretary introduced the Memorandum asking Council to consider and advise whether Full Development Permission should be granted, with Conditions, for the Proposed Development of Trade Winds Ocean Village Comprehensive Development Area at Horse Pasture, Thompson's Hill and he also explained the reasons why the application was presented to Executive Council.

The Chief Planning Officer presented Members with a detailed Power Point Presentation covered the following points:-

- Location: Horse Pasture
- Application Site
- Extent of Development Area
- Views of Development area
- Access Tracks
- Proposed Development – Layout and Uses
- Details of Site and Development

- Proposed Development Objections
- Community facilities, BBQ and playgrounds sites and equipment
- Other Private facilities,
- Road layout of the site
- Housing types
- Details of development floor space
- Examples of Internal walkways
- Road upgrade and Improvement
- Objective of the design and construction approach
- Major issues of development – provision and facility
- Background to timeline
- Update on Development
- Representation - Public and Stakeholder

The CPO also elaborated on the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), the Environmental Management Plan (EMP), the views of the Chief Environmental Officer (CEO), the issues and concerns on the EIA, outcome of assessment of the factors and activities for the EIA, the Land Development Control Authority (LDCA) assessment, Views of the LDCA and assessment of the revised layout.

The CPO stressed to Members that this was a large development “that did not start tomorrow” but it was vital for people investing to be assured that Full Development permission with conditions was approved because all the technical issues could be resolved as and when they arose.

The Governor thanked the CPO for his detailed presentation.

A lengthy debate ensued with some Members supporting the proposed development and others expressing various concerns. One Member felt that the development would provide benefits to St Helena with investment but raised concerns about approving full planning permission and advised that he would only support the application if the major conditions were referred back to the LDCA as he was concerned about the water and sewerage connections in particular; the Chief Secretary advised that Executive Council had the authority to approve and discharge conditions which would be managed through the CPO.

Another Member said that given the size of the development and the fact that the CPO consulted the LDCA informally he sought the Attorney General’s advice whether the LDCA could formally have this information provided; the Attorney General responded that this decision laid with the CPO and cautioned that the request suggested was neither advisable or the correct procedure to follow.

The CPO added that this was also raised by the LDCA and he pointed out that this process would have to apply to all applications and there were no resources to be able to do this as this would be a lengthy process and to formalise this it must be set out in the Ordinance. The Member referenced the representation from the St Helena National Trust which had mentioned a water hole being in the area, pointing out that there was no protection in the planning conditions for this and felt it should have the same protection as the wall; the CPO replied that this could be dealt with through phased developments and unfortunately he was not able to locate the water hole nor was anyone able to direct him to it. The Member stated

that any developer proposing a development of this size would seek to obtain certainty regarding the development and was of the view that the implications of the conditions imposed would be monitored by the LDCA and concluded that given all the information, they had to rely on the advice provided by the professionals.

Members also raised the following issues/concerns:-

- that the suggestion by the CEO of an addendum should be pursued;
- that the information provided did not justify approving full development permission but outline permission;
- that no financial resources for this investment had yet materialised for example, the land transfer had not gone ahead. It was explained that would only happen once development permission was approved;
- that the campsite area was an afterthought; the CPO replied that was located at the front of the development so it is more accessible;
- this was a known wirebird site;
- whether due diligence was completed; the Financial Secretary replied this was done in 2018;
- why a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) was not carried out; the CPO explained that a SIA could be performed in a number of ways and one has to look at the benefits this application provided to the Island such as jobs and training opportunities;
- whether the housing units would have disabled access; the CPO explained that each of the development plots would be accessible to people with disabilities;
- whether there would be any housing gains; the Financial Secretary said that there would be tax gains and stamp duty benefits; and
- would there be sufficient water on site; the Chief Secretary responded that if a desalination plant was required as the preferred option later then a separate development permission for this would need to be sought.

Members noted that the environmental impacts of the development would need to be reviewed throughout the various phases of the development, as it was recognised that these would change over time.

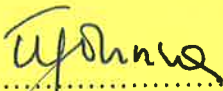
Following discussion, Council advised by a majority of 3 to 2 and the Governor agreed, that Full Development Permission should be granted, with Conditions, for the Proposed Development of Trade Winds Ocean Village Comprehensive Development Area at Horse Pasture, Thompson's Hill. This approval was subject to include all the twenty conditions listed on Annex A of the Memorandum which were pages 25 – 29 respectively and the requirement for the Chief Planning Officer to report back to Executive Council with updates on the water, sewerage, electricity and the telecommunications connections.

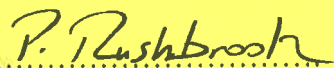
(Action: Hon Chief Secretary/Clerk of Councils)

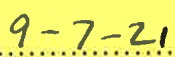
The Governor and Chief Secretary thanked the CPO for his input and at this point, he left the meeting.

109.3 Any Other Business

There was no any other business for discussion in the Open Session.


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Clerk of Councils
09.07.21


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Governor


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Date