

# Donated CBD buildings to accelerate social housing

The three inner city buildings, namely West Point Lodge, the Palm Beach Hotel and the Semans Institute, have been donated to the City by the provincial Department of Public Works.

The Executive Committee tabled a report outlining the transfer of government immovable assets to eThekweni Municipality at a meeting held on May 15th . The report, initially tabled at Economic Development and Planning Committee meeting held earlier this month, stated that the buildings were being donated with the aim of accelerating social housing in line with the eThekweni Densification Strategy as well as the Inner City Local Area Plan: Inclusive Residential Strategy. The report granted authority to the Deputy City Manager of the Economic Development and Planning Cluster Phillip Sithole to accept donation of the three buildings to trigger renewal of bad buildings within the inner city phase one implementation of a priority precinct. According to eThekweni Municipality’s acting head of communications, Mandla Nsele, the report also granted authority to City Manager Sipho Nzuza to be authorised to sign a memorandum of agreement with conditions, processes as well as roles and responsibilities of all parties on behalf of the city. “It further noted the working collaboration between eThekweni Human Settlements, Economic Development and Planning and the Real Estates departments to redevelop the three buildings, dispose them to the private sector and recapatilise investment for higher social housing units at strategic locations,” he said. The financial implications is R5.5 million of the capital budget for 2018/19 to be spent on redeveloping the buildings. EThekweni Mayor Zandile Gumede welcomed the donation by the Department of Public Works with the aim of accelerating social housing. “This is in line with our Densification Strategy. We want to applaud Human Settlements MEC Ravi Pillay for doing this for the City,” she said. Mayor Gumede acknowledged that some of the buildings had been illegally invaded but said this would not stop the City from accepting the donation of the buildings. “We need to go ahead and accept this donation so that we can decisively deal with these bad buildings. This is definitely a step in the right direction. We hope this donation will go a long way in solving our housing problems in the inner city.

We are also looking forward to youth, women and disabled communities benefiting from this project,” she stated. Speaking at the Executive Committee meeting, Deputy Mayor Fawzia Peer said people who had illegally occupied the buildings would not be “thrown out” but would be dealt with through legal channels. Concluding on the issue, Mayor Gumede said the City was faced with serious issues of infrastructure and urbanisation which is why job creation was so important. She reiterated that eThekweni Municipality was a caring City and would take the “care of everyone implicated in the issue.”