

Nod for Bay cleaning and greening project to start

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More than four months after it was meant to have started, a R5.8m cleaning and greening project will finally begin after council gave it the green light.

The Nelson Mandela Bay municipality will start clearing illegal dumping sites and general cleaning operations across the metro in mid-March after a motion to have the delayed project kick off immediately was given the thumbs up.

The cleaning and greening project would have created 200 temporary jobs between November and January.

The move was intended for clearing of illegal dumping sites, litter-picking, bush-clearing, removal of bulk waste and creating awareness around litter problems.

The motion was tabled by ACDP councillor Lance Grootboom and seconded by DA councillor Georgina Faldtman.

While the motion was supported by the DA and the EFF, it was rejected by the ANC and its coalition partners.

The project was meant to kick off on October 1, but pub-

lic health portfolio head Yolisa Pali withdrew the item twice in the mayoral committee, claiming it lacked information.

In a desperate attempt to ensure the project finally got going, acting executive director Tsietsi Mokonyane wrote to then acting city manager Noxolo Nqwazi, asking that she intervene in the matter.

Presenting his motion to council Grootboom, who is the former public health portfolio chair, said cleanliness standards in Port Elizabeth's townships, Uitenhage and northern areas had deteriorated as a result of the delays.

"Due to the increased level of waste during the festive season, illegal dumping has increased in the various areas.

"This will have serious health and environmental impacts on the residents of Nelson Mandela Bay if not cleared," Grootboom said.

He said hiring Expanded Public Works Programme workers would have saved the municipality thousands in overtime pay.

Pali said the project had been approved by the mayoral

committee in late December, but delays in implementation occurred because many officials were on leave at the time.

"We passed this item very late in December, most of [the] public health officials were already gone. We only managed to do the beach-cleaning."

Pali said she intended to ensure that the project started in mid-March.

"Processes are unfolding but we are waiting for supply chain processes," Pali said.

EFF councillor Lukhanyo Mrara said: "We cannot dispute we are in a crisis in this city when it comes to cleanliness . . . We need to let service delivery be a priority for all of us."

Infrastructure and engineering head Andile Lungisa said the city should put aside more money for litter-picking.

"What we saw in China . . . It was so clean that we didn't even see a chewing gum in the streets," Lungisa said.

"And if we want to be a smart city . . . We are saying on top of the R5m we must add another R5m to R10m – maybe even R20m – to clean this city so it can be a smart city."