

■ HOUSING

# City may backtrack on project

*Angst over Salt River Market development*

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FEARS that the City of Cape Town may stall or backtrack on its commitment to continue with the Salt River Market affordable housing project have surfaced after some mayoral committee members were allegedly trying to block the project yet again.

The city made an about-turn on the project in December due to public and activist pressure after stalling it in October, claiming it needed further information.

Then-former mayco member for urban development, Brett Herron, who left the DA over its alleged refusal to redress spatial injustice, blamed a cabal within the party which included ward councillor Dave Bryant and mayco member JP Smith for being part of the moves.

According to sources, allegedly there was a new move to backtrack on the decision again as well as block other critical projects earmarked to provide well-located housing, although the city council has denied this.

The Green Point Bowling Club and the Canterbury Road sites have also been taken off the table, despite the appointment of consultants to do pre-planning.

Former mayor Patricia de Lille and Herron identified 11 sites in 2017 for affordable, social and mixed income housing projects. Included in the 11 sites were Pine Road, Woodstock, the Salt River Market, where Communicare was identified as the developer of Pickwick Transitional Housing in Salt River to provide transitional housing for families and to prevent relocation to the outskirts of the city.

A call for proposals for five of the sites was launched in September 2017, and included Woodstock Hospital Park, New Market Street Parking lot and Fruit & Veg Site in Roeland Street.

The city council received about

14 proposals for the five sites and the request for proposals included a requirement that each site had to meet a social housing threshold – which would provide 4000 social housing units, in addition to any other affordable or market related development.

But the proposals were never opened as the officials couldn't agree on the process to be followed.

Herron, who is now secretary for the GOOD political party, said he was shocked and disappointed that the DA was unable to resolve its land conflict.

"The current mayor of Cape Town was a former member of the National Party – the architects of apartheid, so too the mayco member for spatial planning and the mayco member for assets (property management).

"It's not likely that those who subscribed to segregation in the past are suddenly going to champion integration," Herron said.

He posed questions regarding the sites to Public Works MEC Bonginkosi Madikizela after he alleged in the debate on the Premier's State of the Province address, that the disposal of the 11 sites was halted by the courts.

"I will not rest until we see a change in how public land is used and until I see that public land is being used to address one of our greatest failures since democracy – addressing the foundation of apartheid: the spatial segregation and disadvantaging of South Africans based on their race," he said.

Mayco member for human settlements Malusi Booie said an appeals report on the Salt River Market project would be sent to the mayor's appeal committee for a decision.

He said the city council was still committed to the affordable housing projects and would continue to assess council-owned land – including in and near the Cape Town CBD – to determine whether some of these properties could be developed for housing opportunities.