

KZN Public Works Portfolio Committee and alternate members “cruise on” harder and harder to deliver

Writes Vusi Shabalala and pictures by Sane Khumalo

The 15th of February 2012 marked another cruising stride for the KZN Department of Public Works, hardly two weeks since coordinating and hosting the official visit by the Gauteng Legislature together with the KZN Public Works Committee. Compliments came pouring towards the Public Works’ leadership for a sterling and well organized meeting sessions and site tours.

Its hard work again as Kokstad sees itself embraced by the committed entourage of political figures who remain focussed to the course of governance and delivery for the benefit of the people in the province.

The Public Works Portfolio Committee’s visit, led by its Chairperson, Mbali Frazer was centred on two crucial projects that zoomed into the construction of two schools namely Ginyiqhinga Senior Secondary School and Shayamoya Secondary School situated within various areas of Kokstad. The committee really set a standard as all members were at the site on time and ready for work.

Our first site visit commenced at Shayamoya Secondary School, a school scheduled to be erected for the Shayamoya local community. This project was proffered to the Durban Building and Maintenance (DBM) in August 2011 and the site was officially handed over on 29 September 2011 for a construction contract period of 22 months scheduled for completion on July 2013.

The scope of works for the Shayamoya school project include 25 learner classrooms, 6 multipurpose classrooms, a computer room and media centre, team teaching room and 4 offices for the HOD. Other buildings include 4 large stores and 20 mini stores with three cleaners’ stores, a guard house. All these building are supplemented by a staff toilet, 5 male and female ablutions with two toilets for the physically challenged. The external works of this project include ramps and screen walls, kerbing and paving as well as palisade fencing and gates. Electrical works from municipal connections comprised of electrical, data and telephone, and security installations as well as lighting protection. At this stage only groundwork is underway but a lot is still to come.

A site tour did not take place at Shayamoya as groundwork was the order of the day at the site. The actual building activities have not as yet started as the contractors are currently doing the ground laying of the structural area. However, it was interesting but equally encouraging to feel the eagerness and rejuvenation of seeing work progress on the part of the KZN Public Works Portfolio Committee during the briefing session by both the contractors and leadership of the Department of Public Works. “This is not a grilling session but an opportune time to build the province of KwaZulu-Natal” alluded Ms Mbali Frazer during her opening remarks.

During the question-answer session, Mr Xulu, Senior Manager for EPWP made an explicit and fathomable elucidation as he responded to the concern on employment of community members and the remuneration part thereof. “It is in the interest of the Department of Public Works to have members of the community who are physically challenged to be in our employ within these programmes but the challenge we have is their unavailability or their incapability to doing the physical work due to the nature of the work” he stressed.

The Regional Manager for the Southern Region, Mr Thobuyise Mchunu also gave a presentation specifically to the portfolio committee’s attention, acknowledgement and understating. Three representatives from the contractors also had an opportunity to make brief presentations so as to alleviate. The question-and-answer (Q&A) session was dealt with in an amicable manner which at the end saw the Chairperson of the Committee commending the coordination of the visit as highly professional.



Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee, Ms M Fraizer(right) together with her colleagues from the Legislature, Inkosi MZN Madlala (far left) and Mr M Dlungwana (middle)entering the Shayamoya construction site premises

A big close-up to the Ginyiqhinga project profile proffers concise and pertinent details that include 18 months completion contract period scheduled for the 20th of July 2012 since the site was handed over and construction commenced on 20 January 2011 to the Pan African Development as custodian contractor. To date the scope of work comprises of new buildings namely, the administration block comprising a foyer, reception, sick bay and storeroom, offices of the principal and deputy, a strong room and personnel office. Added to the new building are six learner classrooms, a kitchen with an undercover dining area and a binyard, a multipurpose classroom with two stores, laboratory with equipment store, library and computer rooms, boys and girls toilets comprising with 5 number girls toilets respectively, female staff toilet and one for the paraplegic. Included for the boys' toilets are a urinal and a male staff toilet. A new yard with a consulting and an emergency room separate, a waiting room, two counsel rooms and an ablution conclude the structure.



The current Ginyiqhinga classrooms



The newly built Ginyiqhinga classrooms

The external part of the project comprises of stairs, ramps, paths entrance wall and fencing, landscaping, parking and roads and lastly for the storm water management having two new water tanks and two drinking fountains. This project is currently reaching its completion stage of 95% registered thus far.

Job creation and service delivery always comes at the tail end of project government or corporate. However, it should also be taken into cognizance that for every government initiative there is corporate partnership involved, direct or indirect hence the involvement of contractors and partners.

This is in essence a social responsibility project that ensures the commitment route of good governance by the provincial government in KwaZulu-Natal province in ensuring that all people benefit.

As we focus closer to the impact that these projects will leave, it is quite evident and tangible that major strides are and will continue to be registered by the Department of Public Works together with the Department of Education at its side as its clientele. The two projects have jointly provided a scope of good and positive benefits for the Kokstad communities. First this fosters the improvement in the level of education for the communities. Secondly job and work opportunities are a lifeline for the Kokstad communities. The Ginyiqhinga school project has in terms of the Expanded Public Works Programme has to date attained 60 jobs created with 11 for skilled, 49 unskilled comprising of 44 for the youth and 5 work opportunities being for women beneficiaries. Lastly and eventually the Deepvale community will confidently benefit from this project on short and long term basis with the long term benefits assuring continued access to and available government services supplemented by reduction of poverty constraints.



The KZN Public Works Portfolio Committee members together with the leadership from the Department of Public Works

The interdepartmental collaboration of provincial departments in KwaZulu-Natal indicate a positive comradeship and total commitment on the part of government that “working together” indeed brings a message across to all the people of the province on the role that government wishes and intends achieving, notwithstanding the difficulties, criticism and challenges encountered in the course. When looking at a horizon this is a journey worth taking with its pathway showing lights of hope and brighter future for betterment of the province. The Public Works Committee and its alternate members will continue to cruise harder and harder in order to ensure that government is committed to deliver. The journey continues.



Seen here above are senior managers from Public Works during a questions and answer session: Mr TL Mchunu, Regional Manager: Southern Region (left) and Mr X Xulu, Senior Manager: Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) Head Office



Mr Makhosi Sokotshe from Pulana Baxter & Associates (on the left) also had his turn to respond during the briefing. On the right are members of the contractors (Henk Mantel Associates Architects, Durban Building Maintenance (DBM) & Pulna Baxter & Associates) attached to the Shayamoya School project



The Contract Manager, Mr Hadebe at the main entrance



The computer centre above



The other view of school building taken while the employees who are residents in and around the local area make some finish touches to the school. It should be mentioned that this project has benefited the communities for both short and long term added value