



MEDIA RELEASE

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Update on Islamic Centre

KNYSNA – NO DATE has yet been set for the High Court review hearing of Knysna Municipality’s decision to authorise the rezoning of a property (erf 503) in central Knysna for the construction of an Islamic Centre, including a Mosque.

Executive Mayor Georlene Wolmarans says: “Knysna Municipality is of the view that it is fully empowered to authorise the rezoning and approve the departures from certain restrictions that apply to that property.”

“Knysna Municipality complied entirely with its legal responsibility, including the public participation obligations.”

At present, the applicants in the matter – 22 Rawson Street Body Corporate and Michael John Hudspith – are due to file their replying papers in the matter. The Knysna Muslim Council NPC is cited as the second respondent in the matter.

The applicants seek that the Western Cape High Court review and set aside Council’s decision on grounds that “council-approved plans contravene several regulations and by-laws” and “the proposal violates at least 15 of the Knysna Municipality’s own by-laws and regulations”.

In response Knysna Municipality duly filed its notice of opposition and its answering papers. “Knysna Municipality is of the view that none of the applicant’s arguments have any merit and the matter should be dismissed,” says Mayor Wolmarans, adding: “Council is eager for the matter to be adjudicated in our favour and for the dispute to be resolved.

“The Constitution of South Africa guarantees freedom of religion, and by allowing the construction of the proposed Islamic Centre this freedom is being fulfilled. Similar rezoning decisions and departures from restrictions have previously been allowed for other religious denominations, and should be permitted for the Knysna Muslim Council.”

Legal correspondence or process should be directed to Knysna Municipality’s attorneys of record in this matter – Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr Inc. – by e-mail via lionel.egypt@cdhlegal.com or by fax on 021 481 9558.

ENDS

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