

SAPI

3 March 2010

Ms Nontsundu Ndongu
Acting Chair
South African Council for Planners

Sent via:
Email: planners@sacplan.co.za
Fax: 011 3080405

Dear Ms Ndongu

Thank you for your letter dated 1 March 2010 which I received on 2 March 2010 and immediately sent to SAPI Board members for their input. This letter is based on the comments received.

1. Introduction

The SA Planning Institute (SAPI) is a voluntary association of planners in the private, public and community sectors. SAPI has received provisional recognition as a voluntary association in terms of Section 17 of the Planning Profession Act (Act 36 of 2002 and referred to as the PPA) from SACPLAN.

Although, SAPI would like to regard itself as a partner with SACPLAN in building and strengthening the planning profession, this has not been possible because of the rather incompetent manner in which SACPLAN has been managed since its inception. Our call is to “re-professionalise” planning and the planning profession, as planning has been relegated to a relatively minor profession in a country with compelling spatial challenges. There are indeed many challenges in the planning profession and SACPLAN as the regulating body, although central to addressing these challenges, has added little value.

The general consensus in the planning sector (and SAPI members, in particular) is that SACPLAN has not been able to rise to the challenges and we continue to receive complaints from members that they wait for several months for their registration certificates. Some complain that their applications are rejected without reason, or without good reason. Registered professional planners often question the value of registration when SACPLAN fails to protect the profession as planning work is allowed to be undertaken by non-planners. Ironically, registered planners are then blamed for sub-standard work and the planning profession continues to be treated poorly by all sectors.

In this regard, SAPI would like to raise some queries and request from SACPLAN critical information that it could refer to its members who are increasingly disillusioned with SACPLAN and often, as a result, with the planning profession as a whole. If the information requested and questions raised can be provided prior to the meeting, it would go a long way to facilitate a fruitful meeting.

2. Queries and Request for Information

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Some of the concerns we have are listed below in no particular order of importance:

- a)** What is the status of the rules governing the profession and the associated documentation such as Reservation of Planning Work in terms of Section 16 of the PPA? It is my understanding that proposals were presented to SACPLAN at a Rules Workshop in October 2008, so it is of interest to SAPI members why has it still not been promulgated. If anyone is entitled to do planning work, despite the provisions of the PPA, and SACPLAN appears incapable of protecting the interests of registered planners, what is the value of being registered? This is a central concern that has irked planners since SACPLAN has come into being. A draft document has been presented publicly and has circulated for a long time now, so why has it not been promulgated?
- b)** What is the status of Continuing Professional Development? I am told that a draft document exists, so why has this not been promulgated?
- c)** Please provide a list of total registered planners, and the number of planners registered in the past year. What is the average time it takes from the time someone submits an application to the time the person is registered?
- d)** What are the reasons on which applications were rejected over the past year? What are the specific criteria which the registrar applies when assessing an application?
- e)** Is there an intention to gazette a new Tariff for fees? If yes, then when can this be expected?
- f)** Please provide a list of all documents gazetted thus far by SACPLAN
- g)** What is the status of the qualifications and standards generation process and what are the roles of SAQA and SACPLAN respectively? Reports from some of our members who attended the SAQA workshop in February are that it was a waste of time.
- h)** There are questions from planners regarding the functioning of the Council, citing weak governance practices such as the abuse of the remuneration system. For example, it is said that remuneration is made without proof of attendance at meetings or minutes of meetings being provided. I do not intend to give credence to rumours, but at the same time sound corporate governance practice requires that there be policies and systems in place to manage remuneration of voluntary SACPLAN members. Can you verify the validity of this concern? Perhaps you could clarify how SACPLAN manages the remuneration of SACPLAN members? It would help if you could provide the key corporate governance policies such as those on Finance, Employment, Audit, and Supply Chain Management which SACPLAN subscribes to
- i)** Please provide a breakdown of costs for travel, accommodation and remuneration paid to those who qualify for this. Section 11 of the PPA stipulates the remuneration of members must be determined by the Minister (responsible for SACPLAN) in concurrence with the Minister of Finance. Please confirm that this has been done and the basis of such remuneration
- j)** Please provide the audited Annual Financial Statements for SACPLAN since its inception. Registered planners continue to question the value of the fees they pay and what it is being used for; so they are entitled to have the financial information of public bodies to which they are obliged to be members. If they are not available, could you explain why this is the case?
- k)** Your letterhead states that Mr Sita Mathiba is still the chair and that Ms Lauretta Teffo is still on SACPLAN. My understanding is that this is not the case and that both had resigned some time ago. Can you clarify this? For example why are you the acting chair if Mr Mathiba is still the chair according the letterhead? What are the circumstances under which the chairperson ceases to be the chairperson and did these circumstances apply to Mr Mathiba?

- l)** Can you confirm that all people serving on SACPLAN are registered planners, as required in terms of Section 4 (1) of the PPA, except for the 3 “Community” representatives?
- m)** Please provide a list of each person serving on SACPLAN, which sector s/he represents and what role that person plays on SACPLAN, or what contribution that person makes to SACPLAN
- n)** SACPLAN recently advertised for a CEO. What is the intent behind the need for a CEO, when the Registrar is meant to play this role? Are these two different roles? If so, how is this expense justified? If not why is SACPLAN employing a CEO and not a Registrar?
- o)** Please provide a list of meetings and resolutions arising out of these meetings since the appointment of the present term of SACPLAN
- p)** Please supply the SACPLAN business plan and an indication of progress regarding its implementation as it relates to the legal mandate of the PPA and the various committees and their mandates

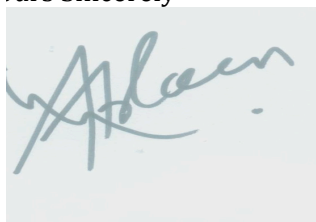
Conclusion:

As you can see, these are questions based on the actual experience SAPI members have had with SACPLAN. Since these are questions being raised in the planning sector and by SAPI members generally, as a constituency based organisation, we are obliged to act on behalf of, and in the best interests, of our members. Thus, the motive behind these questions is not intended to be malicious, but as a service to our members who are entitled to have such information. Furthermore, by responding to these questions you create the opportunity for us to set the agenda for a meeting between us, rather than us meeting without any substantive basis for doing so. In doing so you'd also be establishing the basis for transparent engagement; and dispel any cynicism amongst some SAPI members that your request for a meeting emanates from my persistent requests for a meeting with Deputy-Minister Phaahla since October 2009 and following a disastrous meeting with Mr Ogunrumbi from the Department in December 2009.

Trust that you appreciate our position. Hence, a timely response to our queries and the provision of the information requested is paramount to a successful meeting and mapping a constructive process forward.

Please do not hesitate to contact me on 083 786 7644 should you wish to discuss the contents of this letter.

Yours Sincerely



Shraf Adam

Copy sent to: Deputy-Minister Phaahla