

NEWS YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO KNOW

R39⁶⁰
(including VAT)

noseweek

197 MARCH 2016

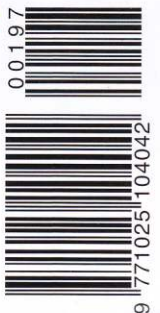
SA MEDICAL STUDENTS IN CUBA
RELIGION, RIOTS AND RUM:
IS IT WORTH IT?

OUTRAGEOUS INHOSPITALITY
VISITING UNISA PROF
HOG-TIED BY RED TAPE

GUPTAS DIG COAL POWER
TORTUOUS TALE OF
OPTIMUM ACQUISITION



Presto! See R50m gambling debt disappear



420401-520177-9

Ostrich City citizens put their heads in the sand

THE FIRST THAT OUDTSHOORN residents heard of a proposed shopping mall on their doorstep in the sought-after suburb of Wesbank, was from a story published in *Noseweek*: "Ostrich capital is a nest of political intrigue" in November 2014.

The planned 13,113m² shopping complex was, as far as could be established, only advertised in the local free ad-rag on 14 December 2011 – when many residents were already on holiday.

On learning about the rezoning and planning applications – submitted by Klein Karoo Beperk – the main concerns raised by residents were:

- the depreciation of the value of property in Wesbank;
- the danger that the rapid increase in traffic will have on the area;
- the negative impact on the existing central business district and adjacent areas; and
- in particular, the detrimental effect the complex would have on the school, its sports fields and in particular, pupils, as the site of this proposed development is only 45m from the gate of Wesbank Primary School.

Local guest-house owner Reynhardt Brittnell, an engineer, lodged an objection on 2 February 2012, which was acknowledged on 7 February by the municipal head of planning and development, Jaco Eastes, who assured Brittnell his objection would appear in the town planner's report to the provincial authorities.

However, Brittnell was dismayed to discover he was the only objector. The reason, he says, is that "a few thousand residents are directly and indirectly financially dependent on Klein Karoo Beperk, so they are reluctant to oppose this development publicly".

"The residents' subsequent silence and the clandestine manner in which they contact me is not a favourable method of communication in a democratic society – rather, it is associated with South Africa's apartheid history," says Brittnell.

A local newspaper reported in December 2012 that the Oudtshoorn council had taken a decision on 6 December to consider legal action if the province approved the development. The municipality was responsible only for processing the application and making a

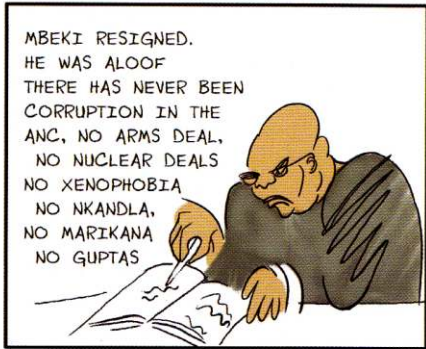
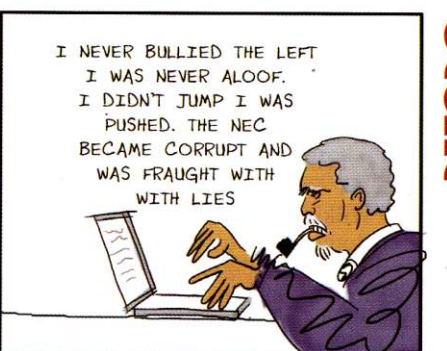
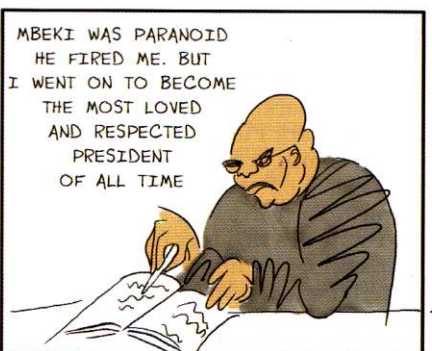
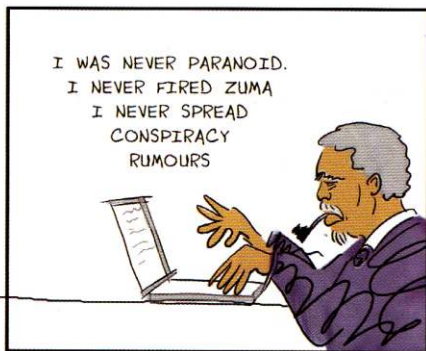
recommendation, which they did.

The final decision lay with Anton Bredell, Western Cape provincial government minister of Local Government, Environmental Affairs and Development Planning in the (DA-controlled) Western Cape provincial legislature. He approved the application on 14 March 2013.

Brittnell says he sent a 100+-page request to AfriForum's Oudtshoorn branch to assist the community in approaching the high court to take Bredell's decision on review, as the minister cannot change his decision, once made. George Kersop, the local chairman, elevated this to AfriForum's head office.

"I was informed – nine months of extreme bureaucracy later – that AfriForum had decided not to assist because of the absence of community support," Brittnell told *Noseweek*.

The same request was sent to DA leader Mmusi Maimane in September last year. "His reaction was instantaneous and more positive. So we decided to follow his advice to approach the high court," says Brittnell, adding that he will be creating a Facebook page shortly to keep the public informed. ■



Stent

© Stent Feb 2016