

**MINISTER**

**HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, WATER AND SANITATION**

**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO.: 1945**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION: 21 AUGUST 2020**

**Ms S J Graham (DA) to ask the Minister of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation:**

(1) Whether her department has allocated a budget for the construction of houses in Nieu-Bethesda in the Eastern Cape; if not, why not; if so, (a) what total number of houses will be built, (b) what progress has been made with regard to the various approvals including Water Use Licence Authorisation and (c) on what date is commencement envisaged;

(2) whether, with reference to delays that may persist for more than six months, her department has contingency plans in place to assist with temporary relief housing for families who have nowhere to live, given that no houses have been built in the past 24 years in Nieu-Bethesda; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details? NW2461E

**REPLY:**

(1) The Eastern Cape Department of Human Settlements (ECDHS) approved funding to the amount of R1 708 350, 70 for the planning and design stage of the construction of houses in Nieu-Bethesda in the Eastern Cape. The planning and design stage is scheduled for completion by March 2022. The budget for internal services infrastructure will be allocated in 2022/23 financial year (October 2022) and the budget for the construction of houses will be allocated in the 2023/24 financial year.

(a) The initial number of houses to be built was 250, however, the project scope had to be reduced to 173 due to the surrounding wetland. Upon submission of the Basic Assessment Report (BAR) to the Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEDEAT), the project was further reduced to 100 erven in order to move the development to a safety zone, further away from the wetland.

| **REQUIRED APPROVALS** | **PROGRESS** |
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| Layout Plan Approval | A large portion of the land bought by the Beyers Naude Local Municipality (BNLM) for development has upon investigation proven to be undevelopable due to an existing wetland that covers much of the area between Nieu Bethesda and Pienaarsig. The seasonal nature of the wetland was deemed to be problematic for development and has reduced the remaining developable land to only 100 erven that can be accommodated within the demarcated area. This required the town planner to go through several layout changes before the ideal layout could be agreed on with the available land. These options also had to be discussed with the community on more than one occasion.  The Layout Plan is currently with the BNLM and will be subjected to the requisite approval processes. |
| Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Approval | The Basic Assessment Report was revised and submitted to DEDEAT. Thereafter, the DEDEAT will issue a Record of Decision (RoD). |
| WULA | The Water Use Licence Application (WULA) documentation had been prepared for the original layout plan but a wetland was discovered on the initial project area. The discovery of the wetland prompted a revision of the WULA study. The revision of the study is underway. |
| Engineering Designs | The preliminary engineering designs for the provision of bulk infrastructure services were completed in May 2015.  Following the identification of a wetland on the planned development area, the final engineering designs had to be amended. |
| Land Survey | A Land Survey had already been done on the original layout plan on which some land portions were later declared undevelopable due to the wetland.  The Land Surveyor will survey additional areas which were not initially included in the planned developable area. |

(b) The planning stage will be completed in March 2022 due to the process of Water Use Licence Application (WULA) and the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) approvals. It is envisaged that the installation of services will start in October 2022 and the Construction of houses in April 2023.

(2) Yes, there is a contingency plan in place in terms of which the ECDHS, (Sarah Baartman Regional Office) has requested the Dr Beyers Naude Local Municipality to identify the destitute and vulnerable families in the area, who will be allocated with Temporary Residential Units (TRU). To this end, the municipality has identified and profiled seven destitute families who are scheduled to receive their TRUs by end of October 2020.