

# LTE Consulting Turns Sweetwaters Project Around

Sweetwaters, located next to Ennerdale in the South of Johannesburg, was an informal settlement with an excess of 1000 shack dwellers living in abject poverty. The settlement was identified as a high priority township to be formalized in accordance with the government’s upliftment policies. Under the Gauteng Department of Human Settlements (GDHS), the formalization process began sometime in 2006, but the various appointed Professional Resource Teams (PRT) tried and failed due to the prevailing challenges.

By 2009, the Sweetwaters project had reached a critical stage; the community had resorted to such violence and unrest that at a community meeting, they almost beat their Ward Councilor to death and left a female housing official in ICU, having driven over her with a car. The DHS was instructed that urgent action be taken, and accordingly appointed LTE as the new PRT to take the Sweetwaters project forward.

Within months, the LTE project team restarted the process, engaged the same community, and together with the assistance of the DHS and the various City of Joburg (CoJ) authorities, turned the project around. The various requisite studies were completed, most notably:

- The EIA was approved
- The Geotechnical Studies were complete
- The Township Layout had been redesigned and an approval was issued.
- The Water and Sewer services were redesigned, submitted and approved by Johannesburg Water

Sweetwaters was formally registered as Kanana Park Extension 6.

A huge challenge for the project however, was the lack of bulk sewer capacity in the region. Although the Water and Sewer designs had been approved by Johannesburg Water, no services could be implemented on site. This was due to the fact that all the waste water and sewage in the region was piped and discharged 50km South of Johannesburg into the Sebokeng Waste Water Treatment Works in the Vaal. The Treatment Works was severely over-capacitated and a moratorium on new developments within the drainage basin feeding into the Sebokeng WWTW was instituted by the Sebokeng Municipality.

The progress to date, though significant, did little to alleviate the problems faced by the residents of Sweetwaters. After several high profile visits to the area, most notably from the State President, the instruction was very clear; something had to be done. The Sweetwaters project was officially given Presidential Project status.

A presidential task team was set up to ensure that all the relevant resources were made available for the project

Towards the end of 2013, it was acknowledged by the National Department of Water and Sanitation that they would intervene to alleviate the bulk sewer crisis. The Sebokeng WWTW was to undergo upgrades to increase capacity by 50ML/day. Phase 1 of the upgrade programme, intending to address the current capacity shortfall with a marginal surplus, was subsequently launched and construction is underway.

In January 2014, as the prevailing PRT for Sweetwaters, LTE Consulting was commissioned by the Gauteng Department of Human Settlements, on a turnkey basis, to complete the installation of the water and sewer services in Kanana Park Ext.6 for 2679 stands. The

2014 MEC Norms and Standards rate for services was R43 626 per stand, equating to R117m for the development. **LTE Consulting, based on their detailed Bill of Quantities, offered a cost of R108.3m. The offered price was accepted by the GDHS Supply Chain Management and the Contract was signed by the MEC for the value of R108.3m.** The site was handed over on 14 February 2014 and works commenced accordingly. To date the entire scope of works has been completed with the exception of the connection to the outfall sewer. The water and sewer infrastructure has been tested. The results, and the infrastructure, have been accepted by Joburg Water. The GDHS is now ready to proceed with the construction of the top structures.

Rand Water has confirmed that the Phase 1 upgrades to the Sebokeng WWTW will be complete in April 2017. This aligns with the current top structures programme where Phase 1 of the top structures will be completed, including water and sewer house connections. This convergence was carefully planned and programmed by the LTE Team so that the Sweetwaters development would officially be allowed to connect to the outfall sewer and discharge into Sebokeng WWTW, thereby ensuring that the project is successfully implemented, as declared by the State President.

It must be noted though, that numerous challenges have plagued the progress of the project, but through sheer skill and perseverance, the project has been extremely successful thus far. The joint efforts of LTE Consulting, the GDHS, Joburg Water, CoJ Human Settlements, etc, have shown what obstacles cooperation can overcome when there is a common goal.

It is most unfortunate that not everyone shares in this vision. Indeed there are individuals who stepped away from directorial positions at LTE Consulting and have



Installation of services underway



Aerial of views of pre and post installation of services

recommended price. **The docket at the SCCU shows the Claimant (the former directors of LTE) stated, on record, that LTE was issued the Contract for R200m whilst they had full knowledge that the Contract was signed at R108.3m. Not surprisingly, the NPA, after reviewing all the Contract Administration documents, Reports, Expenditure, etc, found no evidence of fraud or any claims lodged thereto.**

Not enjoying any success with the NPA, the former directors of LTE Consulting went on an accelerated smear campaign on radio, numerous newspapers and social media, repeating the accusations, again with vicious misinformation and slander. What must be repeated is that the former directors are well aware of the truth, versus the lies they perpetuate. To which end they were clearly warned against and they agreed to when they resigned from LTE, signed their settlement agreement and walked away from LTE Consulting with a handsome payout; which they have apparently squandered, leaving them even more bitter and determined to scandalize LTE.

Despite the media onslaught, LTE has always maintained a professional stance, choosing only to respond to reputable institutions. Whilst many in the public may view LTE as poorly as they are portrayed in the media, those who know LTE, Clients, colleagues, and peers have all offered unending support and professionalism towards the Company, as can be expected from professionals. There is no doubt that the rhetoric will pass sooner or later, either way, there is much work to be done and Team LTE is focusing all their energy on progress, growth and development to help build a better Africa.



Source: The Star

Further, in their shameful attempts to destroy the Company, they had acquired LTE’s intellectual property and used it to lodge a case of fraud (CAS1376/06/2015) with the Specialized Commercial Crime Unit (SCCU) of the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) for the Sweetwaters project, claiming that LTE had overpriced the contract, when in fact LTE was well below the

made it their mission to destroy the Company by derailing the Sweetwaters project, and in so doing discrediting the professional team and slandering all spheres of government by spreading malicious lies and rumors in the media.