

MAYOR SHASHA MAKES AN IMPORTANT BREAKTHROUGH

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By Dave Rapson



An important day for Smithfield was October 6 when the newly elected Mayor of Mohokare Municipality, Mando Shasha, visited the town to introduce herself to the local forums.

Unfortunately, the meeting was poorly attended, partly because few knew of it, and partly because of scepticism on the part of those who had tried working with the previous administration. What was more disappointing was the lack of representation from Rietpoort, Mofulatshepe or Greenfield, especially since these areas make up the majority of Smithfield residents. This highlights the lack of community spirit and co-operation which has contributed to the decline of Smithfield.

It was reassuring that Mayor Shasha and Councillor Thuhlo made no empty promises but instead told us about the restructuring of the municipality to improve communication and service delivery.

It was suggested that forums be established for each residential area and the business community to address the problems of each and build community awareness and spirit. The leaders of these forums would then make up the Smithfield Forum working directly with the local municipality which in turn would represent Smithfield at district level. It was pointed out that the local municipality would also have autonomous authority in certain areas to speed up the addressing and resolving of problems.

Discussion ranged from the on-going water problem, illegal building and littering. All issues highlighted the fact that the municipality has to re-establish its authority and ensure that by-laws and legislation are adhered to and where necessary enforced by ensuring that the people employed in these positions not only have the skills and qualifications but the authority backed by the municipality. It was asked of the mayor that the municipality become a "visible leader" in the communities. Many Smithfield residents who are not involved with the forums see what is not being done and have a negative opinion of the Municipality. Community programmes e.g. clean up days, could be arranged; fixing of leaks and other obvious problems could be dealt with swiftly so that the community could "see" the municipality taking an interest.

Mayor Shasha did say that the process of restructuring was not an overnight process but one that would take time so I am cautiously hopeful that this will be a turning point for Smithfield. Although new administration has an enormous task ahead to win back "hearts and minds", it is also up to each person in the community to adjust their "mind set" and try to make a difference.

[Source: [www. http://smiffienews.wordpress.com](http://smiffienews.wordpress.com)]