

29 March 2017

Executive Mayor of George officially opens George Municipal Court

Alderman Melvin Naik, Executive Mayor of George officially opened the George Municipal Court today. The Mayor said in his address, "All of us present here today, are part of history." He said in any democracy the people should uphold values, laws and carry the weight of the individual and corporate responsibilities. "We have started a journey of local justice, through consultation and proper engagement with our local court authorities, the local chief magistrate and the local state prosecutor, and have concluded that administrative and infrastructural assistance in the form of a Municipal Court as a necessity." "This will allow the justice system to enhance its infrastructure base and it will allow the municipality to administer its by-laws more effectively and by so doing enhance our revenue base," Aldm Naik said. He asked the citizens to support the structure and called on all officials involved to always give a humane face as many people see courts as grim places. Ms Nozuko Mviko, Senior Magistrate and Judicial and Sub Cluster Head of George, Uniondale and Knysna said it is a honour to attend the opening of the Municipal court. She said one of the key issues of the Municipal Court is to see that justice is done and that respect is given to the accused person, who can be anyone. She said when an accused person enters a courtroom the persons' rights needs to be explained because if it is not done, it can be an infringement of the person's constitutional rights and therefore the case can be taken off the court roll. Mr Trevor Botha, Municipal Manager, said we are proud that the Municipal Court is now officially open. "It will make a huge difference to George Municipality. It is a known fact that George Municipality is well on its way to becoming a Metropolitan City. He said they are driving to get more investment for the city. Botha said the influx of people to George puts enormous strain on the city's resources and some of the major issues are to implement and apply the city's By-Laws. "The Municipal Court will play a huge role in ensuring that the law is upheld," he said. At first the court will mainly hear traffic offences but will eventually include cases on the contravention of council by-laws and building regulations. The reason for the Municipal Court is to get more cases onto the court roll. In the past the George Municipality was constrained to how many court cases they could get onto the court roll at the Magistrates Court. Ms Amanda Joubert, former prosecutor at the Mossel Bay Municipal Court, was appointed as the magistrate for the Municipal Court in George. Members of the public can make appointments to see the Prosecutor of the court, Mr Benjamin Ngewangu at the court building. Court sittings begin Monday, April 3 from 09:00 to 16:00. Adv. Johan van Schalkwyk, Head of the Legal Department at the George Municipality, thanked all delegates attending the function, including representatives of George Council, the South African Police Service, Correctional Service, the Department of Justice, the National Prosecuting Authority, Attorneys, the Provincial Traffic, Directors of the George Municipality and Mr Jaap van Lille, the architect of the building. Van Schalkwyk thanked all involved for making the establishment of the George Municipal Court a success.

Caption: Adv. Johan van Schalkwyk (Head of Legal Services), Cllr Gerrit Pretorius (Executive Deputy Mayor), Amanda Joubert (Magistrate of the New Municipal Court), Aldm Melvin Naik (Executive Mayor) and Trevor Botha (Municipal Manager).

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