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TAXI OPERATORS AND THE MUNICIPALITY AGREES TO DISAGREE

The Qwa Qwa United Taxi Association (QWAUTA) on Thursday the 20th meet with Executive Mayor of Maluti a Phofung Cllr Gilbert Mokotso accompanied by his Members of Mayoral Committee to agree to take a new approach on concerns of the taxi owners and also how they could work together with the municipality.

The meeting took place amid claims that the Association were not consulted nor invited to the planning of building the new taxi rank that is under construction next to Manapo Hospital, both parties were locked in a two-hour meeting at the Charles Mopeli Eduqwa Hall where they discussed their concerns and other concerns raised by the taxi drivers. The parties at the meeting described it as a very productive with the presence of the Executive Mayor Cllr Gilbert Mokotso and his Members of the Mayoral Committee (MMC)s, Chairperson of QWAUT Me Nteo and her Committee members. Most of the grievances were addressed but the operators said they still needed the municipality to give them time frame so that they can give feedback to their drivers before finalising a decision on the way forward.

Ramohloli said they would be working with traffic officers to ensure that they were only used by taxis or buses so that passengers are never dropped off in the middle of the road again. The taxi operators had also complained about filthy conditions at taxi ranks and the municipality committed to improve the cleaning of ranks. On a complaint about traffic congestion at the Sasol garage due to the operation of pirated taxi's in Setsing, the Mayor said he will engage with all traffic officers and ensure that traffic officers get there timeously and conducting traffic effectively "I must also emphasised the shortage of traffic officers in our municipality but we are working on making things right with what we have" he said

The municipality also asked for the taxi operators to ensure their vehicles were roadworthy as per the National Road Traffic Act...



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“Since the municipality does not have the authority to reduce or cancel the fines ... we have agreed that we will approach the court to see how we can get the fines that were obtained on the streets to be either reduced or cancelled” said The Mayor.

One of the complaints was that taxi owners’ permits were being withheld by the Department of Transport, as tension is still prevalent within the taxi industry, the Executive Mayor encouraged taxi owners to work alongside each other and find ways to resolve disputes peacefully, and avoiding physical confrontation by all means. With regards to the allegations that were made during the meeting that some traffic officers owned taxis that are pirating, Cllr Ramohloki assured that the matter would be investigated. Chairperson commended the Executive Mayor’s and his MMC’s for their contributions; she also encouraged taxi owners to follow proper protocol to avoid any taxi violence.

By: Masilo Malakwane