

MICHELLE MARAIS *Gazette* 30th Aug 2011

After sustained unworkable options and over a period of ten years the provincial government intervened to realize the long-expected and badly needed low-cost housing in McGregor. Mr. Bonginkosi Madikizela, provincial minister of housing (human settlements) told the *Gazette* the provincial government agrees in principle with the development proposals of the McGregor Heritage Society on private land east of the village.

"The proposed developments by the previous ANC controlled municipality were not suitable, among others, because the proposed areas have high archaeological, environmental or heritage values with high geo-technical restrictions."

According to Madikizela no approval has ever been granted for the building of houses.

"The Department has a strategic object to provide all South Africans with homes irrespective of their political affiliations."

He added that McGregor is a town with a tourism-driven economy and a relatively low economic development potential.

According to Mr. Theuns Botha, leader of the DA in the Western Cape, he held a political meeting in McGregor three weeks before the election earlier this year. "I encountered a severe concentration of frustrations about a long-expected housing project. It was obvious the previous ANC government could not provide workable solutions."

"I undertook to solve the problem and together with my colleagues involved with this, we formulated the solution."

Botha confirmed that Madikizela has already scheduled meetings with all role-players locally in order to get the ball rolling on the project as soon as possible.

This includes the buying of private farm land east of the village for this purpose.

"Our government will not disappoint the community of McGregor. This will be achieved according to my undertaking and the government's resolve."

Mr. Tony Saddington, former chairman of the McGregor Heritage Society, said the previous council was incompetent in sorting out the housing shortfall and ignored the findings of their own environmental impact and other studies. "In short, the housing issues could have been solved five years ago."

Mr. Gawie Fielies, former ANC councillor undertook to submit his comments on the housing shortfall in writing to the *Gazette*. At the time of going to press and after various telephone calls no feedback has yet been received.