



**Summary of Proceedings
Public Hearing**

**Joint Select Committee on Local Authorities, Service Commissions and Statutory Authorities
(including the THA)**
held on Wednesday May 24th, 2017

Subject matter: Inquiry into certain aspects of the operations of the Chaguaramas Development Authority (CDA).

Objectives of the inquiry

The objectives of the inquiry were:

- i. To determine what policy and Development Plans are presently guiding the development of the North-West Peninsula;
- ii. To assess the processes and criteria which are being applied by the Authority to allocate and designate land for the various developmental activities.
- iii. To understand the operational constraints and challenges that are advisedly affecting the performance of the Authority.

Venue: The hearing was held on Wednesday May 24th, 2017 from 10:06 a.m. to 11:58 p.m. in the A. N. R. Robinson Room, East, Level 9, Office of the Parliament, Tower D, The Port of Spain International Waterfront Centre, 1A Wrightson Road, Port-of-Spain.

Committee members

The following committee members were present:

- i. Mr. H. R. Ian Roach (Chairman)
- ii. Ms. Ramona Ramdial, MP (Vice-Chairman)
- iii. Ms. Khadijah Ameen
- iv. Mr. Stuart Young, MP
- v. Mr. Darryl Smith, MP
- vi. Mrs. Jennifer Baptiste-Primus

Witnesses who appeared

The following officials of the Chaguaramas Development Authority appeared before the Committee:

- Mrs. Deowattee Dilraj-Batoosingh, General Manager (Ag.)
- Mrs. Susan Russell-Edwards, Manager, Human Resources (Ag.)
- Ms. Tricia Dyer, Corporate Secretary
- Mr. Robert Cezair, Board Member
- Ms. Mary Seepersad, Board Member

The following officials of the Ministry of Planning and Development were also in attendance:

- Ms. Marie Hinds, Deputy Permanent Secretary
- Ms. Wendy Williams, Project Specialist
- Ms. Andrea Julien, Senior State Counsel
- Mr. Ancil Kirk, Assistant Co-ordinator
- Mr. Earl Jardine, Development Control Specialist
- Ms. Jassodra Rampersad, Research Officer II

Key Issues Discussed

The following are the key subject areas/issues discussed during the hearing:

Operational issues and Corporate Governance

- i. The constraints on the operations of the CDA due to a large debt portfolio which stands at \$118million;
- ii. The efforts of the Board and Management to restore the CDA to a favourable financial position;
- iii. The strategic plan 2016-2020 seeks to address *inter alia* the Authority's existing debt;
- iv. Two strategic objectives of the Board are improving the CDA's self-sufficiency and organisational alignment;
- v. The efforts of the CDA over the past 20 months to achieve self-sufficiency;
- vi. The type of projects being implemented to generate revenue and improve the financial position of the CDA;
- vii. The main sources of the Authority's revenue;
- viii. The nineteen projects identified in the Authority's strategic plan (2016-2020);
- ix. The aggregate cost of preparing the CDA's Strategic Plan (2016-2020);
- x. The disparity in revenues being earned and collected;
- xi. Whether the CDA has been lethargic in collecting rents/fees;
- xii. The actual revenue and expenditure of the CDA for 2016;
- xiii. For fiscal 2016/2017 the CDA received \$7,750,000 solely for development expenditure. The Authority does not received state funding for recurrent expenses. As a consequence, the organisation struggles to pay monthly salaries;
- xiv. The CDA has been running a deficit in recent years;
- xv. The CDA's challenges with paying gratuities and pensions;
- xvi. The relevance/value of the CDA and whether it is supposed to be a self-sustaining body;

- xvii. The need for amendments to be made to CDA Act;
- xviii. The status of the manpower and other relevant external audits of the CDA;
- xix. The internal audit conducted by Ernst & Young in 2016 is currently lodged at the Ministry of Legal Affairs;
- xx. The status of Annual Administrative Reports to the Parliament;

Land use management and development activities

- xxi. The Chaguaramas Development Plan (1974) is 44 years old but is the only plan that was approved by Parliament in accordance with Part II of the Town and Country Planning Ordinance 1960. As such, the CDA can only be guided by this plan;
- xxii. The relevance of the existing plans which are guiding the CDA's operations relative to changing environmental factors;
- xxiii. The steps being taken to develop new plans and to obtain the necessary statutory approvals;
- xxiv. The status of the Draft Master Plan, 2015;
- xxv. The initiatives being taken by the CDA to encourage investments as is recommended by the Draft Master Plan, 2015;
- xxvi. The reason why other developmental plans (drafted subsequent to 1974) for the area of Chaguaramas were not approved by the Parliament;
- xxvii. The estimated length of time required to revise the Master Plan 2015;
- xxviii. The lack of political will to advance developmental plans and to engage investors;
- xxix. The willingness of the Ministry of Planning and Development (MoPD) to provide the CDA with assistance in reviewing the Master Plan and providing technical advice to finalise the Draft Master Plan;
- xxx. The geographic zone/region that falls under the purview of the CDA;
- xxxi. The operations of the Pier I and whether it is compliant with the CDA Plan (1974) and has the required EMA approvals for its operations;
- xxxii. The CDA's Sports Tourism plans;
- xxxiii. The quantity of lands in Tucker Valley dedicated to agriculture as opposed to other purposes;
- xxxiv. The views of the CDA and MOPD regarding the institution of public private partnerships with a view to advancing development and generating revenue;
- xxxv. Whether UTT's facilities are compliant with the 1974 plan and whether the Institution pays rent to the CDA;
- xxxvi. The initiatives to address the transportation plan for entry and exit in and out of Chaguaramas;
- xxxvii. The role of the MoPD in assisting the CDA in determine it strategic priorities particularly in relation to the peninsular's development;
- xxxviii. The CDA's developmental plans for the offshore islands;

Lease Arrangements

- xxxix. The CDA's initiative to revise the terms and conditions of lease agreements with a view to achieving more earnings from these leases;
- xl. The collection of rents/revenues from holders of leases despite prevailing concerns regarding the legality of these leases;

- xli. The legality of “old leases” and whether they are in contravention of the CDA Plan (1974);
- xl.ii. The CDA continues to accept rent payments from tenants and leaseholders without prejudice, pending advice from legal counsel;
- xl.iii. The next step if leases are deemed illegal and not in accordance with the 1974 plan;
- xl.iv. The actions that can be taken if leaseholders’ projects are not in compliance with the 1974 plan;
- xl.v. Whether leases have a termination clause and whether it has been invoked by the CDA;
- xl.vi. Whether the state’s option to pursue a compulsory acquisition is also applicable to lands under the purview of the CDA;
- xl.vii. The status of the land tenure matters involving Guave Road farmers and the measures being taken to encourage agriculture in the area;

Seabed protection

- xl.viii. The construction of jetties and piers by tenants without permission;
- xl.ix. At present, the Commissioner of State Lands has jurisdiction over the seabed surrounding the N/W peninsula;
 - 1. The measures being taken by the CDA to manage sewerage and the consequential impacts on the environment.

The hearing can be viewed on our YouTube channel via the following link:
<https://youtu.be/LIPkSV2TZQg>

Contact the Committee’s Secretary

You may contact the Committee’s Secretary at jsclascsa@tparliament.org or [624-7275 Ext. 2283](tel:624-7275)

*Committees Unit
Wednesday 29th May 2017*