

MEET THE NEW CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT, COUNCILLOR MAKGAKGA PHASHA JOHN

Makgakga Phasha John is one of a rare breed of councilors who can be described as having gone full circle. Born in Pickum Village the 1960s, councilor Makgakga ranks amongst a few who defied the odds by refusing the repressive apartheid system to define and determine his destiny. Like all his peers, Makgakga endured very torrid circumstances in his quest to make something out of his life and came out unscathed.

He started out his schooling career at Bojelong Primary School and matriculated at Tembisa High School in Tembisa Township. He then headed to the reef where he enrolled for a qualification as an Artisan at the Lazarus Nhlapo Technical College (present day Ekurhuleni West College) in Tembisa. That is where he cut his political teeth by participating in various Mass Democratic Movements activities aimed at ensuring improved quality of education in particular and better socio-economic conditions for the broader society in general.

Upon his return from the province of gold, Makgakga established himself as an astute businessman and is the proud owner of a fleet of taxis. The Bochum Taxi Association soon realized his immense human relations potential and appointed him as Public Relations Officer (PRO) and was subsequently elected Deputy Chairperson of Blouberg Transport Association which comprises of five (5) taxi associations from across the municipal jurisdiction. His presence and easy going demeanor helped stabilize and quell potentially explosive situations associated with the taxi industry, hence there has never been any reported or significant level of violence across the five Blouberg Municipality taxis' operational areas as experienced elsewhere. As an out and out community member, Makgakga is also a member of the Pickum Communal Farm Association – a sign of how entrenched and attached he still is to his community regardless of his documented accolades.

Having consistently served in the local Chris Hani Branch of the African National Congress, Makgakga's tenure as Councillor began following the August 2016 Local Government Elections where he was elected Ward 11 Councillor. He was assigned to both the Infrastructure Development Portfolio as head of the Roads and Stormwater unit as well as the Petitions and Public Participation Committees. Due to his obvious leadership qualities, he was called upon on several occasions to act as chairperson of both committees. His breakthrough, which came albeit under very unfortunate circumstances, was resultant from the untimely passing of then Chairperson of the Infrastructure Development Portfolio Committee, Councillor Mashalane Mmapitsi Simon (may his soul rest in peace) in September 2020.

In an effort to leave no vacuum in the all - important service delivery Portfolio Committee, Council resolved to have councilor Makgakga acting as Chairperson of the Infrastructure Development Portfolio Committee. He, beyond any doubt proved himself to be equal to the task and subsequently council sitting of the 23rd December 2020 unanimously elected him as Member of the Executive Committee and Chairperson of the afore mentioned Portfolio Committee on a full time basis. Councillor Makgakga has a mammoth task ahead as his Portfolio is undoubtedly the face of service delivery and has within its ranks Roads and Stormwater, Electricity, Water (though primarily a district function) as well as Project Management units. It is anticipated that he, along with other stakeholders including but not limited to the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (Roads), Department of Energy (Electricity) and the Capricorn District Municipality (Water) will bring about renewed hope and vigour to the Blouberg citizenry. All the best to Tshetla as Bloubergers yearn for a better life.