



## The Ideal Procedures for Residential Stands Allocations on Council Land

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**Introduction:** The following are the major steps that were used before in allocating residential stands in Harare. However, these have been changed to accommodate the interests of the policymakers and senior council management. These new changes have opened the system to manipulation of town planning regulations. The Harare Residents' Trust (HRT) is sharing these steps in the public interest. Several residents have lost their money through corruption involving officials, Councillors, land barons and real estate agencies who sometimes pocket money that they do not deserve. It is hoped that through this educational and information update, residents would benefit and save themselves the pain of losing money through illegal means. Every resident should verify that whatever residential stand that they are being allocated has gone through the processes listed below.

1. The City Treasurer's Department (City Valuation and Estates Management Division) as custodians of all council land, identifies land they propose for housing development.
2. The identified land is then referred to the Department of Works for Inter-departmental consultations.
3. While at the Works Department, the proposed site goes through a number of sections to assess its suitability for the proposed residential development. These sections include but are not limited to:
  - 3.1. **The Town Planning Section-** It is from this section that the first assessment is conducted. They analyze issues of the proposed project's comparability to Master and Local Plans, land use patterns and everything planning related. If they are happy with the results, the Town Planning section then prepares a proposed layout plan for the area. This involves the layout of the proposed stands, the road network, public utilities like schools and churches, shopping facilities etc. After drafting this proposed layout, the Town planning section then circulates this proposal within its sister sections for their comments and input on the proposal.
  - 3.2. **The Water and Sewer sections-** The proposed layout is analyzed by the water and sewer section to assess if the proposed project can be serviced with reticulated water and sewer. If there are prospects of facing challenges in the provision of these services, the section may require that the layout be amended or dropped completely. If the proposal is okay, the section will proffer proposed designs for the services and then pass on the proposal to the next section.
  - 3.3. **Roads Section-** The roads section will get an opportunity to assess the proposed layout and comment on the possibility of providing access roads both to and within the proposed

layout. Once more, if there are any challenges identified by this section, they may either ask that the layout be amended or canceled all together. Some of these challenges may include but are not limited to conflicts with road servitudes and road reserves among others. If the plan receives the all clear, the section approves it and passes it on to the next section.

- 3.4. **The Power Section-** The proposed layout is also referred to the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA) for their comments on the proposed development. At ZESA they look at the possibility of servicing the proposed site with electricity. They also look at the possibility of the proposed project affecting future or existing developments. This includes areas of possible infringements with power servitudes.
- 3.5. **Communication Section-** The layout is then presented to TELONE for their comments and input on the proposed development. TelOne will then take some time to look at the layout particularly looking for areas of possible conflict with their above and below ground infrastructure. Once that has been done and the layout has been cleared, they move it on to the next section.

The process goes on and on until every relevant section has been consulted and have given their comments. Eventually the proposed layout is returned to the office it started from, the Town Planning Section. If the proposed layout has less than ten residential stands, the Town Planning Section moves the proposal to the next section within the same department, which is the Survey Section. If on the other hand, the proposed layout contains more than ten residential stands, the proposed layout is referred to the Ministry of Local Government (Department of Physical Planning) for their comments and approval.

If approval is granted by the Ministry, the plan is returned to the Town Planning Section who will then forward it to the Survey Section.

At the Survey Section, all the stands within the proposed layout are then surveyed to determine their actual size and location of each. After the stands have been surveyed, they are numbered and the proposed layout returned to the Town Planning Section for its final approval. The proposed layout is then presented to the Director of Works for final signature approval.

4. Upon approval, the now approved layout is returned back to the City Treasurer's Department (City Valuers and Estates Manager) for valuation of all the land represented in the layout. As the custodian of all council land, the City Valuer is then mandated to dispose of all non-residential land including Church sites, industrial sites, commercial sites, recreational sites and so on. While the City Valuer can dispose of all other land, he is obligated to value all residential land and surrender it to the Director of Housing and Community services for allocation to deserving beneficiaries.

5. As soon as the Director of Housing and Community Services receives the approved plan from the City Valuer and Estates Manager, he should write to Council seeking permission and its resolution to allocate the land.
6. After the resolution has been granted, the Town Clerk must advertise the proposed allocation of land in the local press and inviting any objections to the same. This is in fulfillment to a requirement in the Urban Council's Act (Chapter 29:15). If there are no objections, the Director of Housing and Community Services will then proceed with the allocation process, if there are objections; council will have to attend to the issues raised.
7. Once at the Department of Housing and Community Services the director of housing refers to his housing waiting list register to find qualifying applicants depending on the type of development represented by the approved layout. The housing waiting list has been categorized into three tiers, high density, medium density and low density.
  - 7.1. To promote transparency in the stand allocation process, the Department of Housing and Community Services has broken down the exercise into a number of segments. The Research Section sets the criteria for one to qualify for stand allocation by looking at the available stands, their values and other financial requirements depending on the level of development in the area. Having set a criteria, the Research Section gives it to the Housing Allocations Section to call in qualifying candidates for interviews.
  - 7.2. The Housing Allocations Section then goes to the waiting list register armed with the criteria provided by the Research Section and calls in all qualifying candidates for interviews. When the qualifying candidates have been identified and called in for interviews, the Research Section then conducts the interviews. During these interviews, they verify the identity of the applicants and their capacity to pay for the land available and develop appropriate structures on the same land.
  - 7.3. The shortlisted candidates are then deliberated on by an inter-departmental Allocations Committee. The Allocations Committee must be composed of the divisional head (Housing), a member of the Legal Section, a member from the City Treasurer's Department, a member from the Audit Department, an alternate divisional head from any other division within the Department of Housing and Community Services and a member of the Secretariat.
  - 7.4. Following a sitting of the Allocations Committee, they present their recommendations to the Director of Housing and Community Services for final approval. Once final approval has been granted, the successful candidates are notified and given a deadline by which to make payment for the stands they will have been allocated. Failure to meet this deadline will result in them forfeiting the opportunity and the stand will be allocated to the next best candidate from those interviewed.
8. A list of successful beneficiaries is then sent to the appropriate District Officer for preparation of Agreements of Sale which is done at the District Office concerned but will be handed to the Director of Housing and Community Services for Signature. This creates an administrative

file for each of the residential stands allocated in the respective site. The created file contains all the relevant documents starting from the application for land, the payment details and the site plans.

9. The District Officer then submits the returns and the list of the allocated stands to the Revenue Office at Rowan Martin Building, basing on date of sale, and council starts charging rates.

**Contact Details:** 0772 869 294, 0772 380 927, 08677109781, [hretrust79@gmail.com](mailto:hretrust79@gmail.com), [programs@hrt.org.zw](mailto:programs@hrt.org.zw), [www.hrt.org.zw](http://www.hrt.org.zw)