

Managing property properly

Joburg abandons pool registration plans

Joburg residents will not be required to register their swimming pools, as announced earlier this year by the City of Joburg.

However, they will have to submit plans and make an application if they build new pools, and the council says it will 'shortly announce the mandatory process for swimming pool plans or applications'.

As a result of public pressure following a series of public participation meetings with residents, the city has decided to withdraw the proposed bylaws because of costs and concerns about the capacity to enforce the by-laws.

In January, the city announced that all pool owners, would be forced - for the safety of children and non-swimmers - to register their pools and have fences, set to certain specifications, built around them.

The city on Friday considered a report from the committee on public safety, recommending that the draft by-laws be withdrawn. 'This decision was taken after the committee had analysed stakeholder submissions, as well as feedback from public hearings held between February and March,' said city spokesman Nthatisi Modingoane.

Some of the submissions received include:

- Concerns were raised about the lack of statistics on drowning incidents in private pools versus drowning in rivers, dams or any form of open water.
- Residents already have an interest in ensuring swimming pool safety, but were opposed to a by-law being the best mechanism to address safety.
- The tariff for inspection and approval of pools was a major concern.
- Concerns were raised about the cost of safety nets.
- Concerns about the capacity to implement the by-laws.

As such, the committee considered the legislative provisions of the national building regulations, which state that the owner of any site that contains a swimming pool shall ensure that access to such a pool is controlled, and that any owner who fails to comply with the requirement of the regulations shall be guilty of an offence.

Although swimming pools are considered 'minor' building work in terms of the act, it is evident they are recognised as structural construction.

It must be stressed, however, that in all cases, an application must be submitted to the local authority, so that it is aware of proposed work to enable conditions to be set where necessary.

'This comes as welcome news for all affected stakeholders. The city will shortly announce the mandatory process for swimming pool plans or applications. This process serves as a clear demonstration of what can be achieved through engagement with various stakeholders.

'It further positions Joburg as an engaged and accountable municipality,' said Modingoane.