



Citizens' Action Forum

The Fifth Estate

The Commissioner
Bangalore Development Authority
Bangalore

27th April 2015

Dear Sir,

Sub: "Objection to holding the public hearing/consultation on Master plan 2035, proposed to be held on 29th April 2015 and instead seeking development of a "vision plan with citizen participation".

We recall an attempt by BDA when you had released an advertisement informing the Public that a Public Hearing was proposed to be held on Thursday the 13th November 2014 at Yavanika from 10.30 A M to 1.30 P M to "consult"/"hear" public opinion on the proposed Master Plan for Bangalore for the period 2015 - 2035.

In view of the very strong and adverse public reaction then you postponed the hearing by releasing an equally inconspicuous advertisement announcing that the event stands postponed and the next date will be intimated.

Now you have come out with a Press Statement today that you are holding a Public Hearing to move forward with a Revised Master Plan 2031 on Wednesday the 29th April 2015 at 3 P.M. at Ambedkar Bhavan.

At the very outset we would like to register our strong protest at the very cavalier manner in which you have treated the entire issue of holding a Public Hearing. We remember about two years back when Sri. Pradip Singh Karola as the then Commissioner of BDA had called for objections on their proposed Master Plan 2015-35. CAF had meticulously prepared a note pointing out many drawbacks in the very nature of its proposal.

OUR OBJECTIONS ON THE PROCEDURAL ASPECTS OF PREPARATION OF CDP THEN AND NOW INCLUDE -

1) Visioning cannot be done by a team of officers and Engineers sitting in their offices and telling us the citizens what kind of a city we deserve. It is so reminiscent of the top down approach of the colonial times where the Government in its infinite wisdom decreed what was good and what was bad for the citizens which we were expected to accept meekly. Is it not a part of common sense that the group whom the so

called planning process is supposed to benefit should have participation rights in the very process of planning because of the simple fact that they know what is best for them, and which incidentally may not suit the needs of the Consultant – Contractor - Builder lobby. And this is also the essence of the 74th Amendment to our Constitution of which you must all be quite aware of.

HENCE WE DEMAND that the entire visioning process should be carried out in association with the Citizens and Civil Society Organisations and therefore it is incumbent upon BDA to provide for a platform to achieve this.

For this it is imperative that a draft notification is made public mentioning that you wish to prepare a vision document and for which inputs are called for and give the citizens 60 to 90 days time to prepare and submit the same in a Public Hearing Exercise spread over at least a week continuously in a large auditorium where there will be unrestricted admission to all citizens irrespective of their affiliations. It should be open to all the citizens of this city.

Once the inputs are received an expert committee should collate all these suggestions which should be made available in the public domain and come out with a draft report on the Vision for Bangalore as required by the Citizens of Bangalore and not as decreed by the Government.

Once the draft is ready it should be placed once again for Public Scrutiny for a period of at least 60 days. Scientific clarifications as to why proposals made by the citizens if rejected while preparing the draft document with valid reasons must be given for rejecting the same and this document of rejections should be available in the public domain along with the draft proposal. This will make everybody involved accountable and avoid the very hush-hush manner in which the whole exercise is being taken up raising the suspicion that there is some hidden agenda behind the whole exercise.

Only after an acceptance of such a vision document the task of preparing the master plan within the parameters of this vision document can be outsourced to any competent organization through a transparent bidding process.

2) CDP 2035 HAS TO BE A HOLISTIC DOCUMENT WITH A SCIENTIFIC UNDERSTANDING OF THE CARRYING CAPACITY OF THE CITY AND AVAILABLE RESOURCES INBUILT INTO IT- What is happening now is that only land use pattern is defined with absolutely no inputs from the point of view of providing the basic requirements like water, power, underground drainage, transport and other requirements. Any process other than this will make the whole process unacceptable in a democratic set up.

We do not want our money to be wasted in some tamasha of a namesake public hearing just to satisfy the requirement of legal provisions and then coming out with a land use document. It is a sheer waste of public money.

3) WE QUESTION THE JURISDICTION OF THE BDA IN PREPARING THE CDP - There is also another issue, namely the role of BDA in view of the formation of Metropolitan Planning Committee. Will it remain the central planning authority reporting to the MPC or will some other role be assigned to it? We believe as per the constitutional mandate the CDP vision document should be formulated under the leadership of the MPC, but as BBMP has been superseded, 18 members of the BBMP who are a part of MPC can no longer

serve on it and further this matter is already in court, in this scenario we want to question the unseemly haste in going ahead with the exercise even before the court has delivered its final verdict. If you are in such a tearing hurry why don't you request the court to expedite the matter and proceed with this if you get the clearance from the Court. There are many more grey areas which need clarity.

We will certainly raise these issues in a properly conducted Public Hearing for preparation of a vision document. We look forward to a more nuanced approach to a really structured Citizen Participation rather than the stereotype of strictly following the letter of the law and ignoring entirely the spirit. It is time that organisations like BDA into whose jurisdiction the vital task of planning the future of our city is entrusted wake up to the requirements of participatory democracy and decentralized and bottom-up approach to this vital task especially keeping in view the 74th Constitutional Amendment passed way back in 1994.

Hence we once again strongly lodge our protest on this hastily convened public hearing to discuss the Master plan 2035.

Thanking you, we are,

Sincerely
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Honourable CHIEF MINISTER of Karnataka
Secretary UDD
BBMP ADMINISTRATOR