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OFFICE OF THE CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS
KAMLA NEHRU RIDGE, DELHI-110007.

No. F11(26)/PA/DCF/95/Vol. III/4889-95

Date: 29/10/97

To

GOVT. OF N.C.T. OF DELHI

1. Vice-Chairman, Delhi Development Authority, Vikas Sadan, New Delhi. Dated - 4/IV 1997
2. Finance Secretary, Govt. of NCT of Delhi, 5, Sham Nath Marg, Delhi. Diary No. 1704/13
3. Prof. I.H.Khan, Indian Society of Environmental Management, B-II, Jamia Nagar, New Delhi-25.
4. Mr. Akshay Kumar, Prakarti, Centre for Environmental Protection, No.3, Shankracharya Marg, Delhi-54.
5. Sh. B.L.Nimesh, L&DO, Ministry of Urban Affairs & Employment, Nirman Bhawan, New Delhi.
6. Director (Hort.), CPWD, Y-Shape Building, New Delhi.
7. Director (Hort.) MCD, House Avenue, New Delhi.
8. Mr. Manjeet Singh, Addl. Commissioner, Slum & JJ., Vikas Bhawan, New Delhi.
9. Mr. Manoj Kumar, Forest Settlement Officer, ALM(R), Tis Hazari, Delhi.
10. Director Survey (AR), West Block-IV, Wing No. IV, R.K.Puram, New Delhi.
11. O.S.D. to Chief Secretary, Delhi.
12. P.S. to Secretary (Forests).

Sir,

Enclosed please find herewith the minutes of the meeting of Ridge Management Board held on 8.10.97 at 2.00 P.M. under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary, Govt. of NCT Delhi for further necessary action.

Please acknowledge the receipt.

Yours faithfully,

R.K. Goel
(R.K. GOEL)

CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS-CUM-MEMBER SECRETARY RIDGE MANAGEMENT BOARD.

Sh. S.K. Wadhwa
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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RIDGE MANAGEMENT BOARD HELD ON 8.10.1997 AT 2.00 P.M. UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF CHIEF SECRETARY, GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI

A meeting of the Ridge Management Board was held on 8.10.1997 at 2.00 p.m. under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary, Govt. of NCT of Delhi. The list of the participants is at Annexure I. Details of items discussed are indicated below:

Agenda item 1

1. Handing over of unutilised and excess land by Janki Devi Mahavidyalaya :- Member Secretary briefed the Chairman and the Board that 1548.80 sq. yards of excess land and 3.534 acre of unutilised and undeveloped land was to be handed over by Janki Devi Mahavidyalaya to Ridge Management Board. On the basis of the measurement, it was found that there is no excess land and hence question of handing over of 1548 sq. yard to Ridge Management Board does not arise, but measurement of unutilised land indicated that College Management is in the possession of 3.53 acres of the unutilised land is proximity to ridge, which they are required to hand over. Since College Management was not handing over 3.53 acre of the unutilised land, an affidavit was filed in the Supreme Court to the effect that College management has failed to hand over the land in terms of the Supreme Court's directions and adopting non-cooperative attitude. After the discussions, it was decided that immediately L&DO should take over 3 acres of the land which College authorities are ready to hand over and in turn hand over to CPWD. Further the balance area should be inspected to know the status of the balance 0.53 acres of land on which no construction whatsoever shall be allowed.

2. Clearance of encroachment behind Birla Mandir and Balmiki Basti:- Chairman Ridge Management Board was apprised of the position that encroachment behind Birla Mandir, especially the two Pacca houses, has not been cleared by L&DO despite clearing the encroachment six times in this area. As a result, CPWD has not been able to take over partially cleared area which has resulted in the frequent encroachments. Chief Secretary

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It is indicated that L&DO must take the action to clear the encroachment in terms of the Supreme Court's direction without delaying the matter further. Chief Secretary further desired that he would take up this issue at his level due to considerable delay for which a D.O. letter addressed to Secretary, Urban Development, Govt. of India be submitted. Similarly, L&DO has to undertake the removal of the re-encroachment of area in Balmiki Basti and, after removal of encroachment, it is to be handed over to CPWD a land managing agency. Chairman, Ridge Management Board stressed that Supreme Court direction should be followed and no fresh encroachment shall come up in any of the ridge area. Immediate action should also be taken for the removal of the re-encroachments, which reportedly has taken place in the area behind Birla Mandir and Balmiki Basti.

3. Re-encroachment by Baba Asa Ram by breaking the fence constructed by CPWD:- Secretary, Ridge Management Board explained that the Temple management was allowed to retain an encroached area of 196 X 198 ft. with 6 ft. wide passage from Gautam Buddha Road (Upper Ridge Road) by the Supreme Court. However, Temple authorities have encroached the area and created a very wide passage approx. of 40 ft. width. Further, they are taking the vehicles inside and also parking on upper Ridge Road which have been declared as 'No Parking Road by Hon'ble Supreme Court. Also, Temple authorities have written to Ridge Management Board that their devotees can create the law and order problem. Chief Secretary was also apprised of the fact that an affidavit has been filed in the Supreme Court indicating the above position. Since all these actions of Temple management of Baba Asa Ram are in violation of Supreme Court directions, it was decided by the Board that a contempt of Supreme Court directions be filed in the Hon'ble Supreme Court with press cuttings, FIR's filed, photographs of the area and photographs with CPWD where parking is done unauthorisedly along Upper Ridge Road.

4. Non-handing over of land by Lal Dwara Management Committee:- It was explained to the Board that Lal Dwara Management Committee encroached 1590.08 sq. yards of the area and the Management was supposed to remove the encroachment and

Agenda Item No.
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handover this area to Ridge Management Board (to be taken over by DDA) in pursuance of Supreme Court's orders dated 24.07.1996 within a period of two months. The Management could handover only 400 sq. yards and, subsequently, on the directions of Supreme Court, the Management handed over another 376 sq. yards of the area while balance of the area has not been handed over. The Chairman, Ridge Management Board stated that this would amount to contempt of the Supreme Court's orders and we should immediately file a contempt petition against the management in the Hon'ble Supreme Court.

Shifting of 11 squatters from Central Ridge:- The details of the case were given by Member Secretary who explained that 11 squatters were to be shifted and L&DO had to take over the land and handover the land to be vacated by squatters to CPWD and-DDA by 31st May, 1997. The Member Secretary further explained that this case is being heard in the Supreme Court again where squatters have filed the review petition and in which the Hon'ble Supreme Court directed the MCD authorities to clear the construction plans, etc. of alternative plots allotted by DDA in pursuance of Supreme Court's order immediately as directed in the last hearing on 01.10.1997 by the Hon'ble Court. It was decided that Ridge Management Board will formally write to MCD to expedite the clearance of the construction plans, etc. submitted by squatters in terms of the Supreme Court's orders.

6. Non-completion of boundary wall by DDA along Chouburja Marg on Northern Ridge:- Member Secretary explained that DDA has not completed the shifting/construction of the boundary wall as decided in the previous Ridge Management Board Meeting and left a portion of the boundary uncompleted. Chairman, Ridge Management Board and other members stated that this balance portion of the boundary wall shall be completed latest by 31.10.1997 so that Ridge can be secured and DDA will also undertake the plantation work on the land retrieved to be merged in the Ridge.

Agenda Item No. 2

Proposal for laying of transmission line between Naraina and Park Street by Delhi

Vidyut Board :- The proposal of DVB for laying of transmission line between Naraina and Park Street through Central Ridge was discussed in detail. This project involves the construction of 33 Towers, cutting of 869 trees, regular pruning/cutting of the trees to avoid contact with the transmission lines, damage to the Ridge by way of taking construction material and other machinery to the Ridge required for construction of Towers and laying of transmission lines besides dumping of excavated soil. It was pointed out by Member Secretary that Central Ridge has already been notified as Reserved Forest u/s 4 of the Indian Forests Act 1927 and its diversion for non-forestry purposes would require prior permission of Government of India under Forest Conservation Act, 1980. Since the Supreme Court is monitoring the Ridge matters in I.A. No. 18 in WP No.4677/85, the diversion of the Ridge area for above purpose would require permission of the Supreme Court which in its various judgments emphasized the need to maintain the ecology of the ridge and its preservation. After considering the various options, the Chairman, Ridge Management Board stated that keeping in view the sensitivity of the ridge area, its importance as lungs of Delhi and since the proposal would involve deforestation and other damages, it is not desirable to take the transmission lines through ridge area and DVB must consider the laying of underground cables outside the ridge area even if it involves higher investment cost. The Chairman further desired that a note be prepared for discussion in the meeting of next Standing Committee to be held on 21st October, 1997.

Agenda Item No. 3

Relocation of three colonies from Asola & Bhatti Wild Life Sanctuary:- It was explained to the Board that the relocation of three colonies was to be completed by 31.10.1996, but the first extension was sought upto 31.03.1997 and the second extension was sought upto 31.10.1997 through an affidavit filed by Chairman, Ridge Management Board. This dead-line is also ending. Mr. Manjit Singh, Addl. Commissioner (Slum) Deptt. explained that Pilot Project for the construction of some houses is in progress. Chief

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Secretary-cum-Chairman, Ridge Management Board stated that all ^{cedal} formalities in this regard should be completed before taking up any work. Approval of the competent authority should also be taken. The matter would also be reviewed at a separate meeting.

Agenda Item No. 4

Permission to be given to Ministry of Defence for establishing their camp near

Rabindra Rangshala in Central Ridge:- It was decided that Ministry of Defence may be permitted to establish their camp for Republic Day celebrations keeping in view the importance of the occasion especially as the Nation also celebrating 50th Anniversary of India's Independence. It was further decided that this will be the last occasion when this permission is being granted to Ministry of Defence. It was further decided that Supreme Court be apprised of the fact that permission is being granted to establish the camp without any damage to the vegetation in the area keeping in view the importance of the occasion.

Proposal of DDA for developing an International Hotel Complex at Vasant Vihar:-
The Member Secretary explained that the area where the Hotel complex is coming up is not part of ridge notified as Reserved Forest w/s 4 of Indian Forest Act, 1927, though topographically and geographically it is a ridge area, being extension of Aravalli Range. However as part of this area has been notified as Protected forest during 1980,.

the prior permission of Ministry of Environment & Forest would be essential for taking up the Hotel Project. Chairman, EIAA, Justice Shukla has also been requesting the Board to intimate the factual position regarding this area. It was decided that Chairman Ridge Management Board would make a site inspection of the area. The DDA will prepare a map of 315 Hec. area and also map of the protected forest. These maps will be sent in advance to Member Secretary (Ridge Management Board).

Review of the Minutes of last meeting of Ridge Management Board held on 5.3.1997:- Strengthening of watch and ward by land management agencies:
Chairman, Ridge Management Board emphasized once again that there is a tendency for

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re-encroachment/encroachment in the Central and South-Central Ridge and it is necessary to keep maximum vigil by strengthening the watch and ward & also directed that all such encroachments should be removed immediately as it was also violative of the Supreme Court order.

Chairman also stressed that the fencing, wherever not completed, should be done immediately and the status report should be sent along with the plantations afforestation carried out in the Ridge area taken over by the various land managing agencies.

Regarding the Ridge area in Mehrauli village, under the control of MCD, Member Secretary explained that one case of Sridar Singh Vs. Others stay has been vacated while in the other case, the contempt proceedings against MCD officials are still in the Court. Director, Horticulture informed that fencing of the area has not been carried out by the Engineering Wing in the area in which the stay has been vacated during March, 1997. Chief Secretary stated that he had visited the area in Mehrauli from where encroachment was removed from 7 acres out of 12.5 acres of the land. Keeping in view the sensitivity of the matter it was suggested that this matter be placed before the Standing Committee for discussion before encroachment ^{from} remaining area is removed.

Director, Horticulture, DDA informed that the CRPF has vacated from South-Central Ridge. They also removed the encroachments on the agricultural field, the milk dairy and for which the stay was also vacated. DDA also fenced the area and carried out the afforestation. Director, Horticulture informed further that they have fenced the area around Temple in Sanjay Van by excluding the Temple. The Board directed that fencing in remaining area should be completed after removal of the encroachment.

Encroachment by Maurice Nagar Police Station

Chief Secretary-cum-Chairman, Ridge Management Board indicated that he would like to take up this issue in the next law and order meeting to be taken by Lt. Governor and for which a note may be also ^{be} sent to him.

Construction of boundary pillars at Delhi-Haryana Border

A.D.M. Panchayat informed that Development Commissioner is taking a meeting on construction of pillars/demarcation of boundaries and where Haryana officials will also be present on 17 Oct., 1997. Chairman, Ridge Management Board desired that after the meeting, he should be apprised of the outcome and, if necessary, he would raise the issue in the meeting of North Regional Council to be held on 20th Oct., 1997 in Sri Nagar.

Closure of approach road to Tytler School from Ridge side

Member Secretary informed the Board that petition of Rajinder Nagar Education Society has been dismissed by Hon'ble Court after one and half decade. Accordingly on the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, the approach road to the schools have been closed by CPWD as informed by Director, Horticulture the representation of the Rajinder Nagar Education Society was deliberated upon keeping in view the management and protection of the ridge and safety of the children. After the deliberations, the Board was of the view that the passage cannot be allowed from the ridge as it would divide the ridge in four parts artificially and make the protection of the ridge difficult. Further the safety aspect of the children has also to be kept in view. Considering The heavy traffic on the Gautant Buddha Road (Upper Ridge Road), the Board was of the view that it would not be in the interest of the school children from point of view of traffic safety.

Taking over of Gaon Sabha Land

Member Secretary indicated that he will be submitting a separate note for calling the meeting keeping in view the very slow progress in handing over the Gaon Sabha land in the ridge area to the Forest Deptt.

The meeting ended with Vote of thanks to the Chair.
