

THE WEEKLY

ROAD BRINGS JOY TO THABONG RESIDENTS

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Thank you Matjhabeng ... Esa Maqelepo, Albertina Mosotho, Mahwang Lefeeame, and Tsiane Mosebekoa has been living in Thabong for more than 30 years

“This is a great day for the community. It represents the day when the new Joe Slovo Drive in Thabong is completed but also the day the Matjhabeng Local Municipality restores the faith of this community in a government that hears us when we speak.” This is according to Tsiane Mosebekoa, who has been living in Thabong, Welkom for more than 30 years.

The community gathered last Friday to see the executive mayor, Sebenzile Ngangelizwe, unveiled the new Road 200. The road, which cost R9.4-million, was finally completed within four months after eight years of failed attempts to rebuild it. “With so many service delivery challenges on our shoulders days like these give us hope that the ANC led and democratically elected government of South Africa is on the right track,” Ngangelizwe said.

He acknowledged that the municipality and government still have a long way to go to address the needs of the poor. “The majority of our people in townships are still in dire need of roads, water, sanitation, public transport facilities, and electricity. Roads are an integral component in our people’s everyday lives. They enable citizens to participate fully in the socio-economic and political activities of this country.”

The new road has been officially named Joe Slovo Drive to pay tribute to the late SACP struggle icon. According to Ngangelizwe, it is fitting that the busiest road in the area should be named after Slovo, because as the former Minister of Housing he fought for development in townships such as these. “These kinds of street names reflect the diversity and cultural heritage of all our citizens and install a sense of history in the community.”

Joe Slovo Road is some 1.3 km long and connects wards 15, 13, and 17 in Thabong.

“This is a great day for the community of Thabong. They have been complaining about the condition of the road for a very long time,” said the councillor of ward 17, Tsokolo Thelingoane.

He added that he is proud that the municipality does not take lightly the decision to change street names and extensively involves the public in the decision-making.

“When the municipality included the whole community in the name changing process, it gave us a sense that this road is also ours and a sense that our opinion is valued by it.”

Members of the Thabong community said the condition of the road was terrible before it was redone. “It was not a real road at all. It looked like a jungle that separated the houses. People in the area used it as a dumping site, no cars or taxis could drive on it, and all sorts of things used to grow on it,” Mosebekoa remembered.

He added that his greatest fear was always that they would find bodies buried amongst the rubble in the old road. “We know that the municipality still has a long way to go. But this is a start in the right direction and we would like to say thank you.”

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