

## LANIA COMMUNITY COUNCIL PRESS CONFERENCE 30/10/07

Lania, without a doubt possesses an exceptional natural and manmade environment. The community has a rich cultural heritage that reaches even to our days.

These characteristics contributed to the village being chosen by the relevant authorities as one of the first on the island to be included in a master plan.

These characteristics, combined with the population reduction of the last 10 years have provided the foundation on which the master plan study team relied to create the plan.

The many faceted development of the community in accordance with the master plan will rely on:

- A) The creation of measures and strategies for the 1<sup>st</sup> stage development of the village (vineyards, traditional products etc).
- B) The creation of measures and strategies for the 3<sup>rd</sup> stage development (new forms of tourism).
- C) The execution of specific works in the nucleus of the village which will safeguard the promotion of the traditional elements; the upgrading of the town planning and traffic and the environmental upgrading of the housing stock.

Concerning the traffic in the village the plan foresees the freeing of the nucleus from the through passage of vehicles and the provision of adequate parking for visitors on the periphery of the village centre.

These, in brief, are the basic facts on which Lania, in agreement with the master plan, is basing its future development. These are the points that we, the new Community Council have adopted as our aims and intend to see through. This is the dream in which along with all Lanites, we believe and will continue to believe.

The master plan study team in their report say that

-the road network, both national and local, which serves Lania is quite adequate in respect of its quality. This brings into question the need for a new highway connection so close to the core of the village.

-the passage of this highway so close to the skyline to the east of Lania will create a visual nuisance from the village as it is bound to damage the green mountain view. Additionally, the proximity to the houses will create a real problem of noise pollution which will be in direct relation to the volume of traffic and speed of vehicles.

The current proposal brings the road to within 400 metres from the centre of the village. The work itself will be visible from all parts of the village. An important reason for the reservations voiced by the study team comes from the proposals and priorities which have been suggested for the revival and upgrading of the community.

Based on the above, the implementation of proactivity has been considered of the foremost importance and concerns the parallel and complimentary development of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> stages with the simultaneous reinforcement of the viticulture and viable tourism within the framework of corresponding directions of the EU.

Given that, both the vineyards and natural surroundings of the settlement are considered as the basis for the success of this aim, we believe that the proposed routing of this road destroys both these resources and overturns the whole philosophy of the master plan.

Therefore, we believe that the road must be moved further away from the village as it is expected that there will be significant visual and environmental nuisances (especially noise) which will undermine the development, progress and quality of Lania.

Exactly for this reason, from the moment we took our position on the council, we identified the problem that this highway creates and its collision with the master plan. We felt supported by the position of the previous council which was circulated to the authorities and was posted in the coffee shop. On the 21/2/07 we circulated a letter to all competent authorities signed by ALL members of the council referring to the problem which the road will create and the blow it will deliver to the future of the village. The letter refers to the noise pollution due to the proximity of the road to inhabited areas, the aesthetic change to the environment and the destruction of the land reclamation programme which was only concluded in 2000. There followed a second letter, also from the whole council, to the chairman of the House committee for the Environment. In this, we requested the intercession of the appropriate authority of the environmental committee with the relevant departments and specifically the Environmental Services for the alteration of the road plan.

The Transport Minister eventually accepted our demand for a meeting which took place on 25/5/07 at the Ministry. The Action committee also attended. Having acknowledged the validity of our argument, the Minister asked us to provide an alternative. After studying the terrain and altitudes of the hills in the area we handed in our suggestion.

The new road would pass behind the Gouros hill at a distance of approximately one kilometre from the proposed road which it would rejoin near the chapel of Panayia Valana. It is far enough from the village so as not to cause any nuisance and pushes the Lania highway exit a further 1200 metres away but in a parallel line, so that substantially the distance from the village is not affected. Also, we have asked for another exit at Valana.

There is therefore the possibility of extending the housing zone (for a gradual development alongside land cultivation) towards the east. The amount of land affected is clearly much less (about  $\frac{3}{4}$  less as there is supposed to be a 1200 metre tunnel along the way), and its value for the purpose of expropriation is at least half.

The argument that the cost of the new road is 15million higher finds us in disagreement. This can be explained better by the civil engineers who worked on the project and who can give us better information.

We also know that a project that is friendlier to the environment as a road with a number of tunnels is, stands a better chance of funding from Europe.

We, the MAJORITY of Lania community council ask for your support so as to change this road to catastrophe. We believe in the justice of our fight and with your help we will save our Lania which we all love.

The majority of LCC.