

'Redevelopment plan to go on despite change in govt'

KUALA LUMPUR: The Kampung Baru Development Corporation (KBDC) has assured landowners that the massive redevelopment project in the city's oldest Malay enclave will go on despite the change in federal government.

KBDC chief executive officer Datuk Zulkurnain Hassan says unless told otherwise, plans will go on as per previous instructions.

He says even though it will be up to the new federal administration to make a final decision, the Federal Territories Ministry has told the corporation to continue a survey related to the project.

"In a recent meeting with the Federal Territories Ministry secretary-general, we have been told to proceed with our exercise to engage with landowners as we did before," said Zulkurnain, referring to a survey it has been tasked with carrying out to gauge whether landowners agreed to the government's offer in the redevelopment plan.

He says 60 per cent of the 5,359 registered landowners in Kampung Baru have agreed to the government offer in the land sale, and it needs to reach a referendum of 80 per cent of them before a decision can be made on whether to proceed or scrap the proposal.

"We are engaging landowners. This is because a caveat under which the land was given to them by the sultan of Selangor 120 years ago dictated that any transference or sale of the lots must have approval of all landowners."

Asked whether the redevelopment plan would be scaled down, Zulkurnain said KBDC is prepared for this possibility.

"The best scenario is wholesale development, due to the land caveats and a need for the amalgamation of the smaller plots.

"Redevelopment needs to be comprehensive instead of fragmented, with optimal planning and infrastructure.

"That is why during the previous (federal territories) minister's (Khalid Abdul Samad) time, we proposed for a very good price to encourage landowners to participate. We want them to resolve land matters and the caveat because we are offering them a very good price.

"But it does not mean that if we fail to do what the previous administration envisioned, we should feel our efforts have been wasted.

"We can continue in a different capacity. We don't have to develop the 80ha all at once. We can do it in parcels."

He is referring to the time before Khalid's tenure when the policy for development in the en-

clave was one of non-direct interference.

"KBDC is facilitating redevelopment by bridging the gap between developer and landowner to negotiate a deal to ensure there is mutual understanding to go ahead with any project."

He says the approval rate among landowners has increased by 30 per cent in the past two months.

"About 32 or 33 per cent of landowners agreed to it in December.

"Just before the 'Sheraton Move', it reached 60 per cent.

"We still need at least another 35 per cent of landowners."

He says only five per cent of Kampung Baru landowners they interviewed so far have rejected the offer.

The 120-year-old Kampung Baru is administered as a Malay Agricultural Settlement and covers 120ha of the city centre.

Of the total area, 80ha, which is three times the size of the Kuala Lumpur City Centre, has been earmarked for redevelopment.

Of that 80ha, 62ha is privately-owned.

While redevelopment has been proposed for many decades, the sheer number of landowners, some of whom are unregistered, have died or are embroiled in small estate disputes, have complicated matters.

In 1975, Kuala Lumpur City Hall proposed a development plan that was not implemented.

In 1985, City Hall came up with another proposal with a rolling fund of RM5 million, but it was unsuccessful.

Another plan in 1991 for City Hall to take over a part of Kampung Baru for development was not realised.

In 2008, former federal territories minister Tan Sri Dr Zulkhasnan Rafique urged for redevelopment plans to be revived. The proposal entailed a RM10 billion allocation and redevelopment of 33 lots belonging to the government.

But it was not until KBDC was set up in 2012 that the recent push for redevelopment was expedited.

Khalid had estimated that land acquisition would cost between RM6 billion and RM10 billion, while its gross development value could reach RM30 billion.

The authorities allow a 1:10 plot ratio for commercial developments in the enclave.

However, this requires lots of 0.28ha and above, but most of the lots in Kampung Baru need to be amalgamated as most of the lots measure only 0.04ha to 0.05ha each.



A traditional house in Kampung Baru.

it together as the political landscape shifts.

He says he has been in touch with members and has urged them to stay calm.

"We have to think positive. We have to take this bold step by staying confident. No, we are not jumping the gun. We are doing what we are supposed to do.

"As for the political side of

things, we can only adopt a wait-and-see stance," he says when asked whether the plan would become reality following the change in federal government.

He says it is crucial for Muhyiddin to appoint a cabinet that has all the needed portfolios, but it is also equally important for the government to update Kampung Baru folk about the

offer made to them.

"Let them come and talk to us. Then we can decide and propose ideas that will benefit all stakeholders.

"What we hope is they'll do something good that we can accept. That's the only thing we want. We don't want something that will haunt us or bother us later in the future."