

The Makar Townsite Residential Subdivision

Rommel Arcega

Like many stories of land tenure struggles in the Philippines, the proclamation of the Makar Townsite for one, showcases an immeasurable number of tales of national history, politics, people power, success, hope, and continued struggle. At different times, it has provoked various interests of people, molding its uniquely urban character despite a history dating back the pioneer times of Mindanao. Numerous attempts were undertaken to grant this land to the landless. However, only in 1991, under Presidential Proclamation 727 of the then President Corazon Aquino, through years of shedding 'blood, toil, sweat, and tears' by the urban poor groups of General Santos City, when more or less 48.4146 hectares of the Makar Townsite Reservation was proclaimed alienable and disposable for theirs, and the city's housing needs. Today, Makar is a testimony of an 80-year old struggle over land, whom the victor has been the urban poor, and whose struggle over security of tenure will indefinitely continue.

Topic list

Pre-proclamation Era
Proclamation Period
Post-Proclamation

Pre-proclamation Era

The documented history of Makar started early in the 20th century when brothers Jose and Alberto Olarte of Barcelona, Spain arrived in Cotabato Province sometime in 1898. This was shortly after the Spaniards turned over the Philippines to the government of the United States of America. They established the earliest company in the area and

called it 'Olarte Hermanos Y Cia' which was engaged in agricultural production such as

cattle and swine raising. The company settled in the western part of what is now General Santos City. In 1923, the brothers applied for patenting of their occupied land through Sales Application 6834 intending to acquire the parcel of land with an aggregate area of about 1,080 hectares. The Bureau of Forestry (BF), which then was responsible for the disposal of public lands, immediately recommended the approval of the application, hence, certified its agricultural fitness, however, amended not to include the 20m easement along the creek. Simultaneously, the Provincial Authorities of Cotabato, through Resolution No. 8 s. 1924, proposed to create a Townsite of 300 has. in the area which will serve as a market of produce in Allah Valley and Koronadal. The resolution was then passed to the Bureau of Agriculture and Natural Resources (BANR) for approval and recommendation by the Governor-General of the Philippines. It was found out later by the BANR that the proposed Townsite will overlap a portion of land applied for titling by Olarte Hermanos. The BANR then mandated the Provincial Authorities of Cotabato to discuss this matter with Olarte Hermanos, and ask them to waive the overlapped portion for the Townsite. Olarte Hermanos however responded favorably and waived a total of 89 ha. for the creation of the Townsite. This land was called Lot 1-TS-50, where the Olarte brothers were given the rights as first occupants, the first to make improvements therein, and the one who waived the land for the use of the Province of Cotabato. With the 89 ha, the Provincial Authorities took 127 ha. more of public land in Silway and named this Lot 2-TS-50. The Olarte Hermanos on the other hand was able to patent the remaining 978 ha. of land under their application. But the land acquired by the province for the Townsite was deemed not enough. The authorities again asked Olarte Hermanos to donate land for the Townsite. This time, 5 ha. of land, now the present site of the Makar Wharf, was donated by Olarte Hermanos to the province, this land was called Lot 3-TS-50.

In 1928, three parcels of land under TS-50 were presented to Governor-General Henry L. Stimson for proclamation and creation of the proposed Townsite, these were lots 1, 2, and 3. On 28 December 1928, Executive Proclamation No. 204 was issued by Gov-Gen. Stimson, establishing Lot 1 as Makar Townsite. For unknown reasons, only Lot 1

was proclaimed with its boundaries and tie-lines as described therein corresponded to

the geographical location and boundaries of Lot 2, TS-50, which is now the center of General Santos City, otherwise known as Dadiangas Townsite Subdivision, TS-217.

The 1930s until the 1950s was the start of migration influx in the area, this was also the start of the patenting of some big parcels of lands within the Townsite Reservation by ranked officials of the government, or what local people now call 'land grabbing'. Migrants who wished to settle in the area started to ask for lands to occupy. Elegio Leyva of the Bureau of Lands (BL) and Miguel Seranillo of the National Land Settlement Agency (NLSA) during that time diverted the people to Dadiangas (Lot 2, TS-50) instead of the established Makar Townsite. However, they themselves titled some portions of Makar under their name, and to some 12 other people. Later, conflicts in land titling and illegal settling in the area was brought to the attention of the government. The local government then sent a letter to the late President Ramon Magsaysay requesting the re-proclamation of the Makar Townsite. On the 16th of April 1955, twenty-seven years after the proclamation of Gov-Gen Stimson, President Magsaysay issued Proclamation No. 149, reserving the area as Makar Townsite and rectifying the error in Proclamation No. 204 defining Makar Townsite as Lot 1, TS-50. The proclamation also mentioned the manner of disposition of the Townsite to remain according to the purpose for which it was proclaimed.

Since then no patents were issued in Makar to migrants, except for those released to a number of people of whose titles now are currently subjected to reversion cases. Meanwhile, continued increase of migrants was experienced in Makar. This increased even more when industries started to resettle in nearby areas, infrastructure was developed like the construction of city roads to Dadiangas and the Marbel-Makar National Highway, as well as the construction of the Makar Wharf for the booming commerce and fishing industries.

During the Marcos administration, General Santos City was established merging Dadiangas with other nearby barangays. This even brought more industries in the area, and more settlers in Makar. The occupants of Makar were mostly low-income families

providing cheap labor to the adjacent wharf and industries. The occupants themselves also started to organize in pushing for their claim over the Townsite and the implementation of rules on how it shall be disposed, thus they established the Makar Townsite Homeseekers Association (MTHA). To their observation, not only did the alleged land grabbers benefited from their fraudulent titling of lots within the Townsite, they were as well multiplying. In the early 1970s, the association together with some local allies started to file petitions for the cancellation of titles issued within the Townsite. This mass movement questioning the validity of titles against the charged land grabbers, and their continued advocacy for distribution of lots within the Townsite, created a spark of what was to be a social volcano of conflicts, which until now has yet to reach resolution. Later on, this conflict was even aggravated by the local government, through the administrations of Mayors Pedro and Antonio Acharon, who were among those identified to have falsely patented portions of the reservation.

On the 30th of May 1974, a directive written by Jacobo C. Clavo, the Executive Assistant of President Marcos, was passed down to the Bureau of Lands stating the distribution of lands within the Makar Townsite Reservation to the members of the Makar Townsite Homeseekers Association. However, no actions were done on the end of the bureau. Six years later, complementing the directive, a memorandum was issued by Pedro Z. Aguilar, the Executive Assistant of President Marcos, to the then Mayor Antonio Acharon again stating to distribute the lands within Makar to the members of MHTA. Again, no distribution took place. Instead, the LGU directed the attention of the public by relocating the city's urban poor to Uhaw in Dadiangas.

In the mid 80s, the MTHA started to go slow with their advocacy works. Some of its leaders have already gone old to pursue the organization's goals. Nonetheless, during this time, newer groups in the movement started to flourish. Common interests in pushing for the urban poor agenda in the city, made them come together to move collectively. With the tumultuous 1986 national elections, these small groups started to collaborate with each other. They volunteered in safeguarding votes to maintain a clean election. This became the take-off point for the emerging urban poor coalition in the city.

Later on, more and more demolitions were experienced by these urban poor groups. To work against these, they again convened themselves and gave birth to a federation which they called “Katotohanan, Pagkakaisa, at Serbisyo” (KPS). Rodrigo “Boy” Olate was their first leader as the elected President.

In the early gains of KPS, they were able to fight against demolition teams with their own might and will. They used non-violence through active participation of women and children in the affected communities to stop the demolition of their houses. However, with the increasing and widening scope of anti-squatting threats, they made themselves open to the option of relocation. With this, the issue of the Makar Townsite Reservation was raised.

Olate, together with his fellow leaders of KPS, started to scout information on the Townsite. He even heard from a co-worker that the Townsite, for a time, belonged to their family. When the leaders were able to meet the old leaders of the MHTA, under the leadership of Otadora, more light were shed from the issue. Indeed, it was mentioned by Otadora to Olate that his grandfathers were the first occupants of the Townsite. However, as the leader of KPS, Otadora handed to Olate a sack of old documents regarding the Townsite, for him to revive the MHTA mission that is to push for the distribution of the Townsite to the urban poor and homeseekers of the city.

Proclamation Period

Makar Townsite became the center of the KPS struggle, not only to reclaim its original purpose, but it was a promise of security over space which they needed, and this was enough for them to go on fighting. In the eve of 5 October 1986, the KPS members gathered to strategize for the next day’s planned demolition affecting 28 households in Bagong Silang, Brgy Lagao. In this meeting, issues were clarified and slogans were prepared demanding for relocation and proclamation of the Makar Townsite for relocation use. With the preparations made, the demolition team was unsuccessful. And

the presence of KPS was brought to the attention of the OIC Mayor Dominador Lagare. Since then, the local government would set meeting with the KPS, and would ask about the issue on the Makar Townsite, which was not known to them.

As the stand of the local government remained for demolition, the stronger was the need felt for the urban poor groups to organize themselves and strengthen their awareness on the faced issues. Organizing was undertaken heavily, accompanied by information dissemination on the Makar Townsite. By the end of 1986, KPS have already organized 14,700 members from the different barangays in General Santos City. In their audience with Commissioner Foz and Butch Aquino's visit in the city early the next year, they made impacts on them which the local government was so disapproving of, as they tried to disrupt programs prepared in voicing out their issue on the Makar Townsite proclamation.

KPS by this time was already learning a very confrontative manner of resolving conflict. As they gathered with them allies for the movement, they also met oppositions in the local government, media, religious institutions, and other sectors in the city. On January 30, 1987, a rare chance came across the life of KPS. Then President Corazon Aquino visited Gen San to campaign for constitutional changes. The urban poor constituents were allowed by the LGU to see Pres. Aquino, however, the space allotted for them was too far for them to create an impression. So what they did, they started to arrive at the venue, as early as 2:00 am and occupied the center space near the stage. When the sun was already up, they have already filled the venue, and resisted the military from taking them away from where they are seated. Banners and placards were not allowed to be brought. Through their creative means, they were able to bring with them a very big poster, which they used as their mat, where written was their statement on the Makar Townsite proclamation.

Before Pres. Aquino arrived at the venue, local officials were on the stage, delivering speeches of local interest. KPS outstandingly expressed their consent over such officials by turning their backs on whoever those they did not like. At the time President

Aquino arrived, people started to shout, and yelled “Cory, Townsite! Makar Townsite!” As they lifted their leader, Boy Olarte, the members brought out their big banner with their agenda for the Townsite. Later, all of them kneeled down and let the President read it. The President then promised to facilitate the issue once she gets back to Manila. She also asked the leader of the group to have a dialogue with her after the program. Briefly after the speech of the President, Boy Olarte had a talk with her as he handed her some documents on the Makar Townsite. This was sure felt as a victory by the group, as well as by some empathetic members of the community. However, this also resulted to unfriendly relationships with the LGU as KPS was more seen and felt as a disturbance.

After that incident, the LGU of Gen San started to meet with KPS regarding the Townsite with some of the claimants of the area. These meetings however were brought to failure as heated arguments dominated the discussions. Less than a month after the assurance of the President to facilitate the issue in Manila, a telegram reached KPS from Sec. Carlos Dominguez thanking them on bringing up the issue, and informing them that the President has already referred the issue to them, also he mentioned that an Investigating Team would be formed immediately for Makar Townsite. Another telegram also came later from Sec. Dominguez stating that there is an issued Status Quo Order for the Townsite.

KPS felt small victories over these communications. But, they also provided their share by communicating back to DENR and to the Bureau of Lands to fast track the conduct of survey in the Townsite. KPS helped as well in the conduct of survey in the field, by providing company for safety to surveyors, as threats were expected from the side of the rich claimants. One incident made the Bureau of Lands backed out from the survey team, when a surveyor from the BOL was shot by suspected people from the rich claimants’ side. Fortunately, the surveyor was not hit, and nobody was reported hurt. With these instances, KPS did not stop communicating with the concerned offices. They pressured through written communication concerned bureaus in order not to delay the

conduct of survey. They accompanied surveyors in the field, and provided them spaces

at the KPS offices whenever needed.

As the efforts were becoming wider and heavier, KPS officials' with their trips to Davao City, monitoring the BOL and DENR activities, also collaborated with urban poor groups in the city. Here they were able to work amicably with KUSA Davao and CODE Foundation, two big organizations assisting urban poor groups, whom later helped them significantly as they pursued for the proclamation. Within the Townsite, KPS also found allies from the occupants. On March 22, 1987 the laborers occupying some portions of the Townsite went to demonstrations against their working conditions. KPS rushed to their picket line and supported the claims of the protesting group. Also, when some teachers of the Gen. Paulino Santos School staged their strike in front of their school, KPS however extended their sought assistance. They provided them food, and helped them negotiate with the goons hired against the teachers. However, they did not go over intervening with the issue. What they did was refer them to a lawyer who helped them in their legal battles, as well as increasing the morale of the teachers to fight for what they believed was due.

Actions were becoming intense, and activities required more strategies and techniques. To carry out all these demands, KPS underwent heavy organizing and organizational strengthening. With the help of KUSA and CODE, the leaders attended series of seminars, trainings, lectures, and discussions. These were then replicated at the member-level of the organization. Understanding the issues and agenda of the movement were then deepened into the each affiliate.

The local government, through the leadership of Mayor Rosalita Nuñez, reconciled with KPS. October 5, 1987 was the first anniversary of KPS. The first week of October was then proclaimed by the LGU at the city level as Urban Poor Week. KPS members celebrated by cleaning up the streets and culminated the celebration with a program at the plaza where some local personalities expressed sentiments and insights on the urban poor struggles. One of the speakers in the event was Bernardo Javier of the BOL.

In his speech, he mentioned that the Makar Townsite is already occupied and no

spaces can be delegated more to relocatees. Later, this statement of Javier motivated KPS together with the LGU to create a fact finding team that will do surveying, sketching, mapping and other assessment in the Townsite. It was later found by the team that there were anomalies between the BOL and the BF. With this regard, the leaders of KPS felt threatened that their advocacy works might go into nothing. So the option of occupying the Townsite was opened to them. This idea circulated within the group. Until series of everyday meetings took place, the General Assembly was consulted, and the members supported the option. Serious thought was given to the option. A number of inputs were then given, regarding possibilities that may be encountered as soon as the group will enter the site.

Through the help of Art Tabalan, the members were given preparations on the strategy. He mentioned to the group the need and importance of documenting through writing and photos all harassments to be committed by demolition teams, militaries, and goons; the strength of defense of women in children against the oppressors; non-bloody tools that will enable offense to the demolition teams—human feces mixed with ground chili to be wrapped in plastic and used as bombs, ground chili mixed with rubbing alcohol, ground chili mixed with fine sand. Also, Art oriented the members on the defenses that they need. It was agreed that those who will enter the site, will put up structures already for them to occupy. Suggested materials were enumerated to fasten the putting up of houses. These were light materials, with hooks and wedges that were easy to install. Each was also oriented to measure the lot to occupy at 150 sq. m. for each family. With all those intense orientations and heavy preparations, the KPS members were still very eager to push through the plan of entering the Makar Townsite premises.

November 18, 1987 the executive committee of KPS monitored the different chapters and areas within the Townsite. At three o'clock AM of the 19th November 1987, the members started to enter the premises of the patented portions of the Townsite. Approximately 100 tricycles, jeepneys and trucks were used to carry the materials to be used for building each household's structure. They did not enter yet the Purok Magsaysay area, which was an unpatented portion of the Townsite because of some

armed men under surveillance. Before they started to build their huts, there were hesitations to some leaders, however this was overcome by them when some motivated them by choosing between going home, or pushing with the plan. By 12:00 noon, there were already structures built within the patented lots of Tanpi, Leyva, Fortune and the unpatented portions of San Roque. The next day, they were able to enter the Magsaysay area even with the armed men.

During the putting up of structures by some members, police officials under the leadership of Captain Tancinco were there to personally demolish the erected structures. At one instance, Capt. Tancinco took the names of some members through a list and declared that they will be given lots of their own, then they were led to a truck. Some fell in line to be included in the list. However, Ester Magpayo interrupted the listing and explained to Tancinco about the status of Makar as a reservation. She handed him the documents, but Tancinco denied reading them, even declaring that he did not know how to read. This resulted to a heated argument and to a clamor which resulted to a fractured arm of a kid due to a forced putting down of a structure and firing, but missed, a pregnant woman, which resulted to a premature delivery. The women stopped the men of their group from joining the conflict, believing this will only worsen the violence. Hence, only the women and the children did confront the police. Those members—some 28 children, aged, women and men—lead to the truck were all brought to jail.

This was only the start of a series of violent confrontations between the KPS members and the demolition teams. Each time the military and the police, at some instances were even drunk, with large bulldozers and trucks attempted to put down their structures, the women and children never allowed the men to fight against them. They fought back with their own hands, sometimes with prayers and pleading with tears. At worst scenes, grenades were thrown at some huts built by the members. Guns were even fired at them, of whom they cannot identify anymore whether from the military, the police, or from hired armed men. All these incidents, for some reasons the members can only be thankful for, did not cause any death from the members. As their struggle extended

longer as expected, slowly their number got smaller. Some endured the sufferings and abuse, however, some did not make it.

To bear all these mistreatments and harassments as an organization, the leaders of KPS sought help from their allies in Davao City. With the help of Rey Magno Teves, they were able to reach for more help from the different urban poor supporters in the city. They also made formal complaints on Military harassments to the Camp in Catitipan. With continued harassments experienced by members in the Townsite, the leaders of KPS decided to go on strike. Hopelessness almost conquered the leaders. Faced with weakening morale, failing strategies and lack of financial capabilities to extend more advocacy works, some of them invested all of their left might to go on picketing at the BOL office. Christmas day, 25 of December 1987, the leaders of KPS went on hunger strike outside the BOL office together with some other urban poor supporters in Davao City. This was one impulsive act of the group without rationalizing much. But determination motivated the leaders while their co-members were in the Townsite enduring all the maltreatments they were receiving from the authorities, some even in jail paying for the crime they were never guilty of.

By the 28th of January 1988, almost a year after KPS met with President Aquino, Executive Order 93 was issued allowing the KPS members to occupy the unpatented portions of the Townsite. Victory from this revived the spirit of KPS. Updating of its members were done while continuing what they started at the Townsite. From the more than 3000 members who joined the initial en mass occupation of the Townsite in 1987, the remaining 515 members who endured all the harassments entered the unpatented portions of Purok Magsaysay in the dawn of the 1st day of May 1988. They put up again structures for each family, however, organized the claiming of the lands in a fashion that will accommodate each member of the organization. In the later days, there was a blessing of the land as a symbol of thanksgiving of the group. The following weeks, lesser harassments were experienced, and the group continued with organizing the community. However, in June 29 and July 23, 1988 there were instances of grenade bombing at Purok Magsaysay, and at the house of Boy Olarte and Chito Abuso. The

suspects were never known. Luckily, nobody got killed, although some people obtained injuries.

From 1988 to 1991, the new community continuedly felt sporadic harassments from different groups. However, with even greater strength and determination to go on with their pursuit, they were stronger to face these. This time, the battle shifted gear, and was brought to a legal one. About 40 members of KPS were charged on anti-squatting under PD 772, with their leader Boy Olarte receiving 9 warrant of arrests from this span of years. Fortunately, he did not get detained from any of those warrants, and the group continued still with their battle pushing for the proclamation of the Townsite. Later on, at the time of Fidel Ramos as President, PD 772 was repealed and the 40 charged with anti-squatting were all cleared. Since the conflicts were less, the organization had more time for convening and channeling time to some other forms of advocacy. Attention was not only poured to the untitled portion of the Townsite, but also to the patented lots owned by rich claimants. From about 12 identified fraudulently titled lots, this time KPS sought more titles and filed them reversion cases all of which would cover approximately 52 hectares within the Townsite. The basic premise of the filing of cancellation of titles was that the portions of land patented by such claimants were invalidly issued, for such portions of the Townsite as a reservation are subject to disposition within the provisions of the Public Land Act and not thru Free Patent Applications.

On 13 May 1991, President Corazon Aquino signed Proclamation No. 727, amending Proclamation No. 204 series of 1928 by Gov.-Gen Stimson, declared the 48.4146 hectare, more or less, unpatented portion of the Makar Townsite Reservation as Alienable and Disposable, and ready for disposition under the provisions of RA 730. This milestone in the struggles of KPS was triumph in itself. Victory was felt not only among the members who sacrificed enough dignity and valor to secure themselves of space against displacement, but to all those sympathetic to the claims and demands of the urban poor.

Post-Proclamation

The proclamation of the Makar Townsite Reservation by President Aquino shifted the course of events in the life of the Townsite. No longer was it only an ambition for the KPS members to acquire their aspired land, nonetheless, it became a real commodity to all actual occupants of the land, those claimants of portions of it, and the local government unit of General Santos City. Immediately, it became an open article of ownership, however, KPS pursued its role and stood by the utilization and subdivision of the Townsite to all those who needed it.

The Makar Townsite as surveyed by the Investigation Team in 1987, actually contained 104.6173 hectares of land, 55 hectares of which are covered by 37 patents. The untitled areas therein covered 48.4146 hectares, which then was proclaimed by President Aquino. Its is situated in Brgy. Labangal, and is subdivided into 5 puroks: Magsaysay A, Magsaysay B, San Roque, Maypagkakaisa, Maguindanao, and Malok. The Townsite is relatively flat comprised of a coastal area extending inland to General Santos City. Its surficial deposit and its vicinity are characterized by extensive sand deposit formed by the deposition of sediments derived from a volcanic terrain. It is bounded by the Sarangani Bay in the south and southeast; Purok Mauswagon, Brgy Labangal in the north; the Koronadal-Makar National Highway in the west; and, Acharon in the East. Its proximity to the center of General Santos City varies at any point of the Townsite. Purok Magsaysay, where the KPS members are residing, is about 5 kilometers from Dadiangas.

Six groups stood as claimants of the unpatented portions of the Townsite. These were: (1) A Moslem group headed by Onos Piang and Mohammad Simpall in Purok Maguindanao, who are occupying an approved subdivision survey for residential purposes on December 13, 1978 with 84 resultant residential lots averaging at 300 sq. m. each, and with a community mosque, cemetery and plaza site; (2) Maypagkakaisa Lot owners group headed by Bienvenido Mijares in Purok Maypagkakaisa, who are

actual occupants with a proposed subdivision scheme with 166 residential lots of 300-375 sq. m. each; (3) Makar Townsite Actual Occupants Association headed by Avelino Flores also in Purok Maypagkakaisa, who are actual occupants of lots surveyed under TS-299 containing 500 sq.m. each, but survey returns are missing and cannot be located; (4) Other Moslem claimants represented by Rajamuda Amil T. Ali and Guerra Lumbos who are actual occupants/claimants in the reservation containing 500 sq. m. to 1 hectare lots; (5) Magsaysay Land Owners and Actual Occupants Association headed by Dedina Tadera who are actual occupants and/or claimants in Purok Magsaysay containing areas varying from 600 sq. m. to 1.5 hectares, absentee claimants were found during investigation; and, (6) Katotohanan, Pagkakaisa at Serbisyo or KPS headed by Rodrigo Olarte whose members are not occupants of the reservation but later found their way to the premises of Purok Magsaysay.

A major problem encountered was on how to subdivide the reservation to deserving claimants and beneficiaries. Although it was given in RA 730 who are the qualified beneficiaries, there were problems on the coming up of actual list of beneficiaries due to difficulty in masterlisting actual occupants and the presence of absentee claimants. Also, there was a difficulty in the subdivision of lots according to sizes. It was given in RA 730 that the maximum area for disposition is 1000 sq. m. which is rather too large for the case already. The original plan of the 1955 proclamation was to distribute lots at 500 sq. m. each. However, with the great demand for housing, if these be followed, only a few will benefit from the Townsite, hence, the purpose for the proclamation will thus be depicted as well. These problems were presented to the attention of the local government and the DENR who were responsible and at stake for the proper disposal of the proclaimed reservation. In Purok Magsaysay, where KPS has already settled its members, they resolved these issues by regulating its member claimants according to those who have occupied already prior to the proclamation, as this was in the recommendation of the investigating team to respect occupants in the Townsite prior to the expressed sentiment of the president to proclaim the area, and to limit the area of claim of each occupant to not more than 150 sq. m. to accommodate as many beneficiaries as the area can handle.

There were also arising problems concurrent to the determination of lot sizes and masterlisting or beneficiaries. Problems in access to roads were encountered when dead roads were closed intentionally by actual occupants, or encroached by fences, and if there are, they are unequal in sizes and shapes. Within the Townsite, houses were not the only structures present and allotted for. There were multi-purpose sites identified and planned. However, these were not well planned and programmed. There were plaza sites, chapel sites, and school sites allotted for in the original plan of the Townsite in 1955. However, some claimants have already used some of these sites. And if some sites have been used for the intention it was planned for, the sizes have not been followed. There is also a cemetery inside the Townsite. But with its few tombs in there, sizes of these were not determined, and were not placed accordingly to maximize space.

In the Townsite, there is also a small body of water flowing. But for irrational reasons, some parts of these have been fenced and closed. Earlier in the proclamation of the site, there were portions that were used for cattle fattening. In the foreshore area of the Townsite, in Purok Malok, with the least space is where the thickest and densest population live within the reservation. Distribution of lots for these families is hard to facilitate. Some will need relocation within, some outside, the Townsite. This is due to the observance of easements, and because also of the fact that space have already been unequally distributed, and scarcity has been met.

To help facilitate all these problems arising in the disposition of lots within the Townsite—with the insufficiency of RA 730—and management of the whole Townsite for the improvement of the lives of the occupants, as well as assist the development of the whole community, City Ordinance No. 8 series of 1991 legislated. This was a product of concerted efforts among the LGU and civil society groups—other NGOs, community associations and KPS. Ordinance 8 s. 1991 provided for the guidelines in the determination of beneficiaries and awarding of lots within the lots covered by Proclamation 727. Also this created the Makar Townsite Coordinating Council—

MTCC—chaired by the Mayor herself, Hon. Rosalita Nuñez, and composed of Heads from selected LGU offices, with the following functions: (1) implement the policy guidelines on the disposition of lots within the unpatented portion of the Makar Townsite Reservation—MTR; (2) screen beneficiaries who will be entitled to the lots to be adjudicated within the MTR in accordance with these guidelines; (3) settle and decide on any dispute that may arise from the disposition of lots; (4) implement socio-economic programs within the MTR; (5) power to direct members of the PNP and all peace keeping forces in the city to assist in terms of maintaining public order and safety within the MTR in the course of the implementation of the policy guidelines in accordance with proper protocol; and, (6) create necessary sub-committees to effectively implement the MTR policy guidelines whose decisions shall only be recommendatory.

For a time, the MTCC was functional, carrying on its tasks. However, in the change of a new administration, when Nuñez was replaced by a new Mayor, the council started to miss its responsibilities. Until a time, that it really stopped functioning.

Later on, to achieve a more concrete idea of how to facilitate development of the Townsite, KPS came up with a subdivision plan with a map to support it. This plan was not only limited to Purok Magsaysay A and B where most of its members were residing. But this made for the whole 48.4146 hectares of the Makar Townsite Reservation. However, this there were portions of the Townsite which needed more detailed plans. One of which is the distribution and relocation of residents in Malok, as mentioned were too dense, and needed more consideration.

As of today, the whole Townsite is home to some 14,720 (2000 figure) people of around 3,687 (2000 figure) households according to per purok census. These people are of mixed, tri-people cultural backgrounds. Some are migrants from the Negros Provinces, Visayas and Mindanao provinces, some natives of the area, some of Moslems ancestry. However, all these people live in harmony, and conflicts due to these differences in culture is extremely rare, if none, as observed. Most of these occupants of Makar

belong to the lower income group people, except for some families who undeniably

have already improved their living conditions.

In the unpatented portion of the Townsite prior to the proclamation, there have been a total of 16 titles released to families who have already fully paid for the land they are occupying. About 50 more have already fully paid for their amortization, and are currently waiting for their titles. Some 36 more have been awarded of certificates and are currently paying their amortization. More than a thousand families on the other hand, have already filed applications for titling in the DENR, to start their amortization. There are thousands more still qualified to apply for titling, however, due to financial restraints, are not able yet to facilitate this right.

According to the residents of the different puroks and to KPS who has been eager in assisting the development of the whole community, there are still a lot more the community needs. Some social services are already present in the area. Elementary and High schools are present in the area. Day cares were established by KPS. Utilities like electricity is already present in the Townsite due to the assistance of some KPS leaders who ventured into politics sometime after the proclamation. Among these other needs are as follows, as enumerated by the people themselves

1. Although very essential, a centralized water source is still a need in the Townsite. Most houses are equipped with water pumps for drinking and other needs of water. This does not complicate into health problems though. However, during dry season, some months are left without rain, and these pumps dry out. Areas within the community especially in Magsaysay, needs more a stable water source. The local government donated a water lever tree in Magsaysay. But this can only serve 10% of the community.
 2. Waste disposal, whether solid or liquid, is a problem in the Townsite. Like any local government unit, solid wastes are hardly collected, thus most households find it difficult to dispose their solid wastes. This can be very critical for some living along waterways and along the foreshore. Families opt more to throw their wastes in these water bodies.
-

3. Due to lack of sewers and drainage, most families find it hard for liquid wastes to drain and be properly disposed. Simple examples are during instances when they have to do their laundry. Without proper drainage, some suds and water with detergent flow to their neighbor's lot. This sometimes result to petty neighborhood conflicts and arguments. Also a large number of families do not have sanitary latrines, toilets and septic tanks for proper disposal of human wastes.
4. Flooding is also a threat to the community. Although it happens only on isolated months and times. But without proper drainage, heavy rains results to erosion, especially that their topsoil is mainly sand.
5. Main roads are still left as they are since the proclamation. Some areas have already been concretized. Most residents though preferred them to be covered by asphalt or cement.
6. The residents also desire streetlights, although crimes are never a problem in the area.
7. In 1996, a mini-gym was constructed in Magsaysay. This was used for multi-purposes. Until now, it is left unfinished.
8. There are mini-markets in the Townsite, however these lack more space. Also there is no proper waste disposal in these wet markets.
9. Livelihood is another problem of the people. There is high instance of unemployment in the area. This is not due, according to some people, to proximity problems to other land uses in the city. But mainly the problem on the economy of General Santos City, from bombing incidence, low investment in the area, and some other economic reasons.

The life in the Townsite according to the residents of the different puroks have already improved over time. However, they are still seeking for means whether through aids or through their own initiatives of means on how to improve their living conditions. There is already felt security over the space they are occupying. Except for those occupying titled portions within the Townsite, which are still fighting over threats of demolitions.

There are portions in the Townsite occupied by some families who never heard of the

KPS struggle and victory. These families may soon face demolitions and evictions. However, with the history of struggle the land they are occupying endured, a promise of urban poor power might finally liberate them from their conditions.