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PBS editorial chairman resigns as minister backs directors

KARL SCHEMBRI

SLAMMING the PBS board of directors and their procedure to select the winter TVM schedule, the chairman of the editorial board, John Camilleri, quit from the national station in his most damning statements made ever since he was appointed by Investments Minister Austin Gatt last October.

In his fiery resignation letter sent last Friday and accepted by Gatt yesterday, Camilleri said he was quitting “in protest against the programme selection process for the TVM winter schedule” after a

tumultuous process that saw PBS Chairman Joe Fenech Conti overruling the editorial board’s shortlist of programmes.

Camilleri reiterated that the process as adopted by the board of directors “was neither fair, nor transparent or credible”, insisting that the board went against the same rules it had set out in the Public Statement of Intent.

In fact, the statement says that “all proposals will be evaluated by the editorial board from the perspective of content. The evaluation will be presented to the board of directors which will, in conjunction with the editorial

board, take the final decision about which programmes will form part of the schedule.”

“This didn’t happen,” Camilleri added.

“Together with my colleagues on the board we did our best to act correctly but the board of directors chose to ignore what they were supposed to be committed to towards the government, the producers and public opinion. In my opinion the board of directors’ behaviour constitutes an abuse of power. ... That’s why I am presenting my resignation in protest against the majority of the present board of directors that have brought national public broadcasting

into this miserable state.”

In his reply to Camilleri’s letter, the minister defended the board of directors, claiming they had the right to have the final say on the programmes included in the final schedule.

“The editorial board has a consultative role and no amount of nitpicking on the PBS documents can lead to any other interpretation,” Gatt wrote. “These parameters were crystal clear for everyone from day one. ... It is unfortunate

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PBS editorial chairman John Camilleri yesterday resigned after clashes with the PBS board of directors



WIGS WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS

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Angelo Xuereb’s Palace without licence and MEPA permit

JAMES DEBONO

SLIEMA’S latest hotel, the 161-bed Palace Hotel, lacks an operating licence from the Malta Tourism Authority and also a permit from the Malta Environment and Planning Authority.

All three permits issued by MEPA in the past years were intended for an extension of the Victoria Hotel, Xuereb’s other hotel in the neighbouring Gorg Borg Olivier street.

But Xuereb has described the whole episode as a “triviality” resulting from bureaucratic



formalities.

Despite his shrugging off the matter, the Malta Tourism Au-

thority said it has taken legal action against AX Holdings so that “the applicant regularises his position without further ado.”

According to the MTA the permit issued by MEPA for the hotel is not “fully compliant with the MTA licensing conditions.”

On its part, a MEPA spokesperson said the permits issued so far were for an “extension

to the existing Victoria hotel”, and that

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Ta’ Xbiex council bans loitering... but only from seven specific streets

RAPHAEL VASSALLO

IF you’re a Ta’ Xbiex-based prostitute or a prospective client, you would be well advised to loiter on Abate Rigord Road or Embassy Way instead of the traditional Testaferrata Street and environs.

As of this week, loitering in Ta’ Xbiex has become a contravention specific only to seven particular streets: Giuseppe Cali, St John Of The Cross, Testaferrata, Emanuel Galizia,

Enrico Mizzi, Giorgio Mitrovich and Sir Ugo Mifsud.

This curiously discriminatory piece of legislation was published as a bye-law in Monday’s Government Gazette. Once it comes into force in a month’s time, offenders will be liable to a fine of Lm30.

Even the title – “Loitering in Specific Streets in Ta’ Xbiex” – suggests at a glance that it may be perfectly permissible for prostitutes to ply their trade, so long as the street is

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