

The Weekly

METSIMAHOLO TO ALLOCATE STANDS TO SHACK DWELLERS

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Phase 5 squatter camp residents in Zamdela, Sasolburg, will soon be allocated stands by the Metsimaholo Local municipality.

This was revealed by the executive mayor of the Metsimaholo Local Municipality, Brutus Mahlaku, in an exclusive interview with The Weekly.

More than 1 500 people had occupied the Boetchhoek Farm, while the municipality and township board were still in the process of finalising the rezoning of the land.

According to Mahlaku, the municipality will place other residents in the new low cost housing flats which will be built by the provincial government.

“You are quite aware that Sasolburg is an industrial town where many people come from other provinces to settle here and this makes it one of the overcrowded areas in the country. Some of these people want to build their own houses and they require stands while others prefer to rent and we will allocate them stands,” said Mahlaku.

Mahlaku said the township board held its meeting last month and resolved to rezone the land from commercial to residential.

“As the ANC led municipality, we promised people RDP houses and we built them as we had promised. We are aware that the shacks were built by desperate people who are working in the town and need a place to stay.

“That is why we plan to issue stands to them to reduce the high rate homelessness. Remember, we have demonstrated our compassion to their plight. However, people who continue to pay their municipal rates and provide accommodation to others will help us to collect revenue,” said Mahlaku.

He lashed out at residents who registered as indigents, but can afford to pay their rates and taxes.

“We know that most of the people in our database of indigents earn an income. Some are landlords to many tenants. However, there is nothing wrong for the deserving poor registering on the indigent database,” said Mahlaku.

Many residents told The Weekly they are happy with Mahlaku’s announcement. They are relieved that they will soon say goodbye to the unhealthy and unhygienic living conditions of their shacks.

Local resident, Sello Radikontsane, said: “We are waiting for stands. We want stands... our children can’t play, because we live under the same conditions as the people of Khayelitsha or Alexandra. All of the shacks are too close to each other and if one of them can catch fire all of them burn. We are calling on the mayor to fasten the process.”

Another resident, Mpuse Mohapi, said the area was no longer safe due to the high crime rate.

“There is no control here, everyone comes and builds his shanti (shack) and many young people own shacks. I just want to see myself out of this area. Here the situation is bad because we have many open toilets all over the area. The mayor must expedite the process so we can move out of this place soon.”

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Residents pay R300 a month to rent a shack while renting a house costs R650 per room per month. Most squatters come from the Eastern Cape, as well as the Eastern and Southern parts of the Free State.

The Weekly understands that residents were also planning to embark on a protest to demand stands. One of the organisers, Serame Molema said: “We shelved our decision to protest for the fast-tracking of the process of allocating us stands because we heard that the municipality is working on the matter. However, we are saying if September arrives without us hearing anything from municipality we will protest.”

[Source: www.theweekly.co.za]