

# Increasing concern over mushrooming shacks in Sea Vista, St Francis Bay

Alarm bells are ringing in St Francis Bay as the rapid creation of illegal shacks opposite the industrial area in Tarragona Road and alongside Zwelitsha.

The shacks are mushrooming so fast and so many as few shacks are springing up overnight. The shacks appear to be moving downwards towards St Francis Drive and also in the direction of Cape St Francis. And currently the powers that be appear unable to do anything.

It is understood that the shacks cannot be demolished without a court order and the court has said people in the new shacks must be given temporary land in the interim until alternative land has been found for them.

According to Community Services portfolio DA Dr Daniel Benson, the municipality has on more than one occasion sent a law enforcement officers to the site to warn the illegal occupants to leave the area. "We cannot force them to leave or obtain an eviction order as the land does not belong to the municipality but to the Department of Public Works (PWD).

"We notified the PWD about the illegal structures being erected on their land when it started happening and also offered to assist them in any way we can," Benson said. "We will continue putting pressure on them to resolve the matter as we too are most concerned about what is happening there. Our law enforcement officers will also visit the site again next week to sensitize the illegal occupants that what they are doing is unlawful," he said.

A Sea Vista committee of five people has been formed to negotiate with the shack dwellers and report back to the municipality about the illegal shack activity in Sea Vista. On this committee is the councillor for Sea Vista Ward V, Zolani Mayoni.

This committee on land invasions gave the shack dwellers lines they must not cross. "We in this committee told them it is illegal to erect shacks there and they must not increase the number of shacks," Mayoni said.

He recounted that the people who are erecting shacks illegally are mostly the backyard shack dwellers who have been paying rent to owners of RDP houses. They are unhappy with the rentals being charged them and their way of life. They were waiting for some time to get RDP houses and now they are waiting and they are demonstrating their discontent by building bigger shacks in the Sea Vista area.

The land in Sea Vista is mostly owned by the government PWD which apparently obtained a court order to evict the illegal shack dwellers. The shack dwellers hired a lawyer, who said the people must be given land somewhere else and the court agreed that these people must be given temporary land. The PWD said it had made 14 ha available for RDP houses for Sea Vista and the current land invasions are on a portion of this and neighbouring land. The municipality has to buy the land from the PWD and the land must be supplied with services.

Mayoni said the municipality's 1819 budget set aside R1-m for electricity to be established on a portion of the 14 ha. On the remainder of the 14 ha 2000 eligible people will get RDP houses. The municipality laid out the lines and placed a meter for the shack dwellers so they can have temporary electricity from 1 July. Mayoni also said that R25-m had been set aside in the budget for sewerage and for a water tower.

R10-m was allocated last year as a kick start, this year R18-m will be given and next year the balance of the R52-m will be given for development of the land for RDP houses.

Mayoni said the municipality has a current list of 1480 people already wanting RDP houses and will soon screen the people who have built houses illegally and they will need to meet certain criteria to be eligible to get an RDP house on the 14 ha.

Mayoni also revealed that when the Water and Waste treatment plant is 50% complete then the Department of Human Settlements will come and



Tarragona Road, Sea Vista, 19 July

do necessary arrangements. Then, when the sewerage and electricity has been put in place on that temporary land, then the temporary electricity will be cut off.

Mayoni denied allegations that he was allowing people to settle there. He said it was an outright lie. "As a councillor I cannot allow people to act unlawfully. As councillors, we are there to enforce the law, not to break the law."

He said certain elements and groups of people have taken to rebelling against the system and are fed up with delays. They are committing acts of defiance and breaking the law.

Commenting on the land invasions in Sea Vista, the St Francis Community Police Forum, said at a recent meeting township residents raised serious concerns regarding the sudden upsurge in the building of new shacks on land owned by the PWD adjacent to Sea Vista.

The area is managed by Kouga municipality that is aware of the developing problem and the meeting was advised by Kouga Law Enforcement that they are actively pursuing legal steps to have the structures removed or demolished. "Current developments indicate that this process now needs urgent follow-up by the municipality as in the period to date it looks like at least another 12 or so structures have been erected with more going up each day.

"Sea Vista residents' comments include

statements about there being no jobs in the area and new squatters exacerbate this issue, health and safety concerns as the squatters are illegally connecting wires to electrical installations placing children and indeed the community at risk.

"These new squatters are also an additional source of pollution to an area swamped in garbage and observations suggest that as the newcomers have no jobs they potentially could contribute to the sharp rise in the last month's crime statistics for St Francis.

"There is a need for urgent action and feedback by the municipality to the community in Sea Vista. Kouga must remove these illegal structures."

The St Francis Property Owners Association says it and the St Francis Community are extremely concerned about the rapidly spreading illegal occupation of land adjacent to the existing Sea Vista township. "We understand this land is owned by the PWD and is administered by Kouga Municipality. It forms part of the sensitive dune and wetland system and is prone to flooding in heavy rains and is therefore not suited to development. Illegal electricity connections and the lack of basic services and proper sanitation pose very serious health and safety risks to the Sea Vista township and St Francis Bay community. We request the municipality and PWD resolve this problem as a matter of extreme urgency." - By Bev Mortimer

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See how many words you can make from the letters. No words to be that start with the letters. Every word has to contain the middle, bold letter. The goal is to also find the Nine letter word's, the plural nouns, capital letters, slang, or foreign language words (unless annotated in the Oxford English dictionary) This month's goal: 79 words excellent, 40 words good, 30 words fair. Note: Words ending in 's' the 'ses' have been allowed. The correct solution is on p14.

Word Puzzle compiled by Bev Mortimer

Y	A	T
R	D	D
E	E	H

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