

KOPANONG CALLS ON RESIDENTS TO OCCUPY STANDS

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Stands lying fallow ... Betty Ramakatsa with ward councillor Tebello Phafudi next to some of the stands which have not been occupied

The Kopanong Local Municipality has pleaded with about 100 Trompsburg residents, who were given stands four years ago, to move in or risk forfeiting the ownership of the stands.

The residents have refused to take ownership of the stands claiming that they cannot afford to build houses on them. The stands do not have RDP houses; they only have flush toilets.

Tebello Phafudi, who is the ward's councillor, told The Weekly that the council had been pleading for months with residents who are in possession of letters from the municipality, verifying their allocation of stands situated at Madikgetla Extension near Trompsburg, to move in but to no avail.

“So now we have stands with only toilets (sic), which people are not willing to move in to anytime soon.”

Phafudi said after the toilets were built on the stands and the municipality had written letters to their owners, giving them the green light to take occupation. He said the residents were also informed of this through public meetings. However, only a few moved onto the sites.

According to Phafudi, it was unfair for the stand owners not to move onto their plots, given that there are 500 other residents on the waiting list.

“When I spoke with some of the stands' owners, they simply told me that they were not ready to move in. We cannot wait for them when there are 500 other people who are desperately looking for stands.” He said some of the toilets have been vandalised, because no one is looking after them. The stands were sold for R500, while others were given for free to residents by the municipality.

Phafudi appealed to the stand owners once again, to take occupation of them urgently. He said the government has spent a lot of money to build the flush toilets on the stands.

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One of the residents, Betty Ramakatsa, is a former farm dweller who is appreciative for the stand given to her by the municipality. She was kicked out of the farm where she worked before moving onto her stand, where she has built herself a shack.

However, she learnt to her horror that the stand belongs to someone else when two people came to her house and told her the stand belonged to them. Ramakatsa is in possession of papers signed by the councillor, which prove that she owns the land.

The municipality is currently attending to her concern.

“At least people should appreciate that they have their own land, unlike farm dwellers that live in constant fear of eviction,” said Ramakatsa.

Ramakatsa is worried that the unused toilets may turn into havens for criminals and rapists.

Another resident, Jacqueline Oerson, is unhappy that there are people who have not taken occupation of their stands while she has been waiting for years to get one.

Phafudi said it was impossible to transfer the ownership of the stands to other residents without the permission of their owners.

[Source: www.theweekly.co.za]