

SPITTING IN FACES OF POOREST OF POOR

Tafelberg sale 'unjust, insult to blacks'

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THE provincial executive's decision to proceed with the sale of the Tafelberg site is unjust and an insult to African and coloured working class people, Reclaim the City (RTC) said yesterday.

After months of demonstration by the Cape Town-based campaign for affordable housing in the inner-city over the proposed Sea Point site sale to Phyllis Jowell Day School, the Western Cape executive com-

mittee yesterday announced its decision to proceed with the R135 million sale.

The sale was stopped after an agreement with the provincial government following a high court order in April.

"With this decision, Premier Helen Zille's government has missed a critical opportunity to commit to build affordable housing in the inner city. They have laid bare their intention to capitalise from our public assets at all costs, in the face of considerable public opposition. They have shown a deep con-

tempt for the principle of using public land to reverse apartheid spatial planning," the RTC said.

Zille's spokesperson, Michael Mpofo, said the Tafelberg site was not suited to affordable housing as the state subsidy could not be utilised under national policy.

Sea Point, where the Tafelberg site is located, falls outside of a Restructuring Zone - a legislative area where national subsidies for social housing can be accessed.

Presentations to the executive committee, including the



OUTRAGED: Reclaim the City supporters demonstrate in the Provincial Legislature yesterday after the provincial executive committee's decision to proceed with the R135 million sale of the Tafelberg site in Sea Point instead of using it for affordable housing.
Picture: TRACEY ADAMS

current pipeline for affordable housing in the metro, legal advice from senior counsel, affordability risks and fiscal constraints in the current economic climate, were factors that were considered, Mpofo said.

"As regards to the financial viability of affordable housing on the Tafelberg property, all substantive public submissions received on the financial modelling noted that the allocated costs of construction had been underestimated, in some instances by up to 100%."

"The majority of substantive

comments on the financial modelling did not take into account that a national subsidy cannot be legally released because the property does not fall within a Restructuring Zone," Mpofo said.

Researcher for Ndifuna Ukwazi, Hopang Selebalo said it would approach the courts once again to ask them to set aside the decision.

"For cabinet to state that they would use the money from the sale for government offices, is a spit in the faces of the poor people."

"The loss of the property and the possibilities it could have brought for many people is devastating."

"We will take this to court. We will not take it lying down. We reject it (the decision) completely," Selebalo said.

ANOMPL and spokesperson on public works and transport Cameron Dugmore said the party would lobby for the site to be expropriated in the public's interest if it were sold.

Dugmore said Zille last week refused to provide the standing committee with a report into

allegations of conflict of interest regarding the sale.

"The Department of Transport and Public Works has also not provided the committee with the minutes of the Provincial Property Management Committee where the decision to dispose of the property was allegedly made. Officials could not confirm whether this committee was informed that the provincial Department of Human Settlements had requested to use the site for social housing."

"The ANC condemns the decision to proceed with the sale," Dugmore said.

A small group of protesters gathered outside the provincial legislature burst into tears when the decision was announced.

RTC activists had camped out near the legislature since Sunday.

An emotional Elizabeth Gomboka shouted inside the legislature: "We are here to tell Helen Zille that we are not happy with her decision."

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