

● **Community forum protests over ‘exorbitant’ Kabega Park lease**

# Row over high police station rent

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A furore has erupted over the R340,000 monthly rental allegedly being forked out for the property on which the Kabega Park police station is situated.

It emerged two weeks ago that the lease agreement between the owners of the Cape Road building and the department of public works costs taxpayers R4-million a year.

The building belongs to the Alberts Family Trust and the

department leases it on behalf of the SA Police Service. The police have been using the property for the past 60 years.

The R340,000 rental agreement was signed in 2017 and is due to run until 2020.

The issue has irked members of the Community Policing Forum, who urged the government to find land and build a police station to avoid exorbitant monthly bills.

Mount Road cluster commander Major-General Thembisile Patekile said the issue of

the rent and the station lay with the department of public works.

“What I can say is that it will take five to 10 years to build a new police station,” he said.

Forum officials questioned how the government could enrich one family over so many years.

They also made startling allegations about the condition of the station, saying it was not worth the amount being paid.

They cited issues such as:

- A door where firearms were

kept was falling apart;

- Three or four officers had to share a tiny working space;
- The stench in the charge office area emanating from the holding cells;
- Inadequate toilet facilities for staff.

Police spokesperson Colonel Sibongile Soci declined to comment.

Public works spokesperson Thami Mchunu refused to divulge the monthly rental.

“Rental figures are regarded as confidential information.

“The building is custom-designed as a police station with no suitable [alternative] state-owned building readily available in the Kabega Park area.

“The lease has escalated over a number of years.

“Options include the expropriation of the building and construction of a new station funded by the SAPS,” he said.

JP Alberts confirmed that he was letting the building to public works on behalf of the SAPS, but declined to reveal details of the lease.

“That subject is confidential. “The contract is between me and public works and if people have a problem with that they must go to public works.

“If you print that, I will take it further,” he said.

Forum chair Timothy Hendricks, said he was appalled.

“How can you enrich one family all these years?

“We have tried to resolve this matter internally but we are blocked. How do you justify the cost implication? It

would appear high-ranked officials are trying to please someone.”

He said police management had enjoyed ample opportunity to find alternative accommodation.

“I do not know why we have allowed this to carry on without intervention.

“It’s either officials simply turn a blind eye or they no longer care.

“Each time this subject is raised, officials want to get off it quickly. We are very angry

not only with the police but with public works,” he said.

Forum secretary Kolekile Calana said it did not make business sense for the government to pay such an amount.

“The building is small.

“There are many vacant land areas available but instead we see the mushrooming of complexes and we can’t find land to build a police station.

“The Motherwell police station was built from the scratch.

“Why can we not do the same here?” he asked.