

Bid to stop Crossmoor transit camp development

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THE residents of Crossmoor in Chatsworth started a collection fund last week to fight against the development of a transit camp in the area.

Since May, the community had been liaising with ANC Ward 71 councillor, Previn Vedan, to stop the city from allowing displaced shack dwellers from living on their doorsteps.

The informal residents' make-shift homes were destroyed during severe storms in April.

Some of the affected families were provided with temporary accommodation in nearby community halls.

They were later moved to a tent about 300m from their destroyed homes in the Bottlebrush Informal Settlement.

Last month, the Crossmoor community found out the humanitarian aid organisation, the Gift of Givers, intended on building "temporary" pre-fabricated homes on vacant land.

The concerned residents subsequently started the "Save Crossmoor" campaign and last week encouraged other home-owners to contribute R10 a month to the project.

They intend on applying for an urgent interdict in the Durban High Court to stop the development.

Julian Moodley, the chairperson of the Crossmoor Civic Association, said the residents were concerned about the future of the 50-year-old community.

He said they previously requested the City build a community hall or a clinic on the land.

"People have to travel as far as Unit 5 to go to the RK Khan Hospital for medication and check-ups and spend hours there. We asked that the land be utilised to benefit the community."

Moodley said it was untrue that they were racist and against the development of the transit camp.

"We would be happy if RDP homes were instead built and integrated with the community but not a transit camp. Through research, we found out some camps have remained in areas for 10 years. These are not temporary structures."

Omi Nair, a community activist and resident, added: "We never said we were against housing. What we said, was that we are against transit homes which are glorified shacks."

"How much dignity are you giving our people by expecting a family to live in 20m² without privacy and private ablutions? Since the local government budgeted R1 billion towards upgrades, give our people proper homes that they can be proud of... Also, the transit camp is not temporary, it is permanent."

"During protests in Isipingo last week, displaced people were angry because they were told it was a temporary arrangement and they were promised they would be moved to permanent RDP homes."

"They have been forgotten and 10

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CHAIRPERSON, CROSSMOOR CIVIC ASSOCIATION

years later, they are still there. This quick fix development (in Crossmoor) has not followed due process and that is what we are questioning," Nair said.

Vedan reportedly said prefab units would be built. He said the property was transferred from the Department of Public Works to the municipality.

"We had lengthy meetings with the community. It was transparent, but the meeting turned ugly when racial remarks were made, causing officials to walk out. This is not land grabs or new residents moving in."

Imraan Mahomed, of Gift of the Givers, said: "We only have one agenda – humanitarian work – and that is what we are doing by setting up the camp. Work should be completed by the end of the month."

Municipal spokesperson, Msawakhe Mayisela said the Gift of the Givers offered to provide temporary accommodation, while the formal housing process talks would take place within council.

"Their pledge will be to construct 50 temporal residential units. eThekweni will be providing ablution blocks and pre-paid electricity to ensure the victims of the flood have access to basic services and can live without the existing health and safety risks associated with living in a tent, or on a floodplain."

He said council held consultation meetings with Vedan, residents, the Crossmoor Civic Association and the Community Policing Forum last month.

"The process of identifying the site for improved temporary accommodation (the same site where the families are currently living in poor conditions under a tent) was explained fully in these meetings," Mayisela said.