

IMIZAMO YETHU | HANGBERG

Housing project delayed



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A group of about 20 Imizamo Yethu residents have been accused of using intimidation tactics to disrupt work at two City of Cape Town project sites.

In a Facebook post dated Friday 30 April, Ward 74 councillor Rob Quintas claimed these projects – one in Imizamo Yethu and another in Hangberg – were being severely disrupted by a group of residents who were “demanding immediate employment”.

In a media statement posted online, Quintas described how the group approached workers at the Imizamo Yethu Housing Phase three Project site on Monday 26 April and Wednesday 28 April. In both cases, Quintas claimed, they threatened the workers with rocks while demanding they stop work on the project.

According to Quintas’s statement, this group also intimidated workers busy with the upgrade of the Hout Bay Sports Complex site located on Victoria Avenue in Hangberg.

On Monday 3 May, Hout Bay Police Station

stated no case of intimidation had yet been opened. However, the City said the timeline of events and the statement provided by councillor Quintas were factually correct. The City said the matter had been escalated to law enforcement and police for further action.

When *People’s Post* spoke to Quintas on Monday, he explained that the contractor assigned to the housing project had been selected via a tender process which stipulated that the contractor was legally obligated to employ at least 20% local labour and 20% local subcontractors. He explained there were registered Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) databases for both local labour and subcontractors. Quintas said the contractor had met the legislated local labour quotient and that the number of employees hired for this project was already at its maximum.

According to the City, in terms of the latest labour report, 15 EPWP workers were employed by the contractor.

Quintas said the project had already experienced very real delays in terms of fires, protest action, vandalism, additional scopes of work and the Covid-19 pandemic. “Now it has been set back yet again by this group who are costing the tax and ratepayer approximately

R19 000 in standing fees per day due to the contractor not being able to go to the site,” he said, adding the community could also not afford the further delay on the upgrade of the sports centre. Work on the smaller project began in mid-April. The upgrade was first delayed when the field became an emergency displacement area after the Hangberg fire of 2017, then due to budget reallocations in response to “Day Zero” avoidance, and more recently because of the lockdown.

Quintas said, because the scope of the work at the sports centre was small, a different City-wide contractor (an existing tender) had been assigned to this project. The scope of the work does not require the legislated local labour quotient. However, Quintas said, should the contractor not be able to finish the sports centre upgrade project by the end of the financial year (June) due to intimidation, the contractor may be reassigned to another project in the city and that the allocated budget set aside for the sports centre upgrade may be lost.

Clifford Nogwavu, chair of the South African National Civic Organisation (Sanco) in Imizamo Yethu, said they were approached by the group, which he describes as a recently formed business forum, with the allegation

that they were overlooked in the housing project hiring process. He said while some of them were registered on the EPWP database as local workers, others were not. He said there had also been an agreement that if someone had been employed in a previous construction project, he or she must give the next opportunity to other qualifying members in the community.

Nogwavu said Sanco told the group members they had not been employed for the housing project because they weren’t qualified.

“We told them the work couldn’t just be done by anyone. That it was an important job. That they needed to take people who are qualified, to do a perfect and permanent job, irrespective of where they come from,” he says.

He claimed it was after they were given this answer that the group went to the construction sites. “But they were taking chances,” he said.

Roscoe Jacobs, spokesperson for the Hangberg Development Forum (HDF), said these incidents point to wider concerns in the implementation of the City’s EPWP. “HDF will engage with the City of Cape Town and Sub-council 16 around the concerns that residents are bringing to our attention.”