

DA queries use of land by ‘chesa nyama’ outfit

Community want it there for recreation, says ANC ward councillor

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A *chesa nyama* (braai food) outfit built illegally on government land has raised concerns about land invasions in BCM.

The DA in the metro says officials are turning a blind eye to the problem and nothing is being done to deter illegal land invaders.

Tasty Mojo Chesa Nyama & Car Wash is believed to have

been operating for more than two years on municipal land close to the Reeston taxi rank, adjacent to Sophathisana Senior Secondary School.

A multipurpose centre with a hall, ward councillor’s office, meeting room, storeroom, caretaker room, ablution blocks and a sports field is on the site, but it is yet to be opened.

The Dispatch visited the area on Tuesday, finding two temporary structures and three wooden bunk stools with tables outside.

There were no customers at

the time. The Dispatch called owner Khayaletu Sandi, who was not at the site at the time, but he did not want to comment.

DA councillor Bill Gould said illegal occupation of government land was a big problem.

“Land intended for housing and even for schools is being invaded by informal settlers. It’s widespread across BCM,” he said. “In this particular case there’s no benefit yet to the community because the hall, councillor’s office and ablution block are yet to be opened.”

The provincial human settlements department initially budgeted R25.5m for construction of the centre, but eventually only paid R7.7m.

“The *chesa nyama* was built more than two years ago, when

Land intended for housing and even for schools is being invaded by informal settlers

construction of the multipurpose centre started but, for some reason, one corner of the municipal land seems to have been alienated to make provision for the *chesa nyama*,” Gould said.

“It has been built there and the fence around the centre was deviated to allow the *chesa nyama* to be available to the public, rather than it being inside the fence.”

He said there should be a building inspector there before public works signed off on the construction to ensure the site

was built in compliance with approved plans.

“In the meantime, the *chesa nyama* seems to have gone from strength to strength and now it also has a car wash on site — a flourishing but illegal business.”

Buffalo City ANC ward 13 councillor Nokulunga Matiwane said her constituency insisted on having the *chesa nyama* in the community.

“I asked the government officials when the centre was being built if there were any problems with the *chesa nyama* be-

ing there, and there were no problems. The community wants it there for recreation,” Matiwane said.

When asked about illegal occupation of municipal land, she said: “I will never demolish anything in this ward that residents have built. As long the committee wants it there I won’t do anything.”

Provincial human settlements spokesperson Masiza Mazizi said the issue of invasion was “the competency of BCM and we understand they are handling the matter legally”.

But BCM spokesperson Samkelo Ngwenya said the municipality was unaware of the *chesa nyama* as no reports had been brought to its attention.

“We advise that people consult the ward councillor and bring this to his/her attention,” Ngwenya said, adding the erf number would be helpful.

“Or they can report it to our property management office. Their office line is 043-705 3360. As and when these are reported, we will institute a crackdown, as will be the case in this particular situation.”