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Class action stirs among power penalties

Elize Parker

Growing complaints from Tshwane Metro residents over disputed electricity tampering penalties, alleged intimidation, and suspected corruption have prompted a Centurion property owner without electricity to consider initiating a possible class action.

This anonymous Centurion property owner's year-long battle to restore electricity has become one of the cases highlighting concerns about the metro's handling of electricity disputes.

Freedom Front Plus (FF+) Tshwane caucus leader Grandi Theunissen further said growing complaints about alleged unfair electricity penalties, intimidation, and possible corrupt practices highlight such concerns.

The owner, who wishes to remain anonymous, as many of his claims form part of a legal matter, told *Rekord* that he had made numerous attempts to resolve the dispute with the municipality after his electricity supply was disconnected following an alleged illegal reconnection and an electricity bridge linked to a tenant's allegedly unlawful conduct.

He claimed that a municipal official contacted him, stating that a bribe would result in the electricity being restored and the fine for illegal tampering being reversed on his account.

The allegation has not been independently verified.

The metro was provided with



Grandi Theunissen, Freedom Front Plus, Tshwane caucus leader

the opportunity to respond, but has not replied to questions via email after 14 days.

Theunissen said the matter highlights the number of growing complaints received by the party from metro residents who claim they are being confronted with unfair penalties and alleged intimidation and corrupt practices.

He said homeowners have faced penalties of up to R75 000 for alleged tampering with prepaid electricity meters, with residents

claiming that some penalties were unjustified and legally questionable.

"There are concerns about a possible pattern in which residents first report electricity problems, technicians arrive without the necessary parts and bridge meters to restore power temporarily, and inspectors later accuse the residents of tampering with the meters," he claimed.

He also said there have been reports of allegedly metro-affiliated

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Grandi Theunissen – Freedom Front Plus councillor

individuals offering to make penalties 'disappear' in exchange for cash.

The party said it is in possession of evidence supporting these allegations.

Theunissen emphasised that the party has already raised the issue in the metro's finance and community safety oversight committees and has called for residents not to become victims of these allegedly corrupt practices.

The concerns have emerged alongside the anonymous Centurion owner's ongoing dispute with the metro.

According to documentation supplied to *Rekord*, the alleged dispute began after the electricity supply to his property was disconnected without his knowledge. At the time, the house was occupied by a tenant.

He claimed that while the property was occupied by this same tenant, the electricity was reconnected without his knowledge.

The municipality subsequently and allegedly identified an illegal electricity bridge, disconnected the supply again, and imposed a penalty.

The owner instituted High Court eviction proceedings against the

tenant and submitted affidavits to the SAPS concerning the matter.

He has also approached several senior municipal officials, including former city manager Johann Mettler, senior officials in Legal Services, Public Works and Infrastructure, and the Energy and Electricity Department.

Despite these engagements, he has received little or no meaningful feedback or resolution.

Rekord approached the metro with questions about the matter, including the current status of the electricity supply, why the property had allegedly remained without electricity for approximately a year, and the municipality's understanding of the alleged illegal bridge.

The metro was also asked whether an internal investigation had been conducted into the matter and whether the allegation that a municipal official suggested a bribe in exchange for restoring electricity had been investigated.

At the time of publication, the metro had not responded to the questions despite being given 14 days to comment.

The owner continues to seek a formal engagement with the municipality to have the dispute reviewed and resolved.