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Melkbosstrand folk vow to fight landfill

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THE flames of dissatisfaction are - burning high at Melkbosstrand because of plans to develop a landfill site for the City of Cape Town virtually on the doorstep of local residents.

And at present there is no sign of anyone rushing up with buckets of water to douse these flames.

In fact, Mr Willem Steenkamp, who arranged a meeting for dissatisfied residents last week, states categorically that residents will not step down in the fight to stop the site from being developed.

"We have come to the conclusion that something is materially wrong. We will fight this thing every day of every year for as long as it takes, but we will not allow this site to be developed so close to our homes - especially as we believe a corrupt process has resulted in the approval of the development," Steenkamp says.

His comments follow an urgent meeting of residents held on 14 August where hot dissatisfaction with plans to develop a landfill site close to Melkbosstrand was expressed in no uncertain terms.

Steenkamp says more than 500 residents packed the Melkbos Country Club to express their anger at the approval of the site.

The meeting was attended by Mr Vincent Bergh, chairperson of the Blauwberg subcouncil and officials of the city's planning division.

At the meeting more than 200 individually signed appeals were handed in. Since then, many more have been compiled and forwarded to the office of the provincial minister of environment, planning and development, Ms Tasneem Essop.

Steenkamp says he understands that since the meeting more than 500 signed appeals have been received by the minister's office.

At the heart of the bitter resentment and dissatisfaction shown by residents of Melkbos and surrounding communities lies the fact that it is believed the environmental impact assessment (EIA) was characterised by what residents believe boils down to blatant crookery.

Some of the reasons given for this belief are: . The correct procedures were not followed to make residents of the area aware of the assessment; . No public meetings were held at Melkbos; Melkbos residents were deliberately excluded from the public participation process; . The Record of Decision (ROD) shows that the EIA was not properly conducted; . Politics played a role in the assessment; . Koeberg was never consulted; . There are other sites more suitable; and . The site was deliberately called the Atlantis site, although

Atlantis is 8 km from the proposed site and Melkbos only 3,4 km.

Steenkamp says towards the end of last week it became clear that residents are standing together like never before.

The fact that so many fundamental flaws have been discovered in the ROD can lead residents to no other conclusion as the one that something is materially wrong somewhere.

An action group was formed at last week's meeting. Legal advice is now sought about the relevant matters.

Steenkamp says if the issue develops into a situation in which residents need to proceed with legal action against the provincial minister for dereliction of duty, they will do so without hesitation.

"We will leave no stone unturned to establish why we have been so deliberately misled.

"The consultants who handled the EIA even lied to our own ratepayers' association about what was going to happen to the site," he says.

In the meantime the residents' body formed at last week's meeting has been renamed the West Coast Residents Forum.

On Saturday Mr Johann Crafford, chairperson of the Melkbosstrand Ratepayers' Association (MRA), told TygerBurger any possible split in the community of Melkbos was sealed and healed in discussions between representatives of the MRA and the new forum.

"We all realise this is not the time for division."

He says the fight against the landfill site was only part of a much bigger issue. There are other development plans afoot for the region with which locals are anything but happy. . Read the report on page 2.

 **Na bo**

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