

GROUNDS FOR HOPE IN ALBERT PARK

THE MERCURY Letter to the Editor by Sayed-Iqbal Mohame

Abandoned ("No Winners in Albert Park", March 16, 2000) does not have to feel dejected about the situation. Tremendous efforts and endeavours are in progress to redress the shoddy state of the area and to restore the rights of bona fide residents.

For my part, while not the local councillor, I had new refuse bins installed last year in Albert Park and the Grey Street complex. The official I complained to responded within three weeks. After hosting a workshop in September 1999 on sectional title schemes and subsequent correspondents and meetings with residents and having attended meetings held by the ANC branch in Albert Park, the following developments took place:-

- 1) Action is imminent against defaulting levy-payers. A High Court (test case) application was agreed upon as this would explore ways to protect diligent levy-payers who have also contributed their pro rata share of the rates.
- 2) There has been lobbying at national level for a separate rating system, so that individual unit owners are held directly responsible for the payment of rates. A draft Bill contains this proposal. Albert Park was the catalyst for this change.
- 3) I discussed the problems associated with non-payment of levies in December 1999 with the National Minister of Housing, Sankie-Mthembi Mahanyile and the general manager of the Banking Council of South Africa, Mr. Cas Coovadia.
- 4) A subsequent meeting was held in Durban with Mr. Coovadia, followed by a meeting with representatives of all the banks and the North and South Central Councils two weeks ago.
- 5) Certain council officials are working very hard to get owners to upgrade their property. Slow but sure progress has started.
- 6) I am in the process of finalising a briefing document for the interim committee of owners, residents and ratepayers association. The formal launch of this grassroots organisation will be another step in providing an organised and cohesive voice.

Abandoned could also contact the following:

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