19 December 2015

Dear Petitioners,

It is right that I inform you of the rapidly developing, and in my view deteriorating, situation in Masi. Below, for your information, is the statement that was handed to Ward Councillor Felicity Purchase at a protest meeting yesterday. I decided to attend, with a few other petitioners, and join the protesters. I learned two things: Wider 'valley' presence counters an otherwise racially divisive situation. Secondly, it is evident the authorities have no plan to solve the Masi problems, that face us all.

It was good that the Ward Councillor came to the protest and was allowed to respond to the memorandum. She was offered the community PA system to address the ca 150 protesters. The protest and march to and from Masi to Fish Hoek was peaceful and friendly. The police presence was massive. At one point I counted 25 police and related vehicles.

Since the fire, 178 re-erected shacks were destroyed by the police. The official view is that they are on illegally occupied land. The reality is that people now sleep in the bush. This includes children and sick people. Councillor Purchase offered the Community Hall as alternative (temporary?) accomodation. Sadly her offer was not acted upon because the hall was locked the previous night and again last night. As a result shacks have once more been erected.

The onus on us all to find solutions could not be higher. We need short, medium and longer term solutions. We, civil society - at our 'valley' level - need to help find a way out of this cul de sac.

People cannot be wished away.

Yours sincerely,

Horst Kleinschmidt

Memorandum of the Community of Masiphumelele (18 December 2015)

handed to Ward Councillor Felicity Purchase at about 11.00 hrs today

1. We as the community of Masiphumelele demand land for the recent fire victims.

2. Furthermore, we demand an urgent engagement with Sanparks and the City officials about the future use of this land in Noordhoek.

3. We demand from the Ward Councilor  to play a significant role in attending especially and immediately to the disabled and elderly fire victims.

4. We also demand more land for those backyarders as well as for those who suffer every winter from floods and fire outbreaks to be accommodated in a new development.

5. We demand clear communication on all decisions that are taken on behalf of the Masiphumelele community to be communicated speedily via the active structures (forums) and our community imbizos.

6. We also want to be involved as community leaders in all disaster plan measures during the process of managing the relief actions for all victims.

7. We are awaiting an immediate response to these demands, while we need a contingency plan right now for those most destitute and scattered all over in the open air as we speak.

8. We further demand a clear mutual communication between this ward and the Masi community to avoid confusion and miscommunication.

9. The Ward Councilor has failed to deliver especially towards the demands of the poor, where basic service delivery is still an issue after all these years.

10. Lastly, we demand from Councilor Purchase to ensure within 48 hours to give answers to our demands how they will be considered and implemented.

Signed by Masiphumelele Community representatives:

Mr Tshepo Moletsane and Mr Howard Mbana