

Truth comes out

Heather Walker

Nobody has a lease for the Parkhurst bowling club. This was made clear at a public meeting about the issue.

Ward 99 councillor Don Forbes explained that although the property (erfs 246 and 247) was adjacent to ward 87 (including Parkhurst), it lay in his ward. He said his efforts to sort out the decaying property for more than ten years were complicated by several factors.

"Erf 246 is an ex-dump with limited development potential due to the 25 and 50 year contamination periods. Erf 247 is zoned for social and outdoor recreation, thus numerous development ideas such as a retirement village were turned down. City council is putting the erf out to tender, which may allow rezoning, although I'm opposed to any commercial usage."

Ashton Bodrick of Joburg Property Company stated there were no current leases for the property as a tender process would soon begin, making the Parkhurst Village Residents Association's usage request invalid.

Lower Parkhurst residents were angry, as this

meant the property lying vacant for many more months.

"The crime problem is terrible. I've been broken into twice in two weeks because of vagrants living there. Residents paid for a palisade fence around the property, which only increased crime. It's not complicated - city council must remove the squatters and secure its property until tender is granted," said Dr Garth Japhet, to loud applause.

Most agreed that Julie Kieser was a victim of miscommunication, and Bodrick said he was investigating how an invalid lease was given to her.

Unable to attend the meeting, ward 87 councillor Sharon Sabbagh later revealed, "I discovered a city council proposal to retain the property's sports and recreation zoning - but change it to a commercial lease. This is to allow for development to the tune of R80 million, which will revert to city council with the land when the lease ends.

"I had the proposal removed from the agenda because too many facts didn't add up.

"Greg Margolis doesn't want the property for his own purposes, as some believe. Now it's likely our plan won't happen anyway," she added.



Ashton Bodrick and Don Forbes address the meeting.

