



1 September 2016

Reclaim the City press statement: Bromwell Street tenants welcome meeting with Woodstock Hub

The tenants at Bromwell Street welcome the willingness of the Woodstock Hub's directors to meet and to find a resolution to the pending eviction against them. The tenants met last night and gave a mandate to Disha Govender, an attorney at the Ndifuna Ukwazi Law Centre, to accompany and represent them at any upcoming meeting with the directors. They also formally elected tenants Charnell Commando and Graham Beukes to represent them as their leaders.

The Woodstock Hub's pledge of R50 000 towards a crowdfunding campaign will not mitigate against the threat of homelessness posed by these evictions. In last night's meeting, the tenants emphasised that their struggle is not for monetary compensation. Theirs' is a struggle for homes and to remain in the Woodstock community, where they have lived for their entire lives. They are fighting to advance a principle: that no one should be left homeless and forcibly removed to the Cape Flats, as areas such as Woodstock gentrify.

The parameters of the tenants' meeting with the Woodstock Hub is currently being negotiated via their attorney. The Bromwell Street tenants will however go into this meeting with a strong position and expectations:

1. They will always resist an eviction which will render them homeless.
2. They intend on staying in Woodstock, and will never move to Blikkiesdorp or the Cape Flats.
3. They would like to continue staying at 120-128 Bromwell Street, and would like to do so by paying fair and affordable rentals.
4. If they are forced to move, they expect the City of Cape Town and the developers to work with them to help secure decent and affordable alternative accommodation in Woodstock or very nearby.

Mayoral Committee Member for Human Settlements Benedicta van Minnen's failure to acknowledge the City's legal obligation to help rehouse potentially homeless evictees in the same area is unconstitutional. In 2011, in *City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality v Blue Moonlight Properties*, the Constitutional Court ruled that local governments must provide temporary alternative accommodation in the same area where private evictions will make tenants homeless. The City has had five years to set up a funded programme to do just that and has failed. Relocation to Blikkiesdorp is not a suitable alternative for evicted people.

The tenants expressed thanks to the broader Cape Town community for support they received in recent weeks. They hope that this struggle will help tenants, property developers and the City of Cape Town to work towards a broader solution to the scourge of poor families being evicted and forcibly relocated from the city.

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