

Municipality accused of sidelining DA councillor

NONDUMISO MBUYAZI

A DA COUNCILLOR has accused the eThekweni Municipality of failing to provide him with an office to conduct his municipal duties, saying he has now been reduced to meeting the public in the car park.

Rick Crouch, a councillor for Ward 10, said yesterday that he had been struggling to get council Speaker Logie Naidoo to allocate him an office since the local government elections.

“I have sent the Speaker numerous e-mails on the matter since May and have not had the courtesy of a reply,” said Crouch.

“I do not think it is right that constituents have to meet with me in public car parks. This situation is severely hampering service delivery in Ward 10 and makes it hard for the residents and ratepayers to meet me.

“Offices and laptops should have been sourced for councillors before the elections.”

Crouch added that Naidoo had refused his suggestion to use the office at the Sizakala centre in Hillcrest.

Naidoo said the delay in allocating Crouch an office was his own doing. He said the office at the Sizakala centre had been allocated to an ANC

councillor because that area, Ward 9, was held by the ruling party.

Ward 9 used to be a DA ward under the party’s caucus leader, Tex Collins. He lost it after the elections.

Naidoo said Crouch had refused an office in Ward 10 because it was dilapidated. “We are prepared to upgrade it if he is prepared to move in,” said Naidoo, adding that he had advised Crouch to find a suitable office, which the city would lease, if he was not satisfied with the current one.

Crouch said an ANC PR councillor from Ward 10 had already been allocated an office. “Council protocol dictates that the ward councillor has priority when it comes to the assignment of offices,” he said. This was an indication of how Naidoo had failed to treat councillors equally, and it had become clear that preference was being given to ANC councillors, he said.

The DA’s chief whip, Dean Macpherson, said when he had raised the issue with Naidoo he had been told that Crouch should rent an office.

“It is our opinion that renting a private office when there is one available in a municipal building amounts to wasteful spending in excess of R50 000 per year,” said Macpherson.

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