

Edgemead residents furious over 'illegal' mast

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RESIDENTS of Edgemead were invited in writing by the City of Cape Town to comment on a 15m high cellular base station that would be erected in their suburb – the only problem was that it had already been erected.

Emile Coetzee, chairman of the Edgemead Residents' Association, said the Telkom Mobile base station in Southdale Road, was built early last month, but the city sent out registered letters dated June 6 for proposed consent from residents to permit the installation of the base station.

The letter said the closing date for objections was July 6 and that "no late comment or objection will be considered unless the city manager has agreed in writing".

Coetzee said two masts had gone up in the suburb illegally in a short space of time and a third, built in 2013 at the Edgemead Village Centre, had also gone up with invalid plans.

He said there appeared to be no consequences from the city for building towers without approved plans.

Coetzee said the tower at the Edgemead Village Centre in 2013, applied for by consultants Warren Petterson Planning (WPP), who also was the applicant on the Southdale Road site, was allowed to remain while new plans were submitted. WPP deals with cell mast applications on behalf of the larger cellular providers.

"Despite numerous objections from residents, the city approved everything after the fact. We are now in the exact same situation again where a tower has been built without approved plans and I would like to know what action the city will be taking."

Coetzee said another mast, with no plans, was erected at the Engen garage on the corner of Edgemead Drive and Bosmansdam Road by a contractor earlier this month.

Subcouncil chairman for the area, Taki Amira, said the contractor for the base station in Southdale Road had been issued with a compliance notice by a building inspector.

"I've also asked them to look into issuing an administrative fine which is based on the value of an illegal structure or building,"



NO PLANS: A mast was erected at the Engen garage on the corner of Edgemead Drive and Bosmansdam Road.

Amira added, saying the Planning Tribunal would make a decision.

Amira said he visited the Engen site last week and was told by the contractors, who were from Joburg, that they had plans for the installation of the mast, but couldn't produce them.

"Engen has now promised to remove the structure until the plans are in place."

There have been a number of protests over the years from residents in areas from Constantia and Mitchells Plain to Heathfield and Muizenberg complaining about a lack of public participation over the

erection of masts in their areas due mainly to health fears and aesthetic reasons.

Johan van der Merwe, mayco member for Energy, Environmental and Spatial Planning said it had been brought to the city's planning building and development department's attention that the cell mast in Southdale Road had already been erected by the time the application for a consent use to permit the construction of the base station was submitted and advertised to surrounding property owners via registered mail this month.

He said notices would therefore be

served in terms of the erection of an unauthorised structure and for the land use contravention, as there were no land use rights applicable to the property to operate a telecommunication mast, irrespective if an application was being processed or not.

Van der Merwe said all cell mast applications needed to comply with the relevant zoning scheme and all applicable laws, including adherence to council policies, and to follow the necessary processes, which would determine whether or not they would be approved.