

Frustration mounts over Joburg water bill

Frustrated property owner has twice had to resort to the courts to force the City of Joburg to turn his water on after it was cut off illegally.

Since November last year, Lisa van der Merwe has been delivering water to the tenants at her father's house in Ferreira Street, Kenilworth, after the municipality cut off the property's water supply.

Dave Whitelocks owns a pair of semi-detached houses in Kenilworth.

In August 2013, his electricity meter was over-read by some 10 000 units. His account is standing at R120 000, which includes estimates for a meter which has been removed.

"We immediately took photos and logged a complaint. After more than two years, that reference number still exists and City Power has done nothing to solve the problem. The meter has only to average to about R800.

"In all that time we have read the meter and paid for what we have used," he said.

In July last year, the city cut off the water and took out the water meter, leaving water running in the street.

Whitelocks's attorney lodged an urgent application in court. He won and the city was forced to reconnect the water.

"I begged them to take me to court so I could prove the error, but they refused. They invited my attorney and myself to attend a meeting to resolve the problem, but guess what? They never turned up," he said.

Then in November year, the city once again removed the water meter, leaving the water running in the street.

Whitelocks immediately contacted his attorney who again logged an urgent application and won.

The city was ordered to reinstate the meter, which it did not do until Wednesday this week after the intervention of MetroWatch.

"In the meantime, water has been running down the street since November. What a disgraceful state of affairs. We are in the grip of the worst drought in decades and the city performs these dreadful actions. To top it all, this happened just after my tenant arrived home from hospital after having an operation for cancer," he said.

As a result of this, Whitelocks's daughter, Lisa van der Merwe, has spent the past few weeks delivering water to the tenant on a daily basis.

The City of Joburg did not respond to numerous requests for comment.

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