

MAYOR'S SPEECH
JAMAICA MORTGAGE BANK HOUSING DEVELOPMENT
SEMINAR - DECEMBER 2004

It is an honour to be sharing in your discussions today on such a very important aspect of our development.

Ladies and gentlemen, you are no doubt aware of the limited role that the Kingston and St. Andrew Corporation (c) plays in housing development in the corporate.

Our role is limited, basically, to the approval of plans for construction and other forms of physical and infrastructural development.

But, while it may be a limited role, it is a very basic and important one in the corporate area's physical development.

Our problem is the continued defiance of our role by persons in the city who are doing development.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are all aware that while many of our citizens want to own their own homes, it is not a simple achievement.

There is not much land available for legal housing, and this has forced many of our citizens to settle in tenement yards, with little space for development and little privacy.

The result has been increased squatting, which is probably the major obstacle to re-ordering this city.

One of the main problems associated with squatting has been the failure of squatters to conform with the law.

Therefore, one of the issues basic to the proper development of the corporate area must be resolving how will we deal with squatting.

as these communities are allowed to grow, without any formal planning, squatters fail to comply with the law. This creates serious dangers in terms of homes built in flood-prone areas or in areas without basic infrastructural necessities, such as water and sewage disposal facilities.

This creates an additional threat to the safety and health of the entire municipality.

But, squatters are not our only problem in terms of physical development.

There are many developed communities, including upscale communities, in which residents and developers blatantly refuse to comply with the requirements of the town and country planning act, the building act and the development orders.

Central government, itself, has breached these requirements by going ahead with developments with which we do not agree, for example the Long Mountain development.

As the recent hurricane disaster showed, there is a large number of people out there who are also able to obtain access to utilities, like water and light, on illegal projects without the required instruments from the KSAC.

The fact is that no development is allowed in this municipality without the approval of the KSAC, whether under the zoning requirements of the development orders, or the building plans under the town and country planning act or the building act.

The KSAC does believe that it should just sit and watch these flagrant breaches continue without taking action.

At the moment we are restricted in our efforts by a shortage of inspectors, which has not been helped by the freeze on employment in the public sector, imposed on us by central government. But, even with these limitations, we intend to see that the law is obeyed.

I urge you to look at these issues that I have raised today, as you discuss the various opportunities in housing development, and that you will be able to make recommendations, in the end, which will assist us in overcoming, at least, some of the problems.

Thank you