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Standing Committee on Town Planning censured

For “approving” building plans without valid authority

MADURAI: Corporation councillors and City Town Planning Officer Murugesan complained of irregularities by the Corporation Standing Committee on Town Planning in “approving” building plans without valid authority.

During a discussion at the Corporation council meeting here on Tuesday, Corporation North Zone Chairman K. Esakkimuthu raked up the issue of construction of a seven-storey residential building in S.S. Colony without the approval of officials. “The builder claims to have had approval of the standing committee,” he said.

Dwelling on the issue, All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam leader P. Salaimuthu wondered whether the standing committee could issue approvals on its own. Mr. Murugesan clarified that if any building plan was not approved within 30 days on submission, the Standing committee could be approached. The committee could recommend the CTPO either for approval of the plan or rejection.

(Later, Mr. Murugesan told reporters that in case of conflict arising between the CTPO and panel, the final decision would be made by the State Government.)

Mr. Esakkimuthu, belonging to the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, said that in a similar case pertaining to “approval” of plan by the committee for a commercial building on 80 Feet Road in K.K. Nagar, the builders applied for permission from the CTPO after the officials initiated action against them.

Mr. Murugesan said that in case of the multi-storey apartment the Corporation did not have any records. The construction violated building rules and scheme rules. "The approval does not have any connection with the Corporation administration. The standing committee was functioning like a separate entity," he said.

Making losses

Earlier, Mr. Salaimuthu and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader, M. Ganesan, alleged that Corporation was incurring a huge loss because of "syndicate" among contractors while bidding for revenue-generating projects such as market.

Mayor G. Thenmozhi said that appointment to Corporation postings under compassionate ground would be done within a month.

Both the opposition parties separately walked out of the meeting protesting against "irregularities" indulged by the ruling party men during the Lok Sabha election. Their members refused to take sweets distributed to celebrate the election of M.K. Azhagiri. Former West Zone Chairman R.M.B. Chinnan, who arrived very late for the meeting, chose to sit in one of the last row of seats.