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Discord in Corporation Council over bus shelters

Special Correspondent

Councillors urged not to hold up project

COIMBATORE: The Coimbatore Corporation's move to get the elected Council's approval for its proposal to involve private firms in putting up bus shelters across the city ran into resistance from a section of the councillors at emergency meeting on Friday.

The stiffest resistance came from Town Planning Committee Chairman P. Krishnamoorthy, on the grounds that the proposal had not been routed through his committee. As the subject came under the town planning wing, it ought to have been placed before the committee, he contended.

A member of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), Mr. Krishnamoorthy demanded that the resolution be deferred and the entire proposal should be examined by the committee. When he asked about the current status of the shelters in the city, Town Planning Officer M. Soundararajan said that out of the 218 shelters in the city, only 22 were approved by the Corporation.

Leader of the Opposition and DMK member V.N. Udayakumar suggested that the contract with the firms maintaining the 22 shelters could be terminated and a fresh one could be worked out

for all the shelters in the city.

Corporation Commissioner Anshul Mishra said talks could be held with the firms, but any unilateral decision by the Corporation could land it in a legal tangle.

As the DMK members, particularly Mr. Krishnamoorthy, insisted on deferring the discussion on the subject, the Commissioner made a fervent appeal to the members not to delay the project because people waiting for buses at the stops were suffering without proper shelters. "Let us not take any decision against the interests of the public," he said.

Mr. Krishnamoorthy argued that the DMK was also concerned about the public, but the bus shelter issue should have been discussed at an all-party meeting and then brought to the Council.

The DMK members objected to All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) councillor M. Natarajan's comment that the Commissioner's decision could not be overruled. Amid a verbal clash broke out between the councillors of these parties, Mr. Mishra clarified that only the Council's decision was supreme.

At one point of time, when the discussions were not making any headway, the Commissioner said he would refer the proposal to the State Government for its decision. AIADMK member P. Rajkumar called for a quick consensus, warning of further delay if the proposal was referred to the Government.

Communist Party of India (Marxist) councillor C. Padmanabhan said he condemned the demand to hold over the proposal for yet another round of discussion.

However, the resolution on the proposal was not passed in the Council. It would be placed in the Council later after discussions at an all-party meeting.