

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
FERNKLOOF NATURE RESERVE (FNR) ADVISORY BOARD (FAB)
HELD AT ELECTRICAL BOARDROOM, ONRUSRIVIER
ON FRIDAY, 11 AUGUST 2017 at 09:00**

1. Welcome, Attendance and Apologies

Present: Duncan Heard (DH) [in the Chair], David Beattie (DB), Penelope Aplon (PA) Environmental Officer – Overstrand Municipality], Councillor Kari Brice (KB), Heloise Fortune (HF) [Environmental Secretary – Overstrand Municipality], Lee Burman (LBn), Andrae Marais (AM) [Cape Nature], Glynis Van Rooyen (GvR), Liezl de Villiers (LdV) [Environmental Manager: Overstrand Municipality], Anthony van Hoogstraten (AvH)

Apologies: Muthama Muasya (MM), Linda Griffiths (LG), Edward Fisher (EF) [Law Enforcement – Overstrand Municipality]

Welcome: DH opened the meeting and welcomed all present. He informed everyone that his term of office as member of the FAB will expire on 24 August 2017. Anthony van Hoogstraten proposed that DH remains as chairman of FAB until reappointment has been finalised. His suggestion was supported by the board.

2. Confirmation of Minutes for the Meeting of the FAB held on 12 May 2017.

H.F

2.1 Confirmation of Minutes and Public Availability

HF confirmed that the minutes were made available to the public.

The minutes were accepted.

Proposed: Anthony van Hoogstraten

Seconded: David Beattie

2.2 Comments from Council on FAB Minutes dated 12 May 2017.

K.B

No comments were received from Council.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 Amendment of Bylaws relating to FNR and FAB/Re-declaration of FNR:

P.A

DH & PA had a meeting with regards to the bylaws. DH gave some background to the board. The next step will be for EMS to discuss the recommendations made internally and then with Overstrand Municipality's legal department. The 1st draft will be sent to FAB for their information.

The re-declaration of FNR must wait until the management plan is finalized.

3.2 Provincial By-Pass Road

P.A

PA commented that there is no additional information to report they are awaiting the results of the EIA process.

4. Administration

4.1 FNR Integrated Management Plan (IMP) Progress

P.A

LdV reported that she added the entire coastal strip which is municipal property to the nature reserve. It is important to take control of the coastal areas. The document will therefore need to be advertised for public comment again. She confirmed that the document will be re-advertised before the end of August 2017.

The other changes that were made in the document as listed below;

- Figure 4 the development map. Nodes were changed to management units.
- The application processes for developments were changed to the town planning process.

LBN wanted to know if the astronomy centre which was taken out by the board has been added again. LdV commented that the municipality has added it again. She further commented that she knows how the board feels but the Municipality cannot only go on what the board advises. If the Municipality decides that they want it in the plan than they can override the decision made by the advisory board. The Municipality made an in principle decision in 2009 and when the advisory board provided their comments it was overruled.

AvH commented that the Municipality made a mistake because they never referred it to the advisory board in 2009. The Municipality cannot go back on something which was passed provisionally in 2009. It is not acceptable.

LBN commented that a botanical survey was done which the board requested copies of but to date has never sighted. DH commented that he did see the report and requested that FAB be provided with a copy.

DH commented that the administrative procedure now is that once the document is advertised FAB will have a chance to provide their recommendations on the changes again and they will see what other comments are received from the public.

AvH commented that LdV mentioned that she has added something to the reserve. He wanted to know if DH was aware of this and if the rest of the board can be informed as well.

LdV explained that they have looked at areas which are of conservation concern. These areas are currently under Area Management. The areas are overgrown and have alien vegetation and are not looked after properly. She understands that it is a capacity issue but it not that much of an area per hectare. The areas have conservation value which is of high importance. They are doing a re-declaration and added on specific sections. They will then request approval from council to add these sections which will then become part of the proclaimed nature reserve boundaries.

DH commented that the actions on the management plan should be placed on a timeline and should be approved by Director Stephen Muller. The timeline should reach FAB as soon as possible.

4.1.1 Hermanus Astronomy Centre

P.A

PA reported that EMS has requested additional information from Dr Pierre de Villiers through the Town Planning application. EMS is still not satisfied with the information that was provided.

4.1.2 Cableway

D.H

DH reported that a botanical study has been done on target areas. The cableway cannot go ahead until a bottom station has been secured. He will follow up if the botanical study can be made available to all.

4.1.3 Damage done to Riparian Zone at entrance

L.d.V

PA reported that EMS wanted to do the restoration themselves but DEA&DP requested that a consultant be appointed to draw up the rehabilitation plan.

4.2 FNR 2017/18 Budget

P.A

PA reported that the overall EMS budget has not been allocated to the different areas yet but she can report that they have about R200 000.00 available for the maintenance of FNR hiking trails and R80 000.00 for fire breaks. Both tenders for the maintenance of the storeroom and the carport have been cancelled. New tenders will have to be put out again.

4.3FNR Management Reports

P.A

PA commented that she has nothing to report at the moment. DH requested a bullet point summary on what has been achieved in the reserve between meetings instead of a lengthy report. The rest of the board agreed with his request.

4.4 World Heritage Expansion

D.H

DH commented that at the moment they do not have a motivational champion who can put the report together. The board are welcome to make suggestions if they know of someone who will be willing to take this on. DH will be happy to assist the person.

5. Standing Items

5.1 Enforcement

P.A

DH commented that there were no enforcement issues reported. LdV reported that security lights will be erected at the gate and will be situated so that it shines away from the residence nearby so that it won't cause a disturbance.

5.1.1 Encroachments

This point was discussed under 7.2.

5.2 Hoy's Koppie

P.A

DH reported that the alarm in the cave at Hoy's Koppie has not been working. PA commented that she has asked Dean to do some focused patrols to determine if people are still living in the cave. PA also mentioned that she did speak to the Municipality's electrical dept and they have discovered an alternative electrical source. The cable of the candle light on top of Hoy's Koppie is still there but they will have to dig a 20m trench to put in an electrical box in the cave.

6. Ecological Issues

K.B

6.1.1 Baboon Virtual Fence

KB reported that she had a public meeting with about 90 people last Thursday. It went better than she expected. At the moment she only has R10 000.00 that has been received through volunteer donations but it will not cover all the costs. They have 3 HWS monitors from Cape Town that will assist with the implementation of the virtual fence. They have been in Hermanus since Sunday. She gave thanks to Vogelgat for sponsoring the accommodation of the 3 monitors for two weeks. A Trainee will start today to shadow the HWS monitors he will then stay on once the HWS monitors leave again in two weeks. She will pay the trainee for today and tomorrow if she has to but is trying to get sponsorship for the remainder of the time. The operation is underway and extremely successful but it needs to be sustained. She and Liezl will sit down with Dr Phil Richardson to determine the exact costs to employ a person full time. Two options that were discussed at the meeting were to put an extra (R20 thumb suck) fee on top of the rates payable to HPP. Plan B will be to ask for public donations. The trainee was identified through Liezl and has a degree in Forestry and has done this type of work before. He has a drivers licence and will need a vehicle in the future. If anyone has a spare smart phone to donate it will be much appreciated as he needs a phone to download the app to see the exact location of the baboons to ensure that the noise boxes are placed in the right location. Although it is not a municipal mandate she has received a lot of help from LdV and is in constant discussion with the Mr Coenie Groenewald (MM) and Director Stephen Muller. A statement was issued to the Hermanus Times that it is not a municipal mandate but they are doing what they can and to see what can be done.

AvH commended KB for her work and suggested that FAB recommends to Council that they should approach DEA&DP for funding. LdV commented that it is already in process.

6.1.2 Burning of Coastal Corridors

P.A

PA commented that there is nothing new to report.

6.1.3 Event Applications

P.A

PA reported that the event applications as listed below are usually submitted to Area Management;

- Berg en See Trail Run – 21 October 2017
- Cliff Path Night Run – 4 October 2017
- Flower Festival – 22 September 2017

6.2 Research

P.A

6.2.1 Research Applications

PA reported that there were two applications that have been circulated for comment.

- LA Smith - An experimental study of plant-pollinator interactions along a successional post-fire gradient
- Alexander Neu – Spatio-temporal dynamics of pollination networks

Both applications were approved by the board.

6.3 Klein River Estuary Management

P.A

PA commented that there is nothing to report.

6.4 Reports from Hermanus Botanical Society (BOTSOC)

L.G

DH commented that LG's report was circulated to all. FAB and members of the public are invited to the soup and sherry evening on 18 August 2017. Members should indicate their attendance to LG for catering purposes.

PA reported that the Co-Management agreement is on LdV's desk at the moment and should be completed within a month or 2.

6.5 Reports from Cliff Path Management Group (CPMG)

D.B

DB reported that they are waiting on feedback from the Municipality with regards to three existing paths that they want to resurface, 1 in Kwaaiwater and the other 2 in Voelklip. They also want to re-establish the path from the end of Piet se bos going up to the road that leads to the main entrance past the old Hamilton Russell house. The proposal for a boardwalk on the cliff path in Westcliff will be submitted to LdV and PA. The project is privately funded. Together with Frank Woodvine they have been busy removing New-Zealand Christmas trees in the area of Die Gang. They are still waiting to finalize the Co-Management Agreement.

6.6 Annual Hermanus Camp (AHC) – Lease Application

A.v.H

AvH commented that he first applied for the lease in Jan 2017. It has been approved in principle for 9 years and 11 months. The paperwork has not been signed yet. The camp will be held after Christmas for two weeks.

7. General

7.1 Sale of Municipal Land adjacent to Scout Camp

A.v.H

PA reported that the owners initially had a lease agreement for a 4m strip. This stretches from their property boundary towards the De Mond Camp. They now applied to buy the land and they did receive in principle approval to purchase the land. They have subsequently put up a wall but they are only allowed to place hardened surfaces within the wall however they are currently busy building a driveway. Anja Kotze Le Roux has instructed law enforcement to deal with the matter because they have to register a servitude on the remainder of their property to allow for access down to Scout Camp. She also said that whatever they are doing now is at own risk because the sale of the land has not gone through - the property has not been transferred in their name yet.

AvH commented that they have doubled the size of the building and the garage has been built on the Fernkloof Nature Reserve boundary all this while the property is not registered in their name yet. They have put up a fence and a huge building on leased land. He feels this is not right and will contact John Simson with regards to this point as the building affects the boundary of the reserve as well as the buffer area. AvH will provide feedback.

7.2 Dogs in FNR

P.A

DH commented that he has received many reports that dogs are being walked without leads and are running around in the reserve. He suggested that a serious media article should be placed in the newspapers that address the issue. The article must remind people what the reserve is all about and that having dogs in the reserve is a privilege and not a right and that people should abide by the rules. He also suggested that a blue uniform law enforcement official as well as a green uniform law enforcement official should do regular patrols and if they find any transgressors fines should be issued as stipulated by the ordinance. AM commented that the min fine is R2500.00 for first offence and the second fine is a court case. PA commented that the rangers can only issue fines under the municipal by-laws therefore Cape Nature officials will have to be available to issue the fines.

DB commented that the encroachments are getting out of hand. For example people were taking out fynbos and planted Agapanthus and also putting in watering systems. LdV commented that if anybody sees any transgressors they should inform EMS immediately so that the officials can assist with the removals. DH suggested that a week after the article on dogs an article on encroachments must be placed. KB suggested that photographs should be placed with the articles to make a serious statement. Photographs of encroachments in the reserve as well as dogs without leads should be taken to keep record. DB commented that a notice on coastal vegetation in the reserve has been drafted. LBn suggested that Whale Coast Conservation's Anina Lee must be included in the process.

The proposal for the media articles made by DH was supported by all. LdV will approach Anina Lee for assistance and will refer her to DH for information. A statement will be prepared by DH on behalf of FAB.

7.3 Walkerbay Radio Flyers

PA referred to the permission that the Walkerbay Radio Flyers Club received for 5 parking bays on the mountain. Neville Green issued a letter in August 2016 giving specific GPS coordinates. The 5 parking bays will be made in September 2017.

8. Date of Next Meetings: 10 November 2017