

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FERNKLOOF NATURE RESERVE (FNR) ADVISORY BOARD (FAB) HELD AT FERNKLOOF, HERMANUS ON THURSDAY, 18 MAY 2012

1. Welcome, Attendance and Apologies

Present: Duncan Heard (in the Chair) [DH]; David Beattie (Vice-Chair) [DB], Antony van Hoogstraten (AvH), Frank Woodvine (FW), Linda Griffiths (LG), Muthama Muasya (MM), Andrae Marais (Cape Nature) [AM].

Apologies: Councillor Pieter Scholtz (PS), Lee Burman (LBn), Neville Green (Environmental Officer, Kleinmond) [NG].

In attendance: Liezl Bezuidenhout (Environmental Manager, Overstrand) [LB]; Penelope Aplon (Environmental Officer, Hermanus) [PA], Neville Michaels (Director: Protection Services) [NM], Rudi Frazer (Chief: Traffic / Licenses) [RF], Jill Hendriks (PA, Onrus Office) [JH].

The Chairperson welcomed all and informed the Board of Dr Vic Hamilton-Attwell's resignation from FAB. He is very actively involved in the Hermanus community and has decided to scale down on his involvement. The Chairperson had sent a letter of appreciation to Dr Hamilton-Attwell thanking him for his contributions while serving on FAB.

The Chairperson also welcomed Rudy Fraser (Chief: Traffic / Licenses) to the meeting who will be answering any questions regarding law enforcement. He would stand in for NM who would be joining the meeting in a while.

2. Confirmation of Minutes

The previous minutes had been circulated by e-mail to all members and had been confirmed by e-mail.

JH confirmed that the minutes were put on the official Overstrand Municipal website as well as the intranet for the public to have access. The file in the library is still in process. JH will give feedback as soon as the file has been setup.

J. Hendricks

LB informed everyone that the FAB Minutes will follow an official process through to Senior Management and Council for comments. The Advisory Board members suggested that if no comments are forwarded after the Council meetings, that it will be accepted by FAB that the Minutes were accepted and supported by Council. LB confirmed that the previous minutes distributed will be discussed at the next council meeting.

L. Bezuidenhout

3. Matters Arising from the FAB Meeting held on 8th March 2012.

3.1 The Hermanus Astronomy Centre (HAC) Proposal for the Development of an Astronomy Education Centre and Observatory (AECO) on FNR.

LB had no feedback and will follow up with Mr Stephen Muller (Director : Infrastructure and Planning) regarding any discussions that has taken place. DH stated that a lot of energy was put into the recommendations and that Council should give a formal official feedback.

L. Bezuidenhout

3.2 **Letter of Appointment**

JH confirmed that the letter of appointment for Mr Andrae Marais, Cape Nature has been received and sent to the Municipal Manager.

3.3 **Amendment of By-laws relating to the Fernkloof NR and the Advisory Board**

NG must still take this matter forward and LB will ensure that it is attended to.

Neville Green / Liezl Bezuidenhout

3.4 **Invitation to Mayor to attend FAB meeting**

DH confirmed that a letter of invitation had been sent to the Mayor's office. Acknowledgement of the letter has been given by the Mayor's secretary. The FAB meeting dates have been diarised and the secretary will inform FAB when the Mayor is able to attend.

3.5 **FNR Integrated Management Plan**

The Chairperson reported that the FNR Integrated Management Plan (IMP) has been assigned to Withers Environmental Consultants and that a workshop will be held on the 22nd of May 2012 at the Onrus River Boardroom at 14:00. All members from the FAB are welcome to attend the meeting, although David Beattie, Lee Burman and Duncan Heard had received an invitation to attend the workshop.

The first meeting will deal with the brief for the FNR IMP and the process that will be followed. The consultant will thereafter draft documents that will cover *inter alia* zoning, management policy /activities, and development zones. A draft policy for each development zone must also be formulated. FAB members will have a chance to view and comment on the draft IMP before it goes out for public participation.

LB mentioned that the information on the Astronomy Centre had been given through to the consultants as a very urgent matter. DH reported that the new National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act regulations listed the Overberg Sandstone Fynbos vegetation type as Critically Endangered, which elevates it to a priority status, particularly when it comes to development impacts.

LB explained that the Alien Vegetation Management and Fire Management policies would be included in the IMP. The FNR Buffer Zone would also need definition. The IMP will only identify the overall strategic plans and policies for FNR and that the smaller, management plans such as Alien Vegetation Management and Fire Management Plans would flow from the IMP.

3.6 **Grotto Picnic Area**

DB reported on recent site meetings that he had had with municipal officials regarding the proposed Grotto recreational area rehabilitation project. Specifically: on 16th April with Liezl Bezuidenhout, Penelope Aplon, Hanlie van der Stoep and other members of the municipality to discuss the original proposals and a sub-committee and to obtain general approval for the project. Agreed that the project would utilise the area far more effectively, that it would provide tourists and residents with a more desirable and attractive facility, that it would protect the surrounding coastal forest habitat and that it would return much of the area to its original natural state, acting as a natural filter and obviating the current practice of treating water flowing onto Grotto beach to retain Blue Flag status. Agreed that architect, Andrew Greeff would be commissioned to draw up a plan for the entire area.

A further meeting was held with Riaan Kuchar and a team from the municipality to consider a proposal that the planned development of the old restaurant site (formerly The Nautilus and previously The Goldfish Bowl) be integrated into a single, co-coordinated project including the newly extended cliff path (above Grotto) and the rehabilitated Grotto Recreational Area. Agreed that this would make sense and that budgets could be combined to create a more cohesive unit with the cliff path "flowing" through the development.

Finally a meeting at Grotto at which DB informed Area Manager, Don Kearney, of the proposed development for the area. Noted that Don Kearney has suggested that the Municipality construct a pavement on the sea side of the road leading down to the Grotto area to provide a safe pedestrian link between the cliff path above Grotto and the proposed restaurant and recreational area. Agreed that this is an excellent idea but that it would be held over from the current Municipal financial year to the 2012/13 year commencing in July 2012.

In summary, the meeting agreed with the above proposals.

3.7 **Dumping at Hoy's Koppie/Law Enforcement**

LG attended a meeting with HPP and reported that dumping at Hoy's Koppie is much less. Although the patrols by HPP officials have improved, she is still of the opinion that the number of HPP patrols are not sufficient as yet.

She also reported that the Hoys Koppie dirt bins were not being cleared on a regular basis. DH suggested that Dolf Hansen, the municipal official in charge of emptying of public dirt bins in the Hermanus area be contacted to ensure that the bins at Hoy's Koppie are emptied on a regular basis.

Penelope Aplon / Linda Griffiths.

LG also reported that there are still dog owners that bring their dogs to Hoy's Koppie without a leash and she wanted to bring it under the attention of the Enforcement section.

DH mentioned that Hoy's Koppie is an isolated island of Fernkloof Nature Reserve and is very vulnerable and therefore warrants special attention. He also stated that any Law Enforcement officers operating there will be very much in the public eye and requested that NM bears this in mind.

NM stated that it is very important to introduce a coordinated as well as an integrated approach towards Law Enforcement. He said that the word Law should not be used and requested that the word Public Safety Protection Services to be used. He stressed that everyone should combine their efforts whether it is the Police, HPP, Traffic etc. because all have a role to play.

NM also informed FAB that they are very far in the process of establishing a Municipal court as an additional court in Hermanus. He added that this court would assist in dealing with perpetrators quickly and efficiently thereby improving the enforcement cycle and making it more effective. He added however that their greatest challenge is that they do not have enough patrol officers 24 /7.

DH mentioned that conservation areas needed a special type of Enforcement officer (Field Ranger) that is trained in conservation law enforcement as well as being capable of observing and recording biodiversity and conservation data.

NM reiterated that any crime could be reported (Tel: 028-3138111) to the municipal control room 24/7. Protection Services will then direct the complaint to the relevant enforcement organisation for attention

as soon as possible. All calls are recorded. The control room operator will give the complainant a reference number as well as his/ her (operator's) name. Should the complainant not receive feedback on the incident within 24 hours, they should contact his office about the matter (028 313 8054 or 071 584 9214). Neville added that he can be contacted directly should there be any FNR Enforcement matters requiring urgent attention and that these matters need not stand over till the next meeting.

FAB approved the proposal that Enforcement would be added to the FAB Agenda as a Standing Item.
J. Hendricks

3.8 Keurboom (Virgilia) Distribution and Status

AM to follow up with Grant Forbes regarding the final report. **A. Marais**

3.9 Galpin Hut

LB informed all that she did budget for the upgrading of the hut in the new 2012/2013 financial year. LG will ask Pat Miller (Chairperson: Botanical Society) to contact LB regarding the funds required to upgrade the hut.
L. Griffiths

FAB confirmed that no fires should be made at Galpin Hut.

DH questioned whether the Galpin Hut is appropriately situated and whether it is a worthwhile business opportunity for the Hermanus Botanical Society and the Municipality within the Nature Reserve. Penelope Aplon was asked to put some ideas together on the future of Galpin Hut for the next meeting that can be incorporated into the Management Plan. There should be collaboration on this with the Botanical Society. A sound motivation was required for the continuation (or not) of the hut for FAB to consider at the next meeting.
P. Aplon

3.10 Vervet Monkeys in the area

Grant Forbes was to have followed up with Cape Nature regarding the possible expansion of the distribution of vervet monkeys to the Hermanus area based on a few sightings made. It would appear that isolated sightings of individual vervet monkeys had been made but the evidence suggests that this is not an expansion of their distribution but they were more probably escapees of illegal captive animals. It was requested that if anyone should spot a vervet monkey in the area that it should be reported to AM at CapeNature.
All

3.11 Provincial By-pass Road

AM reported that he was not aware any process surrounding the possible by-pass road. DH asked that he confirm by contacting the Provincial Road's Planning Department to find out if the Provincial By-pass road is on the provincial agenda, because it is still shown on the Overstrand SDP map as a possible future provincial road. LB said that she would also follow up with Mr Riaan Kuchar. DB said that the Councillor for Ward 3 would follow up as well. FAB should to get feedback by the next meeting.

D. Beattie / L. Bezuidenhout / A. Marais

4. Administration

4.1 Re-declaration of the Fernkloof Nature Reserve

LB stated that more feedback will be given after the planning workshop and during the IMP compilation process. Her idea is to wait for the IMP to stipulate the importance of the various areas identified for possible consolidation. She confirmed that the consultants compiling the IMP were asked that the proclaimed/managed areas of FNR and any additional areas be properly surveyed/mapped.

4.2 **New Advisory Board Members**

DH confirmed that the retirement of Dr Vic Hamilton-Attwell brought about a municipal FAB member vacancy. He asked for members to forward any nominations to him within a week. FAB agreed that a sub-committee consisting of LB, DB and the Chairperson should consider nominees and make a recommendation to the Board. This could be circulated by e-mail for their comments. DH reported that it will be good to get someone with the necessary skills and knowledge that could make a positive contribution to FAB.

Duncan Heard / David Beattie / Liezl Bezuidenhout

The Chairperson will also follow-up with Tierck Hoekstra (CapeNature) regarding the appointment of Grant Forbes as a second CapeNature appointment to FAB as allowed by the Ordinance.

Duncan Heard

4.3 **Management Reports**

LB reported that due to the Reserve Manager not being appointed as yet that she will have to compile these reports. She has received information from PA, but still needs to receive NG's information in order to compile a comprehensive report. She confirmed that she will consolidate all the information from March until June and forward to DH for distribution. The Chairperson requested that the Board be informed regarding the main projects/events that are happening in the Reserve.

Liezl Bezuidenhout

5. Standing Items

5.1 **Ecological Issues**

LB reported that NG is dealing with the drainage issue of Prof Verster (Fernkloof Village) and that a comprehensive report will be forward to DH that in turn can be distributed to FAB.

Neville Green

5.2 **Research/Event Applications**

5.2.1 *Quantum Adventures*

The application of Quantum Adventures has been approved on condition that they decrease their total of participants from 200 to 150.

5.2.2 *The Ride*

The application of the ride has not been finalised yet. PA presented the new route that has been proposed by the applicant, because the firebreak is not suitable for them to ride the horses. It was confirmed by PA that the path on the Reserve will be included in the proposed trail. LG and LB were not in favour of the proposal. FAB resolved that they would only support the original route which included use of the boundary firebreak for most of the ride though the reserve. PA would take this up with the applicant again.

Penelope Aplon

5.2.3 *Walking for Water*

PA confirmed that the Walking for Water event went very well, although DB mentioned that it was not well attended.

5.3 **Klein River Estuary Management**

LB would forward the next KREF meeting information, all information regarding the KREF constitution and other relevant documentation to Mr Heard. She also confirmed that an Estuary Management Plan has been drafted and all the different stakeholders had commented, which is available on the web site, but the final draft has not been signed off by the stakeholder departments. It has also not been circulated for public participation or comments. Once the stakeholder departments have reached agreement - the draft will go out for public participation.

Liezl Bezuidenhout

LB also reported that the National Estuary Protocol has been circulated for comments and that the submission date for comments is 4 of June 2012. This protocol will play an important role delegating the mandate down from National Government through Provincial to Local Government.

5.4 **Report from the Hermanus Botanical Society**

5.4.1 **Botanical Society**

LG reported that things are going well and that they are having a meeting on 18 May 2012. She did not receive a report from Ms Miller but would be able to give feedback at the next FAB meeting.

Linda Griffiths

5.4.2 **Memorandum of Agreement with Overstrand Municipality i.t.o. FNR**

DH confirmed that the Hermanus Botanical Society has carried FNR for years and suggested that the Hermanus Botanical Society have a more formal Memorandum of Agreement in place with the Municipality. FAB recommended that the Hermanus Botanical Society put a draft on the table, which can form the basis document on which to negotiate the final document with the Municipality.

Linda Griffiths

5.4.3 **On and Off Reserve Localities of Herbarium species**

The FAB recommended that the plant species in the Botanical Society Society herbarium should be categorised to identify which species had been collected from FNR and which had been collected from surrounding/other properties. Presently it was estimated that 1100 species had been collected on FNR with a further 540 species from other properties but this needed to be confirmed and the other properties identified. This exercise may confirm that FNR and the surrounding area has a richer species density than Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve. DH reported that it is important in order to adequately describe and market the significance of FNR in the IMP based on verified facts.

Linda Griffiths

MM would draw a list of plant species from the SANBI database

Muthama Muasya

5.4.4 **Nursery**

LG reported that the Flower Show that took place over the Easter Period was a great success and that Dr Miller and the workers reached a level of sales that they have never reached before.

LBN has organised for various members to do duty while Jack Bold (nursery manager) is on leave instead of closing the nursery.

1) *Indigenous Plants for Municipal use for Rehabilitation Purposes*

LB stated that a much rehabilitation work will be done in the Onrus River and other areas and the municipality would like to support the nursery by obtaining the relevant plants from them. It should be determined whether the nursery has the capacity to provide this service to the municipality.

Linda Griffiths

2) *Sale of Non-local indigenous invasive species*

DH brought it to the Board's attention that non-local indigenous plants that were invasive in our area were possibly being sold by the nursery e.g. Canary Creeper. It was recommended that the Environmental Section list the indigenous species that are invading into our natural veld and to inform the nursery of these. LB said that the invasive indigenous species in the Reserve and the Botanical garden do not have to be removed immediately, but must be monitored and kept under control to ensure that it does not further invade the natural areas.

Liezl Bezuidenhout

5.4.5 **Accuracy of Interpretation Boards in the Gardens**

MM had noticed certain inaccuracies. FAB requested that the Hermanus Botanical Society make a list of the signs at the Reserve and to submit it to MM to propose any changes to keep the signs updated.

Linda Griffiths

5.5 **Report from the Cliff Path Management Group**

DB reported that the work on the path had started. Cape Asphalt has been appointed to do the Cliff path in Hermanus, Vermont, Onrus and Sandbaai area. DB confirmed that they are doing the Hermanus Fick's pool linking it to the Hermanuspietersfontein Remembrance site. Before the end of financial year the section where the path ends at Grotto will be done as well. The work that still needs to be done at the Grotto area will be postponed until the next financial year.

DB questioned the Working For The Coast's contract regarding the clearing of the coastal section. PA confirmed that their contract covers clearing and maintenance of paths and that she will try to get a work program from Working For The Coast. DH was concerned about more and more people that are installing spraying systems in the natural coastal zone.

Penelope Aplon

6. General

It was decided to have the the next meeting at the Working for Water Boardroom in Onrus River.

7. Dates of Next Meetings

August 17

November 23

The meeting closed at 12.45

CHAIRPERSON

Date

SECRETARY

Date