

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FERNKLOOF NATURE RESERVE (FNR) ADVISORY BOARD (FAB) HELD AT ONRUS RIVER BOARDROOM, HERMANUS ON WEDNESDAY, 26 JUNE 2013 at 09:00

1. Welcome, Attendance and Apologies

Present: Duncan Heard (DH)[in the Chair], Antony van Hoogstraten (AvH), Muthama Muasya (MM), Lee Burman (L.Bn), Estelle Spaarwater (ES), Glynis Van Rooyen (GvR) and Andrae Marais (AM)[Cape Nature].

Apologies: David Beattie (DB), Grant Forbes (GF)[Cape Nature], Neville Michaels (NM)[Director: Protection Services], Pieter Scholtz (PS) [Councillor], Linda Griffiths (LG), Neville Green (NG) [Biodiversity Conservation Manager].

In attendance: Jill Hendriks (JH)[PA-Onrus Office], Liezl Bezuidenhout (LB)[Environmental Manager, Overstrand].

Welcome: The Chairperson welcomed everyone present and requested that everyone check their details on the attendance register and indicate amendments where required.

2. Confirmation of Minutes for the Meeting of the FAB held on 22 of February 2013.

2.1. Confirmation of Minutes and Public Availability

The previous minutes had been circulated per e-mail to all members and no comments were received thereby confirming these Minutes. JH confirmed that the minutes were put on the official Overstrand Municipal website as well as the intranet for public access. Minutes are also placed in a library file for public scrutiny.

J. Hendriks

2.2. Comments from Council on FAB Minutes dated 22 February 2013

LB confirmed that no comments were received by Council, Mr Stephen Muller also confirmed this.

N. Green

3. Matters Arising

3.1 Hermanus Astronomy Centre (Item 3.1)

LB did not receive any comments from NG regarding any new developments for the Hermanus Astronomy Centre. DH confirmed that The Hermanus Astronomy Centre had a botanical impact study done by Mr S. Privett at Rotary Way, and it was determined that the site is indeed very sensitive. DH stated that the future of the Rotary Way site would be addressed in the Management Plan which would be subject to public participation.

N. Green

3.2 Amendment of By-laws relating to FNR and FAB (Item 3.2)

DH and NG were struggling to schedule a meeting to discuss the above mentioned due to other commitments. LB informed DH that NG will be available on the 9th of July.

D. Heard / N. Green

3.3 Invitation to Mayor to attend a FAB meeting (Item 3.3)

DH confirmed that the invitation to the Mayor to attend the FAB meetings is on the Mayor's table, but the Mayor did not have the opportunity to attend the meeting as yet.

J. Hendriks

3.4 Dumping at Hoy's Koppie (Item 3.4)

DH confirmed that no complaints have been given through and it seems as if conditions have improved. He confirmed that if anything should come up it would be brought to NG's attention and be discussed at the Fernkloof Security Forum. Hoy's Koppie is a very sensitive system and attention must be given to keeping the area safe and well managed. LB also noted her concern regarding the alien vegetation and would take it up with NG so that clearing blocks can be re-scheduled.

N Green / L. Griffiths

3.5 Galpin Hut (Item 3.5)

LB confirmed that Penelope Aplon and NG would be going the following day to look at the final results of the renovations done at the hut. LB will distribute photos to all the members, upon completion. NG to follow up whether the lock of the hut has been changed and inform LBn when to proceed with the bookings at Galpin Hut. LB stated that the old toilet and the other refuse must still be removed. LB informed all that the invoice for the renovations from the service provider has been received and signed off, but will not be submitted for payment until the final inspection had been done.

N. Green / L. Griffiths

3.6 Provincial By-pass Road and Stanford Trunk Road Upgrade (Item 3.6)

Regarding the By-Pass proposal DH confirmed that regional transport study had as yet not been completed. This would indicate whether there would still an intention to proceed with the By-pass.

Regarding the Stanford Trunk Road Upgrade LB proposed that a FAB member also be part of the meetings. LBn volunteered to attend the meetings. LB to distribute the Trunk Road upgrade information to all FAB members.

L. Bezuidenhout / D. Beattie/ Lee Burman

4. Administration

4.1 FNR Integrated Management Plan (IMP)Progress

LB confirmed that all the documents has been submitted to Charl Cilliers, the consultant, who will drawing up the final draft with Urban Dynamics next week. NG to give feedback at the next meeting.

N. Green / D Heard

4.2 FNR 2012/13 Budget

LB confirmed that 98% of the 2012/13 budget was spent. LB to forward the final budget spread sheet to the FAB members. (After the financial year end). LB stated that the new budget will only be available on the 28th of June 2013. LB informed everyone that there is not a separate vote for the Fernkloof Nature Reserve, but the budget for the Reserve falls under the Environmental votes. LB to forward the new budget to all the FAB members.

L. Bezuidenhout

4.3 FNR Management Reports

LB did not receive any reports and will follow it up with NG. Feedback will be given at the next meeting.

N. Green

5. Standing Items

5.1 Enforcement

Law Enforcement officials were absent without any apology. LB to send an email regarding the absence of the Law Enforcement officials. No feedback was available. LB informed everyone that an application has been submitted to request outsource funding for 6 officials (field rangers) for Fernkloof Nature Reserve for two years. Feedback will be given in September regarding the approval for the funding applications.

DH expressed his concern regarding the poisoning of indigenous vegetation on public land. AM to find out more regarding the procedure to follow regarding the forensic testing of vegetation to confirm whether and which types of herbicide had been used.

L. Bezuidenhout /Andrae Marais

5.2 Ecological Issues

5.2.1 Baboon Electric Fencing

LB informed everyone that the requested High Court Advocate's opinion has come through and that the Municipality has a specific responsibility regarding Wildlife Management. The Municipality according to the Constitution has a responsibility to protect the community from any harmful nuisance. The opinion states that it is a joint function between Cape Nature and the Municipality. LB stated that they will continue with the Protocol and Management Strategy and negotiate a signed agreement with Cape Nature. LB confirmed that all aspects will be covered and addressed in the Protocol, which will be submitted to Council at the end of July 2013 and then to Cape Nature for signature. AvH still strongly feels that the fence is not working and that it should be removed. LB confirmed that proper monitoring will be done to determine whether the fence is working before any decision will be made to remove the fence. LB to give confirmation regarding the recommendation for the removal of refuse on a Monday in the Voelklip area.

L. Bezuidenhout

5.2.2 Event Applications

5.2.2.1 Biosphere Breakaway (Item 5.2.3.2)

Most comments received were negative because it will have a negative impact on the Fernkloof Nature reserve. NG to follow up with Penelope Aplon and to give feedback to everyone.

N. Green

5.3 Research

5.3.1 Research Applications

None.

5.4 Land and Infrastructure

5.4.1 Fernkloof Village Drainage report

No feedback was given to LB by NG. LB to follow up with NG and to give everyone feedback.

N. Green

5.4.2 Bosko Church – Lease Agreement

After a site meeting that was conducted by NG, a letter was sent to Leandra Minnaar (Property Admin) with recommendations. LB confirmed that the pine trees were to be removed over a phased period and that suitable indigenous trees should be planted to replace the cut trees. The Overstrand Municipality will carry the cost of the removal of the trees but not for the re-vegetation of the indigenous plants. LB confirmed that the lease agreement would go ahead, but only if the lessee agrees to the conditions of the lease.

N. Green

5.4.4. Scout Camp Site

AvH presented a Heritage study and a legal opinion. DH had circulated the documentation some time ago by e-mail to FAB members and by *Dropbox* to officials, but would do so again by *Dropbox* as it appeared that everyone did not receive it. This documentation had been submitted to the Hermanus Heritage Committee for comments who had supported the placement of the Scout Camp Site on the Heritage Register.

The legal opinion reasoned for and supported a Co-management Agreement in terms of NEMPAA (Section 42) to be signed between the Municipality and the Scout Camp Management body instead of an annual lease agreement which could result in this 'Living Heritage' site being taken over by an organisation that would not be in a position to maintain the 100 year traditional use of the site. The proposed was accepted by the Fernkloof Advisory Board. DH would see to it that the legal definition of 'Living Heritage' will be added to the Legal Opinion.

NG to ask WFTC to clear the entrance, the maintenance and the removal of the invasive plants at the Hermanus Scout Camp.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL – 2013(2)

FAB recommends that the Co-Management agreement in terms of NEMPAA (Section 42) to be signed between the Annual Hermanus Camp organisation and the Overstrand Municipality instead of a Lease Agreement. FAB members requested that the site be added to the Heritage Register.

N. Green

5.4.4 Replacement of Signboards

Signboard condition is a reflection on how well an area is managed. DH showed a prominent information signboard at Piet se Bos, which is starting to rust and is fading. He recommended that it be replaced after careful consideration of the kind and amount of information required on it. A FNR boundary signboard above the Golf Course on the side of the road is buckled and needs to be replaced.

N. Green

5.5 Klein River Estuary Management

LB informed everyone that the Estuary co-coordinator's contract has ended on the 14th of June 2013. She stated that the National Protocol has been sent through which makes it quite clear that a municipality is the management authority of any estuaries within the jurisdiction. LB confirmed that a discussion was held with the Overberg District Environmental Manager to approach them for a Coastal Co-ordinator. The Coastal Co-ordinator would report under the District Municipality and the post description would include estuary management and will supervise a number of Coastal Monitors. LB did put in an application through the EPIP projects for funding for Coastal Monitors

LB informed all that Dr Danie Coetzee's contract will be extended to assist with estuary management LB informed all that the student who is funded by WESSA for two years will be monitoring the water quality of the estuaries and will also work closely with Dr Danie Coetzee. LB confirmed that the municipality is still a role player and a stakeholder for BREF and KREF. LB stated that the Minister must still identify which estuaries will require a management plan.

L Bezuidenhout

5.6 Report from Hermanus Botanical Society

DH confirmed that the minutes of the Hermanus Botanical Society has been distributed to everyone.

5.6.1 MoA with Overstrand Municipality i.t.o. FNR

LB suggested that a Co-Management Agreement also be signed instead of a MoA. LB will take it up with Riaan Kuchar and will give feedback at the next meeting.

N. Green

5.6.2 On and Off FNR Localities of Herbarium Species.

MM to give feedback at next meeting. LBn confirmed that the list is updated regularly. DH stated that an accurate record of how many species have been found within FNR are there must be indicated in the Management Plan. It would also be of significant interest to find out how many species not found on FNR are found on adjacent conservation areas.

L. Burman / M. Muasya

5.6.3 Accuracy of signboard in FNR gardens.

MM confirmed that there is only one board that is of concern, due to the new information being available. MM suggested that an additional board be put up with the updated information. MM will assist with the text of the replacement board.

M. Muasya / L. Griffiths

5.6.4 Nursery

5.6.4.1 Indigenous plants for Municipal use for rehabilitation Purposes.

Lauren Rainbird to discuss the requirements with the Nursery Manager to see what he can supply. LB will speak to NG to liaise with Lauren Rainbird regarding the plants that the Municipality will require and will be taken up in the Co-Management Agreement.

5.7 Report from Cliff Path Management Group

DH confirmed that a report was circulated to everyone.

D Beattie

5.7.1 Upgrade of Grotto Picnic Area (Item 5.7.2.)

DH did pass a number of concerns to Hanneen van der Stoep on the draft Basic Assessment Report had been advertised for Public Comment. LB stated that she did comment on some of the questions and that a meeting will be called with Enviro Africa. LB will follow it up with Hanneen van der Stoep.

N. Green

6. General

6.1 Burning of Coastal Corridors

6

LB stated that she received quite a lot of emails from the public via Councillors, regarding their safety because of closed up vegetated areas. The public requested that the corridors be cut back. LB informed everyone that an area Sandbaai was thinned with 50% and there was not really a difference. The public requested that the area be thinned out to 80%. LB suggested that the areas be looked at first to determine what the most effective management options would be for their long-term management.

DH stated that manipulation of coastal bush must be thoroughly researched and examined as in his opinion coastal bush thickets probably seldom burnt naturally and where such fires did occur the conditions had probably been extreme. It was likely though that areas of coast with shallow soils and low vegetation growth probably did burn more frequently.

In his experience the belief by some members of the public that thick coastal bush was a fire risk, harboured more criminals/vagrants and a greater amount of snakes was a flawed perception. This was actually true of areas where the coastal bush had been severely thinned and the latter would significantly contribute to biodiversity, habitat and natural landscape integrity loss.

7. Date of 2013 Meetings:

23 August 2013

22 November 2013

The meeting closed at 13.15