

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
FERNKLOOF NATURE RESERVE (FNR) ADVISORY BOARD (FAB)
HELD AT ONRUS RIVER BOARDROOM, HERMANUS
ON FRIDAY, 22 NOVEMBER 2013 at 09:00**

1. Welcome, Attendance and Apologies

Present: Duncan Heard (DH) [in the Chair], Estelle Spaarwater (ES), Glynis Van Rooyen (GvR), Linda Griffiths (LG), Heloise Fortune (HF) [PA-Onrus Office], David Beattie (DB), Grant Forbes (GF) [Cape Nature], Cllr Kari Brice (KB), Andrae Marais (AM) [Cape Nature], Muthama Muasya (MM), Antony van Hoogstraten (AvH), Mayor Nicole tte Guthrie-Botha

Apologies: Liezl Bezuidenhout (LB) [Senior Manager- Overstrand Environmental], Neville Green (NG) [Biodiversity Manager – Overstrand Environmental], Lee Burman (L.Bn)

Absent without Apology: Johan Du Toit (JD) [Law Enforcement]

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 23 August 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. HF confirmed that the minutes were placed 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.

H. Fortune

2.2 Comments from Council on FAB Minutes dated 23 August 2013

NG: to provide feedback at the next meeting.

N. Green

3. Matters Arising

3.1 Amendment of By-laws relating to FNR and FAB

NG: to provide feedback at the next meeting.

N. Green

3.2 Background to the Mayor on FAB issues.

DH gave the Mayor some background of the FAB as a statutory Board with members appointed by Council and Cape Nature. He mentioned that since discussing various FAB administrative problems with the Mayor there had been considerable improvement in this regard. FAB now has a Secretary appointed by the Municipality and that Meetings are properly recorded and that the Minutes are circulated to Senior Management and Council as well as being made available to the public via the library and the municipal website. Generally, the Board has been meeting and functioning well.

Two years ago there were some criminal activity incidents in FNR but since the Fernkloof Safety Forum was initiated by the Mayor there had been no further incidents to date. The only issue which DH will take up with Neville Michaels is that the SAPS have not attended the last two meetings.

Neville Green had been appointed as the Biodiversity Manager taking FNR under his wing and we welcome that post but FAB's concern is that it is not a post dedicated to the management of the reserve only. In order to improve management effectivity of FNR it is required that the reserve has a dedicated personnel component. Our local economy is based on our natural resources, we have to effectively manage the natural resources. At the moment the hiking trails are deteriorating rapidly and the alien vegetation are coming back. There are serious erosion problems with the jeep track which Neville Green is attending to. These are some of the major issues in FNR. For the future we need to go back to a model where we have dedicated staff for FNR. We have to increase the income stream of the Nature Reserve, an aspect that must be guided by the new Management Plan. GF noted that Cape Nature employed between 100-200 staff members from National project funding and that the City of Cape Town want to use this funding to create jobs in their Environmental Management Department this could also be an opportunity to get additional staff for FNR. DH mentioned that there are many such opportunities but cautioned that the management of the reserve must not be solely reliant on these national projects. We should look to provide adequate permanent management capacity for the reserve over a period of 4-5 years.

The Mayor stated that it is important to understand the core functions of the municipality and that there must be discussion at a much higher level about the management of the reserve. The Mayor referred to what GF said about Nature conservation creating jobs, The Municipality does not have the money to do that, they can link into programs but what happens when these programmes stop. The Mayor wants everyone to be open minded because the IDP spells it out clearly that the environment is one of our biggest assets because our whole tourism industry is based on our environment so as a Mayor but as a Municipality they are actually doing a job that they shouldn't as it is an unfunded mandate which is not their core function, but because it is so important they do it. The Mayor just wants everyone to look at it from that angle as well.

DH mentioned that municipality in his experience has done amazing things for the environment and that Liezl Bezuidenhout and Neville Green are very committed to that cause but they clearly do not have adequate resources to manage FNR effectively. FAB does appreciate what they do for the Municipality and for Conservation.

DH: The other area of concern for the past 17 months is the drawing up of the FNR Management Plan. After going out on tender it was decided to pass the Management Plan on to Urban Dynamics and they have decided to bring in Environmental Consultants to do the plan, unfortunately the Consultants have not done such a Management Plan before. Right from the start of the process we have asked them to stay in touch with FAB to develop the plan so that we can discuss every paragraph of the plan in order that we are all on the same page after the plan has been put together. The consultants did not do this and after waiting 15 months for the draft plan, FAB were given a week to comment on a 186 page document. FAB refused to do so. As_ this was grossly unrealistic as FAB members all have their own private schedules as well as the fact that FAB were being treated as interested and affected parties and not as an Advisory Board. We did have a summit meeting where Riaan Kuchar, Paul Olden and Charl Cilliers were present and we spent a whole morning on the first 21 pages of the draft management plan as the content was unacceptable in many ways. Unfortunately, although the consultants were probably trying their best, the draft management plan was not a user-friendly document and it did not reflect the knowledge of the FAB members around this table. Paul Olden accepted this and agreed to do the Management Plan in the Matatiele format.

DH: Lastly about leasing of properties the Botanical Society and the Scout Camp - both of these

voluntary groups have been involved with the reserve for many years and the Botanical Society have been carrying the reserve for many years. It is therefore unacceptable that they are expected to bid for new leases of these facilities as they are not organisations that operate for commercial gain. The public private partnership process must be looked at as both organisations have been. We can't afford to lose both these organisations as they are firm partners of FNR.

The Mayor thanked FAB for the opportunity to be here today. The Mayor has been trying the whole year to attend but with her programme was impossible. The Mayor and Council thanked FAB for what they do their efforts are appreciated, as stated earlier the environment is of utmost importance. The Portfolio for environmental affairs falls under the Deputy Mayor who's also very committed to serve. It is Council's motto to serve the community. The Mayor mentioned that if there are any challenges FAB should not hesitate to contact the Deputy Mayor. The Mayor will take all the points of today forward. DH thanked the Mayor for attending.

3.3 Provincial By-Pass Road & Stanford Trunk Road Upgrade

DB: traffic study's being done; results will be received in February. NG: to give urgent feedback on the affects of the Stanford road on the reserve boundary and AM will follow up as well.

D. Beattie/ N. Green

4 Administration

4.1 FNR Integrated Management Plan (IMP) Progress

DH: noted that Charl did forward the contents page two weeks ago. DH had a meeting with LB and NG and it was agreed that FNR IMP should use the Matatiele format. A Meeting will be held in Stellenbosch with the Subcommittee to look at the plan first and if the Subcommittee's satisfied they will put it forward to the board and then if all are happy it will be put forward to public participation.

N. Green

4.1.1 Hermanus Astronomy Centre

DH: noted that this process will have to wait for the FNR IMP.

4.2 FNR 2012/13 Budget

NG: to provide feedback at the next meeting.

N. Green

4.3 FNR Management Reports

NG: to provide feedback at the next meeting.

DH noted that FAB finds it difficult to provide input on what's going on in the reserve, if they are not being provided with management reports.

N. Green

5 Standing Items

5.1 Enforcement

AM: noted that he did phone Noluthandwa from Dept of Forestry regarding the poisoning of the milk woods. He will forward email to NG and LB.

LG will attend the Fernkloof Safety Forums meeting on behalf of BOTSOC.

Andrae Marais / Johan du Toit

5.1.1 Hoy's Koppie

LG: Law enforcement not attending to Hoy's Koppie, dumping not that bad at the moment. LG mentioned that she did find the person who has been dumping on Hoy's Koppie and has reported it to Neville Michaels.

5.2 Ecological Issues

5.2.1 Baboon Electric Fencing

AVH: wanted to know since the fence was damaged by the floods, what will the process be regarding the fence.

DH requested that LB and NG to inform FAB on the status of the fence via email.

N. Green

5.2.2 Burning of Coastal Corridors

NG: to provide feedback at the next meeting.

N. Green

5.2.3 Event Applications

NG: to provide feedback at the next meeting.

N. Green

5.3 Research

5.3.1 Research Applications

NG: to provide feedback at the next meeting.

LG: Lee Burman recently took students around in Fernkloof.

N. Green

5.4 Land and Infrastructure

5.4.1 Hamilton Russel Property

DH: brought to FAB's attention an ecological matter that may be beneficial to the reserve. The upper natural part of the Ashbourne Farm, one of the Hamilton Russell Vineyards' properties that lies adjacent to FNR are negotiating a Biodiversity Agreement with CapeNature which will entrench it as a Conservation Area in perpetuity. DH is writing the management plan for Hamilton Russell Vineyards and mentioned that it will probably form a fantastic buffer area for Fernkloof.

D. Heard

5.4.2 Fernkloof Village Drainage Report

NG: to provide feedback at the next meeting. DH: attention needs to be given to the valve; Lee Burman had to close the valve which someone has left opened.

N. Green

5.4.2. Scout Camp Lease

AVH: Campsite was completely vandalised. Camp sewerage pipe has been exposed need some maintenance, AVH will contact NG directly. The Scout Camp lease with the Municipality had been extended.

N. Green

5.4.3 Replacement of Signboards

NG: to provide feedback at the next meeting.

DB: will send an email to NG regarding signage template will cc DH.

N. Green

5.5 Klein River Estuary Management

DH: wrote to environmental consultant that FAB needs more info regarding the Grotto parking.

AVH: at the last KREF meeting the Chairperson announced that he will resign and he wanted to know if LB can advise when the next KREF annual meeting will be.

AVH: mentioned that Liezl did not inform FAB about the Caravan Park public participation process.

DH: LB to please provide update on Caravan Park if there's any concerns that could affect FNR.

5.6 Report from Hermanus Botanical Society

LG: Botsoc thanked the Municipality for funds allocated to them.

LG: **Attention to be given by OSM to the follow points;**

- requests OSM to please provide adjustments to the electrical connections for the future
- lights are needed at the car park
- Firm path with bollard lighting (solar panels)
- building renovations of the seed shed
- Old exposed blocks laid in the garden driveway years ago are now posing a danger to vehicles
- completion and repair of water pipes and connection problems which the storm has damaged between 15-17 November.

L. Griffiths

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

NG: to provide feedback at the next meeting.

N. Green

5.6.2 Accuracy of Signboard in FNR Gardens.

MM: will forward signage info to LG.

LG stated that Geraldine Gardiner phoned her to request from OSM to put up new signage that directs tourists getting out of busses to different areas in Fernkloof. LG informed her that it will have stand over until next year.

M. Muasya / L. Griffiths

5.6.3 Nursery

5.6.3.1 Indigenous plants for Municipal use for Rehabilitation Purposes.

NG: to provide feedback at the next meeting.

N. Green

5.7 Report from Cliff Path Management Group

DB: 4 new signs have been put up in the village area. They have been continuing planting new trees in the Piet se bos area. Trimming of vegetation on Hoy's Koppie on the cliff path has been done this week. DB showed everyone a sample of the new brochures that are to be printed. Brochures will be displayed in Hotel/B&B's and tourism bureau of Hermanus, Gansbaai and Kleinmond.

D Beattie

5.7.1 Upgrade of Piet se Bos Area-Progress

DH: forwarded the Draft basic assessment report which was sent to Province to everyone. Waiting on what province decides how they will take it forward.

N. Green

6. General

7. Date of Next Meeting:

21st February 2014

The meeting closed at 12:00