

**MINUTES OF A MS TEAMS VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE
FERNKLOOF NATURE RESERVE (FNR) ADVISORY BOARD (FAB)**

ON MONDAY, 5 FEBRUARY 2021 at 09:00

Sive Mzananda
Secretary

Duncan Heard
Chairperson

**Please refer to the last page for acronyms used in the Minutes*

1. Welcome, Attendance and Apologies

The chairperson welcomed everyone who attended and wished Liezl speed recovery.

Present:

Duncan Heard (DH) [FAB Chairperson]
Tarron Dry (TD) [Biodiversity Conservation Manager: OM]
Liezl de Villiers (LdV) [Environmental Manager : OM]
Siviwe Nondobo (SN) [Reserve Manager: OM]
Kari Brice (KB) [Ward 13 Councillor: OM]
Heloise Fortune (HF) [Environmental Audit Officer: OM]
Sive Mzananda (SM) [FAB Secretary: EMS]
Glynis van Rooyen (GvR)
Anthony van Hoogstraten (AvH)
Willemien Burger (WB) [Botsoc Exco – Observer]
Johan Montgomery (JM)
Sean Privett (SP)
Pat Miller (PM)
Johan Burger (JB)

Apologies:

Nicolette Lloyd (NL)
Muthama Muasya (MM)
Bongani Sithole (BS) [Cape Nature]

No Apologies

Grant Gillion (GG) [Law Enforcement: OM]

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

2.1 Acceptance of Minutes from the previous FAB meeting on 3 August 2020.

These Minutes had been circulated and had been placed on the Overstrand website. As there had been no amendments proposed, the Minutes were accepted

2.2 Matters arising from previous meeting

DH stated that some dissatisfaction had been expressed by AvH in a letter to the Mayor regarding the last meeting and some of the aspects covered. The Mayor had responded in writing to AVH.

2.2.1 FAB Member resignations

Linda Griffiths and Lee Burman had resigned during last year. It had been decided to award certificates to them as token of appreciation for their contribution and excellent work done while serving on FAB. They were however reluctant because of Covid to attend a Council Meeting to accept the certificates.

TD was requested to organise a short handover ceremony at FNR.

[Action: TD]

DH had written a letter to Lee to express the FAB's appreciation for her service and all members of the FAB were copied with the letter. A similar letter had gone to Linda Griffiths earlier.

2.2.2 Proposed Hermanus Bypass Road

DH mentioned that the FAB opposition comments on the proposed Bypass Road had been sent to SRK, forwarded to the newspapers and had also been placed on the municipality's website.

2.2.3 Co-Management Agreements/Leases incl. Hermanus Botanical Society and CPMG

DH mentioned that there was a proposal from PT that Co-management agreements be no longer than a year.

LdV gave feedback on Co-management Agreements for collaboration between BotSoc and OM Environmental Management Services (EMS), Tarron and Di Marais (Botsoc Chairperson) have set a meeting to discuss the specific work to be finalised.

LvD also pointed out that a Memorandum of Cooperation was also being considered.

This has been sent to the Mayor for information. Lvd is still going through it and will report back with comments as soon as possible to the Mayor and FAB.

[Action: LvD]

2.2.4 Concept Development Plan for “Master Plan” for Fernkloof Gardens and Entrance Complex.

DH asked if the agreement on the use of the buildings at the entrance and future buildings that we put up in the transformed area, is there any discussion between Hermanus BotSoc and the municipality?

TD commented that there was a meeting held last year between Hermanus BotSoc and the municipality. The planning is still with the Mayoral Committee to find closure on this specific topic. Unfortunately, nothing can be done until the Mayor’s office give us a response. Progress will be reported at the next meeting.

[Action: TD]

2.2.5 Oliphant path – Way Forward

DH mentioned that TD was tasked by the FAB to draft a short document on this matter.

TD commented that he had not yet drafted the document, however he had discussed the matter with SN.

SN reported back to the FAB that the old Oliphant path has since been closed off to the public for rehabilitation purposes and the diversion or the new oliphant path is been used which is also heavily hammered after the December holidays. The new path will have to be rehabilitated and reconstructed again.

JB commented that maybe those sections with problems, if the Fernkloof team can take photographs for the FAB board and present them in the next meeting or just the images of the damages.

TD mentioned that with the second lockdown and with the beaches closed, FNR had experienced a high volume of visitors who were hiking.

LdV mentioned that she fully agrees with JB that the Fernkloof team needs to present to the board about the progress of the path. LdV went further to suggest that SN must draw up schedule of all the paths, he should report to the FAB even if it is on a quarterly basis on progress.

DH strongly supported LdV as it would boost management effectiveness. With such information available to it, the FAB would also attempt, through their recommendations, to

create enabling environment for the EMS management officials to more effectively manage FNR.

[Action: TD and SN]

2.2.6 FAB By-laws and composition of the Board.

DH stated that this point has been on the FAB's agenda for a long time. DH has written to the mayor and pointed out the discrepancies again between what the Ordinance states about FAB membership and that which the old OM bylaw of 1979 states.

3. Additional Appointments to FAB

Johan Burger (JB) has been newly appointed from Province by CapeNature as a member of FAB. He joins Bongani Sithole who is already a FAB member appointed by Cape Nature.

Heloise Fortune, the previous FAB Secretary, has been appointed in a new position as Environmental Audit Officer for the Environmental Management Section (EMS). DH congratulated her on her new position and thanked her for her excellent work as part of the FAB team.

Sive Mzananda will continue as FAB Secretary in the interim.

4. Appointment of FAB Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson

TD was requested to oversee the election of the Chairperson.

Duncan Heard was nominated by Muthama Muasya (written proxy) as Chairperson of FAB. No other nominations received. The nomination was supported by all FAB members. Duncan Heard accepted the position.

DH nominated Johan Burger as Vice Chairperson of FAB. Nomination supported by all FAB members. Johan Burger accepted the position.

5. New FAB Member nominations considered by OM

Nominations were submitted to the Mayor for the filling of the two vacant OM appointed members.

AvH nominated Mike Murray.

DH nominated Johan Montgomery (JM) and Sean Privett (SP).

The Mayor has appointed Johan Montgomery and Sean Privett. Duncan Heard welcomed them to the FAB.

DH also nominated Dianne Marais (Chairperson of BotSoc). She had informed him that she resigned, and that Mary Ann Verster had been appointed as the new Chairperson. Mary Ann Verster in turn nominated Willemien Burger as a BotSoc Exco representative on the FAB. Currently there are however officially no more FAB vacancies. The Mayor is still considering the proposal, but Willemien Burger (WB) will in the interim attend as an observer. DH welcomed WB and indicated that although she had no voting rights, her comments on discussions would be welcomed.

6. FAB Long Service Awards

Linda Griffiths and Lee Burman had resigned during last year. It had been decided to award certificates to them as token of appreciation for their contribution and excellent work done while serving on FAB. They were however reluctant because of Covid to attend a Council Meeting to accept the certificates.

TD was requested to organise a short handover ceremony at FNR.

[Action: TD]

DH had written a letter to Lee to express the FAB's appreciation for her service and all members of the FAB were copied with the letter. A similar letter had gone to Linda Griffiths earlier.

7. PAMP Feedback and Status Quo

DH commented that he had been provided with feedback on the FNR Draft Protected Area Management Plan (PAMP) by Stephen Muller (OM Director: Infrastructure and Planning), who had provided a schedule of responses to comments received from stakeholders and the OM Infrastructure and Planning Portfolio Committee. This schedule had also been circulated to FAB members. DH was satisfied with Stephen Muller's responses.

PM noted that she still objected to the current zoning and in particular that there had been no areas zoned as 'Wilderness areas. AvH entirely supported PM's objection. JB commented that one needs to refer to the NEMPAA legislation which defines the word 'Wilderness'. In terms of this definition, no area within FNR would qualify for a Wilderness Zoning.

During further heated discussion on the draft PAMP, AvH stated that he wanted to put on record that DH had interrupted him whilst raising a point. DH responded that he could not allow statements that had clearly been proven to be lacking truth and that AvH was welcome to take his complaint to the Mayor.

The draft PAMP will go to Council in February 2021 for approval before it goes to CapeNature and the MEC for approval.

AvH and PM objected to the draft PAMP being approved by Council before going back to I&APs such as Whale Coast Conservation for further comment.

DH commented that in his opinion that there is no need to be concerned over the present zoning. CapeNature as the official oversight body would in any event review the draft PAMP carefully before recommending it for approval to the MEC. They would also object to any portion of the PAMP that they thought would be unacceptable. DH therefore supported that the draft PAMP should now move further along its legislated approval process.

DH asked if there were any other objections from the rest of FAB. No other objections were recorded and therefore with a clear majority vote, FAB could recommend to Council that the draft PAMP be approved by Council.

TD will report on progress in this regard at the next FAB Meeting.

[Action: TD]

8. Dogs in FNR

DH mentioned that there is an unacceptable presence of dogs in the reserve and it has been a constant problem and threat to wildlife also to visitors.

FAB supported a recommendation that a final media campaign should be run with regards to the dogs in FNR. FAB should make a statement for the media campaign. FNR signage should also be reviewed in this regard.

TD commented that they will give the media campaign and enforcement one last chance and if it doesn't work, they will have to start looking at banning dogs completely from FNR.

The EMS was requested to come up with a 10-point implementation strategy that also aligns with PAMP guidelines.

[Action: TD]

9. Baboon Liaison Group (BLG)

DH mentioned that KB is the chairperson of the BLG.

DH stated that there has been an ongoing problem for many years with baboons in urban areas, raiding houses and causing destruction which does not only affect humans but also the ecology of FNR. There had been a standoff between the Province and the municipality regarding responsibility for these baboons.

A Compact Agreement was signed between the Overstrand Municipality, CapeNature and the WC Department of Environmental Affairs & Development Planning to give a framework for cooperation and collaboration between the parties. The aim was also to reach consensus on the allocation of resources and tasks integral to the effective management and control of many of the baboons causing damage or nuisance in the Overstrand Municipal Area. An **Overstrand Strategic Baboon Management Plan** was put in place. The purpose of this document is the sustainable management of local baboon populations by keeping them out of urban areas.

A **Baboon Liaison Group (BLG)** was established to provide a communication and liaison platform between public stakeholders and the relevant authorities. The BLG also consists of two groups, the Overstrand Eastern and Western groups. The company that was appointed to manage the Baboons to keep them out of town is **Human Wild Solutions (HWS)**. It has been 3-4 months that HWS has been managing the Baboons in the Overstrand Area, they use many methods and have employed monitors. They have been achieving notable successes in reducing urban incursions during this time.

10. Cycling track proposal and BMX

AvH and PM are against the whole notion of a new cycling track in FNR. It was emphasised that cyclists are illegally cycling in the FNR and it needs to be evaluated, as this activity, if left

uncontrolled, can negatively impact the ecological integrity of FNR. TD was requested to set up a FAB meeting/site walk within the next two weeks at the proposed area next to the sports complex which lies adjacent to the FNR boundary.

11. Events

TD mentioned that due to Covid-19 there were very few events and not much to report on. TD also mentioned that there was an issue of the parking lot north of Hoy's Kopie. SN commented that there was a meeting held last year between municipality and Hermanus High School which proposed that the area be used for parking as this was a problem during periods when there are many events taking place. FAB noted this proposal and the fact that the area had been totally transformed historically. JM supported the idea. It was further suggested that locally indigenous plants be planted at such an envisaged parking area.

12. Coastal Sections

Nothing to report.

13. Controlled Burns and Firebreaks

TD commented that he has been requested by residents to cut firebreaks in front of their houses and he is very hesitant to do this.

Recommendation from FAB:

DH commented that firebreaks along the border of residential areas is very contentious. There is a thin line of green along the coast that is protected with coastal vegetation that has they own priority. As soon as the breaks are made people will use the area as paths and the criminal element will also have free reign. If you cut along certain residences everyone else will demand the same treatment. So, whatever gets done in one area of the reserve will eventually happen throughout and will have a huge impact on the reserve and coastal vegetation which according to him is locally endangered.

JM questioned what the purpose of this firebreak would be? Is it to protect property or the greenbelt? He agrees with DH that a greenbelt is too narrow to accommodate a firebreak. He thinks it should be kept as is and to maybe just control the height of certain bushes/vegetation. Property owners must also know that they live next to a nature reserve and to maybe suggest to them that they can install a sprinkler system on their boundary and in the event of a fire they can switch it on to protect their own property.

For the mentioned reasons a firebreak cannot be supported in these areas.

TD noted that he is happy with the comments made.

DH commented that TD must use this recommendation and provide a proposal.

[Action: TD]

14. METT and Annual PAMP Project Determinations

DH mentioned that there must be discussion around priorities of the FNR PAMP projects, to inform future short, medium- and long-term budgets.

15. 2021 FAB Meetings

Meetings will be held on Fridays at 09:00

12 March

14 May

23 July

17 September

16. Closure

The Chairperson thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 13:05.

Acronyms:

AVM – Alien Vegetation Management

BLG – Baboon Liaison Group

BAR – Basic Assessment Report in terms of the national Environmental Management Act Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (2014 – as amended)

BOTSOC – Hermanus Botanical Society

CPMG – Cliff Path Management Group

DEA&DP – Department of Environmental Affairs & Development Planning

EA – Environmental Authorisation

EIA – Environmental Impact Assessment

ECO – Environmental Control Officer

EMS – OSM Environmental Management Section

EPWP – Expanded Public Works Programme

FAB – Fernkloof Advisory Board

FNR – Fernkloof Nature Reserve

HOF – Hands off Fernkloof

IMP – Integrated Management Plan

IAV – Invasive Alien Vegetation

MFMA – Municipal Financial Management Act

MTB – Mountain Biking

NEMA – National Environmental Management Act

NEMPAA – National Environmental Management Protected Areas Act

OSM – Overstrand Municipality
PAMP – Protected Area Management Plan
PPP – Public Participation Process
SCM – OSM Supply Chain Management
SOP – Standard Operating Procedure
WCC – Whale Coast Conservation