

OVERSTRAND MUNICIPALITY

Municipal Offices
Hermanus

MINUTES OF A ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE FERNKLOOF NATURE RESERVE (FNR) ADVISORY BOARD (FAB)

ON MONDAY, 3 AUGUST 2020 at 09:00

Heloise Fortune
Secretary

Duncan Heard
Chairperson

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

1 and 2: Attendance, Apologies, Welcome and Confirmation of the Agenda

Present:

Duncan Heard (DH) [Chairperson]
Tarron Dry (TD) [Biodiversity Conservation Manager: Overstrand Municipality]
Liezl de Villiers (LdV) [Environmental Manager : Overstrand Municipality]
Siviwe Nondobo (SN) [Reserve Manager : Overstrand Municipality]
Kari Brice (KB) [Councillor: Overstrand Municipality]
Bongani Sithole (BS) [CapeNature]
Rhett Smart (RS) [CapeNature]
Glynis van Rooyen (GvR)
Nicolette Lloyd (NL)
Muthama Muasya (MM)
Anthony van Hoogstraten (AvH)

There were no apologies noted. BS was noted trying to connect at the beginning of the meeting, but did not stay connected

LdV confirmed that it was a municipal requirement to have the meeting via zoom.

DH opened the meeting and welcomed everybody to the first FAB meeting of 2020 mainly as a result of the Covid-10 lockdown and the associated Disaster Management regulations. He explained that the Overstrand Municipal Environmental Management Services (EMS) had almost come to an operational standstill although the EMS were still able to operate on the FNR. The reserve was also closed to the public for quite some time and meetings had been reduced to those that were most essential. There had also been great difficulties in communicating with the various sections of the municipality over this time.

DH noted that there were a few matters that he needed to rectify and clarify:

- AvH had stated in an email recently that the Overstrand Municipality (OSM), when they appointed MM, should have thought about the distance he had to travel. DH would just like to remind the FAB that when the past FAB member, Ann Bean (who also lived in Cape Town) retired, MM was her recommendation. The EMS and FAB (including AvH) had considered the recommendation and had unanimously agreed that MM should be appointed whereupon the OSM appointed him as a FAB

member. DH further noted that since MM's appointment, the University of Cape Town had been through a difficult time, which had affected MM's FAB attendance at times. DH was aware that MM was keen to attend the FAB meetings in order to make contributions regarding FNR botanical aspects when he was able to. MM was also a link with the academic fraternity at UCT regarding fynbos and its conservation management.

- The other matter of concern that AvH had highlighted was that the FAB is supposed to have four meetings per year, and his concern that this was now the first meeting and that it was August already. DH stated that it was still the intention to have four FAB meetings this year. The next two meetings will mainly deal with strategic matters, namely:
 - A management effectiveness tracking tool (METT) exercise. Undertaking this exercise will indicate where we stand on an international standard in terms of how effective FNR is being managed; and
 - To deliberate on the most important strategic projects identified in the FNR Protected Area management Plan (PAMP) and to recommend a short list of these projects that could inform a short- and medium-term FNR budget. If this can be achieved, for the first time in history, FNR would have budget planning informed by a formally approved management plan.
- AvH had also requested that some of the points on the agenda be moved around. DH informed the meeting that he had arranged the points strategically as the ZOOM meeting time was limited to two hours. For that reason, the order of the Agenda as distributed would remain unaltered.

3. Introductions of New Attendees:

- **Mr Siviwe Nondobo, Principle Conservation Practitioner (Reserve Manager): FNR and Kleinmond**

DH noted that he was very happy to welcome Siviwe Nondobo, the newly appointed FNR manager. SN had previously worked for the South African National Parks, and his most recent appointment had been with the Harold Porter National Botanical Gardens in Betty's Bay where he was involved on the nature reserve side. DH had already had discussions with SN at a site meeting at FNR. He had been impressed that SN was already talking about the management reports and how he will structure them and present them to the FAB. SN also stated that he wishes to leave a legacy that would benefit FNR. LdV asked the members of the FAB and the BotSoc to take his hand and to guide him with their expertise so that we can get where we want to be together.

- **Mr Rhett Smart: CapeNature**

DH introduced Rhett Smart from CapeNature. RS had been specifically invited to provide any comment that he may have regarding the FNR Draft PAMP. RS had previously commented on the PAMP from a CapeNature perspective. CapeNature was the oversight authority and if they found the PAMP to be satisfactory, they would recommend it to the Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs after which the PAMP would be authorised by the Western Cape Minister for the Environment. RS has another meeting at 11:00 so he was free to leave the meeting after the PAMP discussion had been completed.

4. FAB Member Appointment and Resignations

DH welcomed **Pat Miller** to the FAB and added that she could contribute positively to the FAB deliberations based on her extensive experience of FNR and the BOTSOC as well as the other institutions that she is involved with on a conservation level.

Linda Griffiths had resigned at the beginning of the year and **Lee Burman** had resigned about two weeks ago. Linda Griffiths has been involved with the FAB for almost 15 years and Lee Burman has been involved with the board as an official and FAB member since 1970. DH was of the opinion that there should be a formal token of appreciation towards them for services rendered from OSM and he has asked LdV to determine if it would be possible.

LdV indicated that she will follow up on this and get back to FAB . (LdV)

DH noted that he had also written to Lee to express the FAB's appreciation for her service. He will copy that to the board members. (DH)

5. Chairperson's Function and Discretion

This point also speaks to an Agenda item that AvH had wanted regarding the Chairperson's right to sign off on matters not brought to the board. DH believed that this point was mainly based on his sign off on the Draft PAMP that went to the municipality on behalf of the FAB.

DH was happy to provide the context as he had thus far not had not been requested to do so. He was aware that some people had criticised him and he had received some nasty letters in this regard. Slanderous things had been said about him and about EMS staff. He finds this unfortunate and unfair. Some persons outside the FAB had expressed themselves in the media or had personally written to him. It was quite clear that these persons had been misinformed about the whole situation which is a great disappointment to him.

Before moving on, DH stated that he believed that all the FAB members and EMS officials are passionate conservationists and are keen to ensure that FNR is managed well and that all want to see the best outcome for the reserve. He however accentuated that we all have to act and operate cognizant of the applicable national, provincial, as well as municipal legal and policy frameworks that are applicable to FNR.

DH also highlighted the fact that the EMS staff work within a bureaucratic framework where senior officials and elected members are not professional conservation managers. It makes it difficult for environmental staff therefore to express themselves as they would like and to do what they think is right in terms of conservation management best practice. DH stated that he had been truly fortunate in his conservation career as he had worked in provincial and national bodies only where the whole department or institution were professional conservation managers - but it is not so easy for municipal environmental officials.

DH stated that the OSM is the legal management authority for the management and development of the FNR. They are responsible and accountable for managing the FNR effectively in terms of the applicable environmental legislation. The oversight bodies are Cape Nature, Provincial Administration and National Dept. of Environmental Affairs. The Protected Areas Act also states that if the management authority does not carry out its function effectively, that their mandate for managing a particular protected area can be removed from them. As FAB we are here to make recommendations in terms of the conservation and development of the FNR. We are not here to micro-manage the FNR and control the staff of the municipality. DH said that it is his sense there have been noises made in the past

requiring that almost every single move of the EMS staff must be brought to the FAB first - this is not the point or function of the Board. FAB is not the EMS staff's managers. That must be clear.

More to the point and regarding the chairperson's function and discretion: DH is of the opinion that one of the FAB chairperson's main functions is to ensure that matters for the FAB Agenda are well scrutinised. It is important that all the necessary facts are presented to FAB so that they can positively deliberate and make well informed recommendations; without wasting time on a matter where FAB does not have the full facts at its disposal. It is also important to know the initial EMS's and /or Municipality's opinion on the matter.

FAB (inclusive of the chairperson) have been through a long process with the PAMP. Prior to 2014, the Municipality assigned the compilation of the FNR management to a town planning company. This company then re-assigned it to an environmental consultancy. A junior environmental consultant, with no practical protected area management planning experience, was given the task.

FAB, at a single consultative meeting with the consultant, provided information, guidelines and a reference management plan document that was compiled for the Matatiele Municipality. That specific plan had been approved by the municipality, the Eastern Cape Conservation Board, the World Bank and GEF through the Maloti Drakensberg Transfrontier and Development Project as well as the national DEA.

When the FNR draft plan was delivered, supposedly ready for a public participation process, the FAB Chairperson alerted the Board that its quality fell far short of the expected standard. A special FAB meeting was held. The FAB and EMS members identified many shortcomings. When this was revealed to the contracted Town Planning company, the responsible company Director instructed the sub-contracted Environmental Consultancy to redo the plan. FAB then still assisted through a number of special meetings to ensure that the information in the plan was correct and re-written in line with FAB and EMS recommendations. The resultant draft plan then went out for public comment in 2014. This plan was well received and almost no substantive negative comments were received. It was then expected that the OSM Council would support the plan and forward it to CapeNature for recommendation to the WC Provincial Minister for the Environment for approval.

The 2014 draft plan was however held back, never went to Council and a number of substantive changes were made to it by the municipality without consulting FAB. In particular, the changes to its Management Zoning, was unacceptable to FAB and its Chairperson. This version of the plan was again advertised for comment in 2017. The public of Hermanus also clearly voiced their dissatisfaction with it and the HOF campaign was started. With the HOF and FAB's intervention, the municipality agreed that the plan could be revised. The only problem was that redoing a plan required much work and consultation again.

LdV was instructed to undertake the review. Her position as EMS Manager however required full-time application. It was therefore through no fault of her own that it took many months for the 2017 plan to be reviewed and advertised for public comment again. DH was surprised and proud of her for tackling the work without any previous knowledge in that sphere and being willing to dedicate many nights and additional hours to get the plan completed - while many members of the public were agitated that it took so long.

The latest reviewed version of the draft PAMP was advertised for comment in 2019. There was much distrust in the new plan, with people basing their comments on the previous 2017 plan. The FAB was afforded two full days (special meetings) to review the 2019 at the municipal Preekstoel office. Board members went the whole plan virtually page by page. Every point was deliberated and discussed FAB and responses were captured by Tamzyn Zweig and LdV. At the following FAB meeting, part of the meeting was also dedicated to discussion of the plan and once again all discussions, recommendations and responses were captured. FAB also went through the comments received from the public. FAB had sufficient time and input on this document.

LdV attempted to finish the document by March 2020 while she was battling an illness and working from home, but she persevered and completed it. The 1st 2020 FAB meeting was delayed so that the completed draft PAMP could be discussed briefly, but then the Covid-19 regulations came into force and municipal meetings had to be postponed.

LdV contacted DH on 7 May to inform him that the plan was scheduled to go before a Council Meeting (which had now been reinstated) on 27 May 2020 and that Council requested that he sign off on the PAMP on behalf of the FAB. DH asked LdV if all the comments and responses were written up and if the recommendations from FAB have been incorporated in the management plan. She confirmed that it had, and he asked her to please forward him the latest version of the PAMP to him. Against the background of the significant opportunities that FAB had had to review the PAMP, DH did not want to delay the PAMP process any longer. He used his informed discretion and his signature was provided to Council on 15 May 2020 as documentation for the meeting was in preparation.

DH's intention was then to inform FAB, as there was still more than a week available, of the availability of the updated PAMP. However, Covid-19 regulations were still in place and staff were working from home. LdV did send the plan to him electronically on two or three occasions but he never received it due to poor internet connections at Fernkloof. LdV then attempted to have one of her officials deliver the plan to DH on a memory stick. By the time DH received the document, the Council meeting was less than two days away. He sent out a letter to FAB which happened to be a day before the Council meeting so that the members could download it from the Overstrand website. He gave his reasons that he felt the plan was sound, that it met all the legal frameworks and that it had aligned with all the discussions that FAB had had on the PAMP. Furthermore, he was well aware that should Council support the plan, it would go to Cape Nature. Cape Nature would then scrutinize it and if there is anything in the plan that they cannot agree with based on the legal framework, policy as well as the norms and standards for the effective conservation management of a protected area, that they would send it right back to the municipality for amendments.

There was no colluding with anybody as some persons have suggested. It was an honest and straightforward discretion decision that he used to get the plan moving on its course to approval. That is the way he operates and that is the way he has operated since 2010. If the FAB does not like that and would require that the Chairperson's wings be cut, they must please indicate this and vote a new Chairperson in. No proposal to this effect followed.

DH stated that he had contributed substantially towards the PAMP processes run since 2013 and had given up much of his business time in the process since. He knew that FAB members wanted the best

for FNR. He was however disappointed at the misinformation that has of late been distributed to persons and organisations outside of the Board. Some of this misinformation could be considered slanderous. Based on this, he is aware that his own integrity had been called into question by some persons outside of FAB. It is also disappointing these same persons have not approached him for his side of the story, except for the Hermanus Times. The Mayor too has not approach him for his input as yet. DH was however invited to attend a municipal meeting on Wednesday (5th August) to discuss the PAMP with stakeholders. He was however unable to attend as he had a prior meeting arranged with a client in the Elim area on that day. He stated that would like to go forward in a positive manner with the FAB to assist the municipality in making the FNR one of the best managed nature reserves in the province, especially as it is a protected area of global importance. DH asked if there were any comments.

LdV thanked the chairperson for putting the record straight and also thanked him for his guidance and support through the entire process. She truly feels that she would not have been able to see this through without his guidance. Although she has no decision-making rights with regards to FAB, she would definitely not support his resignation. He has meant a great deal to FAB and to the EMS team.

6. Draft FNR PAMP Progress and *Status Quo*

LdV reported that the *status quo* is still as it was when the document was submitted to Council in May. The meeting that DH referred to will be held on 5 August and was scheduled by the Deputy Mayor and she requested to speak to the stakeholders and I&A parties that had comments on the PAMP. The request was 1 representative per organisation because of the Covid-19 regulations. The Deputy Mayor had to put in a special request to get permission from the Mayor to have a face to face meeting. LdV cannot foresee what is going to happen at the meeting, she is not sure if she will be at the meeting as her attendance was not requested yet.

RS from CapeNature, commented that the Municipality has complied with the minimum requirements with regards to public participation in terms of NEMPAA. One potential concern is that with regard to the next point on the agenda, it does not reflect in the PAMP.

DH feels putting the bypass road in the PAMP when it is not *fait accompli* is encouraging further discontent around the plan. PM shared RS's thoughts that the bypass should be mentioned in the PAMP before waiting to see whether it is approved. It is important to put it in the plan as something that FAB is against and stating the reasons to ensure that FAB has a paper trail on the bypass.

DH noted that since there is a delay with Council recommending the plan, a spot could be found in the PAMP to record FAB's recommendation on the proposed bypass road.

RS commented that after the Council recommends the PAMP to CapeNature, their timeframe will be about two months before passing the PAMP on with a recommendation to the Provincial Minister for the Environment for approval. RS confirmed that if CapeNature finds anything unacceptable in the plan it will be referred back to the Municipality.

7. Proposed Hermanus Bypass Road

DH reported that SRK Consulting had sent out a new final document on the proposed Hermanus bypass road. FAB gave out a statement in the previous round that they are against the bypass road. It was agreed that the FAB was still strongly against it as the bypass will:

- impact significant portion of the reserve's rare ecotone area – between mountain and lowland fynbos;
- impact the rare species reliant on that ecotone area.
- impact the reserve buffer area for about 3km along the reserve boundary – altering it, in terms of its impact on the reserve, from relatively low impact land use areas (low density residential, community cemetery, schooling, religious centres as well as recreation centres (sport and craft) to a relatively high impact buffer area (wide transport route carrying continuous medium to high volumes of traffic).
- have a high visual disturbance landscape impacts on the envisaged routes (e.g. road cuttings scars on the mountain, visual traffic disturbance during the day as well as urban streetlights and moving vehicle lights at night)
- impact more of the reserve than just the footprint of the road. The southern face of the mountain adjacent to the bypass will be vulnerable and subjected to increased impacts caused by higher and sustained traffic volumes on the reserve boundary coupled with prevailing south east winds, for example:
 - higher fire risk and frequency of unnatural fires (from *inter alia* cigarette butts thrown out of cars) will be prevalent and when these occur, they will rapidly sweep up the mountain and be difficult to bring under control. This will directly result in a decrease in the reserve's biodiversity in this area over time;
 - litter thrown from vehicles will inevitably be blown into the reserve and have to be cleared up by an under-resourced reserve staff component;
 - air pollution and noise given off from the vehicles will increase significantly and will constantly affect the southern mountain slope of the reserve. The direct impact of this cannot be estimated at present, but it is highly likely to have a negative affect on the biodiversity of this area over time; and
 - litter and food thrown from vehicles will attract troublesome baboons to this area.
- have a very high negative impact on tourists and the Hermanus community using this portion of the reserve, for example:
 - the present easy access to the reserve's hiking trails from Mountain Drive will be lost;
 - hikers' experience will be negatively impacted by the close-by visible traffic, its noise and air pollution;
 - the community area below the reserve where there are pre-schools, schools, community halls, religious institutions, sports fields and craft and food market, that all enjoy a uniquely peaceful, relatively safe and a pleasing rural landscape setting. This will be totally destroyed by the bypass and the area will be far more dangerous from a traffic perspective.

DH undertook to draft FAB's comment. He envisaged a half page point-based document in opposition to the bypass. He will forward it to everyone for their input or to add to it. (DH)

LdV agrees with DH that the bypass should not be part of the PAMP it is not something that has been finalized and therefore do not think it should be given any airtime in a written document as such. LdV

noted that she cannot comment on the biodiversity offset process as it goes from the environmental consultant into the EIA process.

RS commented that the practicability of achieving an appropriate biodiversity offset is key, should the project be approved on condition that a biodiversity offset must be implemented. They will give more detailed comment to the Department. Cape Nature's comment to date still stands - they have objected to the project from the start. They do not support the loss of part of a statutory protected area. If the project has to proceed due to socio economic importance or political importance, then an achievable and appropriate biodiversity offset has to be implemented - that is basically CapeNature's stance on the project.

PM shares RS's feelings that the bypass should be mentioned in the PAMP before waiting to see whether it is approved. It is important to put it in the plan as a proposal that FAB is against and stating the reasons to ensure that FAB has a paper trail on the bypass. She also supports DH that FAB must put in a comment on the bypass and it has to be made public in the newspapers. She is happy to give DH assistance if he is short on time.

8. Vice Chairperson: Nomination and Appointment

MM nominated AvH as vice chairperson. Both GvR and PM supported the nomination.

DH noted that it was evident that AvH was present at the ZOOM meeting but that he had not responded to his nomination. He needed to confirm his acceptance of the nomination. It then became apparent that AvH could hear the proceedings, but that he was struggling with the settings to unmute himself and the video from his side. LdV tried to unmute him but that was not possible from the side of the host. The host (LdV) asked him to unmute himself from his side but he struggled to do this. GvR then gave AvH a call and helped him to unmute his computer and put on his video, after which he was able to communicate with the meeting.

AvH declined the position of Vice-Chairperson. He suggested that the point stay on the agenda to be addressed at the next meeting. His suggestion was supported by FAB. The FAB secretary (HF) will be asked to place this point on the Agenda for the next meeting. (HF)

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

TD reported that both Co-Management Agreements have been sent out to the parties to update their work areas and thereafter it will go to Director Muller for approval. PM proposed that the Co-Management Agreements should be longer than a year as it just seems more sensible. TD will obtain a response from the Municipality on PM's proposal.

(PM)

10. Parking Area Developments at Fernkloof Gardens and Entrance Complex

DH noted that he had to give some background on this point. He had initially got to hear about the re-development of the parking area when Mary Anne Verster copied him in on an email about a meeting that was held regarding the grassed parking area. The latter was a problem in that it regularly flooded, and that the municipal operations team had decided that laterite (gravel) would be the best alternative surface.

DH was perturbed by this as the matter had not been raised with FAB. He contacted LdV who also did not know anything about it. It became clear that the money to improve the parking area was set aside by Ward 3, but unfortunately the FAB was never informed.

DH was further concerned for a number of reasons; the wet area on the parking area is caused by ineffective stormwater drainage which concentrates water onto the area; and secondly he was not in favour of the gravel topping, as it is a foreign substance and is not compatible with some of the plants in the garden area, while it quickly becomes degraded during wet periods forming muddy pools from vehicles turning on it. A black tar topping was also not suitable from an appearance point of view combined with the fact that it was more expensive and did not allow water to penetrate the soil (an eco-friendly option).

DH researched some alternate options. One was something that has the appearance of tar but can be given various colourings (a resin and stone chip mix) which was durable and allowed water to penetrate the soil. This was however a pricey option. Another option was the use of grass blocks. He found a good example of its use at a new hospital in Somerset West/Strand where all the parking areas are made of grass blocks. It has a good appearance and it is not uncomfortable under the feet of the patients or the visitors. When installed and maintained properly, this a good eco-friendly option.

DH was also concerned about adjacent road drainage that required upgrading to allow excess water to drain to the road at the gate so that it could flow into the municipal stormwater system away from the gardens area.

What concerned him further was that Ward 3 had set about R300 000.00 aside for this, but that already over R100 000.00 had been used for plans in this regard.

At a site meeting arranged by LdV, and attended by DH,TD, SN, and the municipal operations manager as well as a consulting engineering company, the parking area was discussed at length. The meeting agreed that they should look at a plan that captures the roads drainage and drains water away safely down the road and that they should look at possible options to make the actual parking area smaller because once you've parked a row of cars up front you cannot park cars at the back. Eventually it was decided at that point that there will be no new cover for the parking area but that the leftover funds would be used to improve the drainage for the time being. It was agreed that the ultimate cover for that area would be grass blocks in the longer term.

However, some time thereafter at a point when SN had been away from the reserve for a few days, a team came in and put in a tar pedestrian walkway, gravelled the whole parking area and provided for water off the parking area to be drained in a concentrated manner into the gardens. DH mentioned that EMS staff had not been informed of this. LdV mentioned that she did speak to Tiaan Marx (Operations Manager) and was told that it had basically been a financial decision - that the stormwater and the drains were not affordable and that they had made a subsequent decision which they thought was the best at the time with the money was available.

KB explained that ward money is basically a Wishlist. It was suggested by Linda Griffiths who was representing Botsoc on the ward 3 committee that the parking area needed to be looked at. At that stage almost about a year ago at a site meeting it was then decided to tar the area. The concern then was that if a bus were to come in that it should be able to turn around. It was decided again that tar was

not a preferred surface. They had another site meeting where Peter Burger, Brian Wridgeway, Mary Ann Verster and Dianne Marais were in attendance. They decided that the preferred surface material is laterite and it was agreed upon. She was not at the site meeting with LdV, TD, SN and DH. She has requested that the drainage gets looked at urgently. There was also talk about that water runoff which is presently being channelled into the gardens and not into the street. This is a priority to rectify and she has spoken to both Tiaan and Anver about this. She only heard afterwards that laterite was not the preferred surface but as she mentioned she was not at the site meeting because she was not invited to it. It is a possibility to have the grass blocks laid afterwards but that is funding that will have to be found.

PM commented that if there is a laterite (gravel) parking area now, the decision to put the stormwater off the parking area onto the gardens was not a good one, as the water would not be good for the indigenous vegetation.

DH agrees with PM and had noted that that was his concern with the first plan as well. DH commented that there is a track record which appears that other municipal sections that work in the reserve, do as they want. He has two examples, the parking area being one of them and the other one was the damage that was done by a municipal digger in the river riparian zone above the gardens. It is critical that the reserve manager be informed of any work that is to be done in the reserve so that the work can be overseen by an environmental staff member who must be held responsible for the outcome. He requested KB to please make it known that the operational manager and area manager cannot make decisions about work in the nature reserve without consulting the EMS.

AvH commented that this is another example of FAB being ignored.

PM wanted to know if it is going to be a difficult directive for Stephen Muller to give to the operational staff that if work is to be done in the FNR, that they should involve the EMS and make sure that FAB is informed, she doesn't think so.

LdV noted that Stephen Muller does so on a regular basis, it is not just FNR, she manages all the Overstrand environmental areas. Stephen Muller is in constant discussion with Director Williams on these matters where the operational departments make their own decisions or interfere with the EMS mandate.

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

LdV reported that EMS has looked at their workshop development. After discussions with the BotSoc, EMS will submit their draft proposal for the FNR workshop (the property just behind the current offices) to the FAB. This proposal will be part of the Concept Development Plan process. She cannot give a timeframe at the moment as discussions with BotSoc still must take place before they can submit to FAB.

NL recommends that bodies such as FAB and BotSoc sees the concept early before the work progresses too much. Inputs from these bodies are much more useful in the early stages of development and conceptual work.

AvH commented that an assumption is already being made that there will be a building. He did not regard it as an accepted issue at this stage. There will not necessarily be a building there and LdV and the Chairperson has to understand that.

DH commented that the practical considerations have been discussed before at two or three FAB meetings. It has been put on the table that EMS is between a rock and a hard place with their staff and work function. What is necessary at this time, is that the needs of the EMS are taken into account and listed as well as that of BotSoc and the requirements of the visiting public. Compiling a Concept Development Plan in this case was a complicated and lengthy exercise that also ensures that the surrounding natural environment as well as the visitor reserve experience is taken into account.

PM supported DH's comment and stated that there is sympathy to the needs of the EMS, but she is more sympathetic to the needs of FNR and that it should be the FAB's primary role. She further noted that FNR is not necessarily the place to meet EMS's need.

LdV noted that she is not asking FAB for permission to make use of the said property. She stated that they require the property for their needs which is also FNR's needs. They will be discussing and be obtaining the comments of the stakeholders with regards to how the building will be placed and what the architectural requirements will be, etc. She is not asking for approval because it is municipal property and does not fall within the BotSoc lease.

DH suggested that a FAB working group be formed to discuss this matter and asked NL whether would assist in leading the group in order to formulate a brief that can be taken forward.

AvH commented that LdV has already made the assumption that the building has to be in FNR. He further commented that there is a piece of municipal land bordering FNR, east of 17th street in Voeklip, north of where CapeNature is which could be suitable for this use. He had mentioned this to the Mayor who said it was a very good idea. He noted that he would like to be part of the working group. The working group will consist of EMS, DH, AvH and NL. DH commented that if there is any truth in the municipality providing the piece land behind CapeNature for the EMS workshop then it must be confirmed otherwise it cannot be considered as an option.

LdV would schedule a date and time for the working group meeting.

(LdV)

12. Status of Planned Management Block Burns, Fire Breaks, and Invasive Alien Vegetation Control Programme.

TD noted that there will be a planned burn document submitted to FAB soon. Preparation has started for controlled burns in FNR. TD confirmed that neighbours will be informed of planned burns.

(TD)

13. Oliphant Path – Way Forward

TD reported on the reasons for re-routing the path are due to degradation of the path. It is in a wet tributary area so there is constant running water. It is difficult to keep up with the maintenance of the path as they are constantly battling erosion. They have decided to close the current Oliphant Path and re-establish the path on the contour that links the bottom and the top of the mountain. The new path is not a brand-new path. It has been used for many years and will just become the main path now and the current Oliphant Path will be closed off permanently. He will put forward a small document on this

matter to FAB.

(TD)

14. FAB By-laws and Composition of the Board.

DH reported that this point has received attention for some time but has slowed because of Covid-19. The EMS and Municipality must put together a proposal for the bylaws to be changed and it will first be submitted to FAB for discussion. (LvD)

AT THIS POINT THE ZOOM MEETING WAS ENDED TO ACCOMMODATE THE FOLLOWING MUNICIPAL ZOOM MEETING

15. Confirmation of the Minutes of Previous Meetings (23/08/2019 and 22/11/2019)

This point will stand over for discussion at the next meeting.

16. Proposal for dealing with uncontrolled dogs in Fernkloof

This point will stand over for discussion at the next meeting.

17. Dates of Next Meetings

DH will set a date in the first week of September.

(DH)

Acronyms:

AVM – Alien Vegetation Management

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