

MEETING AGENDA - 7 OCTOBER 2014
PLETTENBERG BAY COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT FORUM MEETING
ANGLICAN CHURCH AT 09h30 - 11h30

1. Welcome

Wesley Andrew (coordinator at the Sabrina Love Foundation and also involved with the ORCA Foundation) and Jared Harding (from the ORCA Foundation) was welcomed to the meeting.

2. Apologies

Chris Behrens, Mark Brown, Annabelle Conyngham, Paul Falla, Inez Jamieson, Henk Nieuwoudt.

3. Present

An attendance register was signed by all present.

4. Acceptance of previous meeting notes

Nick Frootko accepted and Angus Greig seconded the acceptance of the notes.

5. Additions to the agenda

5.1 Seawall Construction, Erf 294/5 Lookout Area: notification of commencement of construction (refer to section 8.5)

6. Member updates

Indalo Conservancy: The proposed development on sections of the Conservancy is discussed under section 8.1.

Crags Ratepayers Association: Alien clearing operations are ongoing. Concern was expressed with regards to an old furrow being damaged by the construction of an overnight truck stop at the Shell service station. Anton Wolfaardt confirmed the construction but explained that they are making the area (that has long been used as Truck stop) safer rather than constructing a new Truck Stop. Anton will investigate the damage to the furrow as he is aware that the furrow system is relied on by various farmers.

Food for Waste Programme: The programme has resulted in a much cleaner Qolweni. A concern is that the municipal recycling contractor is not controlling the waste on his processing area. The area is also not fenced in resulting in waste blowing out of the area. There is a concern with snakes emerging from hibernation so clearing in open areas has stopped for now. The Forum will consult with Lawnwood Snake centre for advice on training and removal options. A meeting will

be arranged with the municipality to discuss the issues mentioned once Paul Falla returns.

The Forum is currently finalising discussions with the municipality for a further R100 000 to be made available for the Food for Waste programme.

The Forum will discuss the financial control of the project and financial training of the volunteers for the programme with a professional accountant to ensure that it is managed efficiently.

ORCA Foundation: Volunteers are involved with snare removals in the Craggs and Nature's Valley. They found no snares in Nature's Valley but to ensure that the whole area is clean, they need more landowners to be involved. Snakes are also an issue for the volunteers while looking for snares. An Elephant Seal that was recently photographed with wounds is still surviving and have been recorded hunting seal pups. The last Southern Right Whales are leaving the bay for the season while Humpback Whales have moved in.

Redford Conservancy: Alien clearing operations are proceeding well. The conservancy is rather conducting field outings than holding meetings and on these outings they look at sites to be cleared and consider rehabilitation options. Outings are further used for educational purposes with e.g. a dune ecology outing being planned next.

Eden to Addo: Pam Booth is progressing well with the upper Keurbooms River Alien clearing project. She is working on a 20 year plan but current funding is only for 3 years. Additional funding might be made available if the project is successful after the first 3 years. The Robberg coastal corridor is going well and they are currently waiting for the minister to proclaim it as a Protected Environment. A proposal to place Bee Hives in the corridor is also being considered.

It was discussed that Alien Vegetation is an issue throughout the Bitou Area. The Municipality should be able to access Extended Public Works funding. The Forum will write a letter requesting that the municipality put a long term plan in place with programmes that ensure good onsite supervision (a key step to ensure time and cost effectiveness). Before and after Alien infestation photos of the Keurbooms River pump station (as an example) will be included in the letter to illustrate the extent of the problem. The Forum will try and arrange that aerial photos are taken of the site.

Bitou Ratepayers Association: There is a fire concern at the Airport because of the height of the trees next to the fence. A contractor has been appointed by the municipality to clear the fence area.

The next Mayoral Committee meeting will likely be held on the 16th of October. This will be the first meeting held in 4 months. One of the issues that need to be resolved is that the adjusted budget for the municipality must be realigned to what has been spent.

District road 1770 (between Kranshoek and N2) is planned to be upgraded to a tar road. An objection has been received on grounds that no provision has been made for cycling, horses or pedestrians.

Bitou Wetlands Project: They are working with Plettenberg Bay Tourism to start a guide training programme. A funding application for the project will soon be submitted to the Department of Water Affairs. They are also working with the

community to establishing a Co-operative Business place for everybody to work from.

CapeNature: They are monitoring the Weevils (*Melanterius maculatus*) that are used as Biological Control for Black Wattle (*Acacia mearnsii*). The municipal pump station was recently visited to determine if there was sufficient numbers to spread weevils to new areas in the Garden Route. The outcome is not yet known.

7. Matters arising

7.1. Whale watching operators and Jet-Ski's

A meeting was held with Ocean Safari's. Following the meeting Ocean Safari's wrote a letter to The SA Boat Based Whale Watching Association. Ocean Safari's has not heard back from them yet.

A meeting was held with Ocean Blue and it was discussed that there was a general lack of awareness about the regulations with the public. A letter will be written by the ORCA Foundation detailing the regulations and explaining the specific process that need to be followed if a perceived incident is reported. It will be requested that the letter is published in the CXPress newspaper. The information that needs to be reported is the boat number along with the specific date, time and location and preferably photos. The numbers of the ORCA Foundation, Ocean Blue, CapeNature and Marine and Coastal Management will be included in the letter so that incidents can be reported directly. Once reported with the correct information, the operators can see on their logs who the skipper and guide involved were so that they can follow up. A concern was expressed that the operators won't be able to monitor themselves effectively and that the public might be placed in conflict situations if they contact the operators directly. For this reason not only the operators' numbers but also the authorities' numbers will be made available so that the person reporting the incident will have a choice.

Nicky Frootko, after explaining the history of his previous investigations with regards to Jet-Ski's in Plettenberg Bay, agreed to relook the issue and resume discussion with the municipality. It was suggested that the issue with Jet-Ski's is also tabled with both Bitou Tourism as well as with the Hope Spot Committee.

7.2. Car Park on Portion 91 of 304 (Matjes Fontein), Keurboomstrand

The Forum sent a letter to the Bitou Municipal Manager objecting to this property being used as a car park. The Forum pointed out that as the land is agriculturally zoned it will constitute a change of land use and rezoning needs to be applied for. The Forum suggested that a suitable alternative lawful solution should be identified urgently so that the traffic issues that arise in Keurbooms during peak season can be alleviated.

Nicky Frootko followed up with the Bitou Town Planning section to enquire if progress has been made with regards to establishing an alternative solution or if the intention is still to use Portion 91 of 304 for the parking lot. The

municipality has not yet replied on the letters of enquiry sent by the Forum and Nicky Frootko.

Nicky further received feedback from Danie Swanepoel (DEA&DP) indicating which listed activities may possibly be triggered for this site. If any are triggered, a Basic Assessment Process must be followed and Environmental Authorisation must be obtained prior to undertaking the activity.

A meeting was also held between the Forum, Keurbooms Property Owners Association, Nicky Frootko and Enrico to consider alternative parking. Alternatives were suggested closer to Keurbooms and these have been taken forward by Enrico with the municipality and the roads department.

It was agreed that the Forum will write a further letter to the Municipality informing them that DEA&DP advised that an EIA will quite possibly be required for the car Park to be developed on Portion 91 of 304. The Forum will also enquire as to the permitted seating space and parking lots assigned to Enrico's and the B&B above as per the properties title deeds to ensure that they are operating within these limits.

7.3. Consolidation and rezoning application: Erven 3956 and 3957 (Aquarius Close, Solar Beach)

The Forum did not object to the application but sent a letter requesting that all care is taken to ensure that the proposed development adheres to the relevant building regulations.

7.4. Extension of provincial road: Portion 58 of farm Brakkloof No. 443 (between Solar Beach and Robberg Beach End)

The Forum objected to the proposed road on the grounds that the area is a valuable refuge and effective corridor for animals between the adjacent wetland and sea. The Forum supported the recommendation from the rezoning and subdivision proposal for the development that the existing gravel road must be kept intact not only for residents to use but also for pedestrians and cyclists.

7.5. Section 24G application: Farms 491 and portion 10 of Doukama 221, Wittedrift

A letter was sent to Dr. Eshaam Palmer (Directorate Environmental Governance, Environmental Affairs and Development Planning) to enquire if a decision has been made with regards to the S24G application and on potential rehabilitation of the impacted environment. No reply has yet been received.

A letter was also sent to Mr. John Roberts (Gouritz Catchment Management Area, Department of Water Affairs), to request that a once-off verification be done for these farms so that a correct and more reasonable water rights volume can be allocated. No reply has yet been received.

8. New applications and issues

8.1. Cemeteries, Prison and Housing Development: Portions 3 (Ebenezer Estate) and 33 of 437 Hillview

The Draft Scoping Report has been made available via email to the committee. The proposal is for a new regional cemetery and integrated urban development.

It was agreed in principle that the town needs a cemetery and a prison. At this early stage of the process the following points were raised during the meeting:

- The properties are prime land with sought after views. As such, a cemetery and prison is not seen as desirable and appropriate developments.
- One of the properties are still in private ownership with no agreement that it will be sold or made available for development.
- A more detailed layout and development schedule is required before the appropriateness of the graveyard can be considered.
- The proposal comes across as piecemeal rather than as an integrated development. The properties (including the rejected alternatives) are part of a conservancy and as such an overall development proposal for the whole area should be considered.
- Large sections of the sites are unsuitable for development from an environmental point of view. Reasons for this are discussed in the Draft Scoping report.
- It needs to be considered how close a cemetery can be constructed to a residential area.
- It is important that suitable alternative locations be presented by the developer so that it can be considered.
- Public meetings should be held so that people can discuss the proposal with the developer.
- It can be suggested that sections to the South (towards Ladywood) and East of the proposed sites (owned by the municipality) should first be considered for this development.

It was requested that all further thoughts and suggestion for the proposal be sent to the Forum so that it can be considered for inclusion in their comments.

8.2 Proposed Rezoning: Erf 1395 (Single Residential to General Residential)

The Forum followed up with the Town Planners and based on the urban location in Dassen Island Road there are no environmental issues with the property for the Forum to comment on.

8.3 Keurbooms Estuary embankment activity

The Forum was made aware of the activity and followed up with DEAD&P who informed us that a S24G directive was issued for emergency work to be done (temporary stabilisation of the bank). Dr Robbie Robinson and Vernon Gibbs-Hall further followed up to enquire why nobody was informed or given the opportunity to comment on the Emergency Directive. Achmad Bassier (Head of Environmental Law Enforcement Region 2, Directorate Environmental Governance) responded that it is in the Departments mandate to issue such emergency directives without having to request comments from interested parties. He further commented that all parties will have an opportunity to comment in term of the S24G application process that will follow.

A letter (along with photos taken of the activities) being drafted by the Forum will be sent to Achmad Bassier to request a copy of the Directive issued. In the

letter the Forum queries why a natural process, that has been taking place for at least the last 5 years, is now suddenly seen to need emergency intervention? The Forum further queries if permission is granted for sand/sediment to be pumped from the estuary floor? A letter will also be sent on this matter by the Keurbooms Estuary Management Forum.

There is further concern with regards to Milkwood forest and salt marshes apparently being destroyed with a Bossiekapper. A second letter will be written by the Forum and sent to Francious Naude (DEA&DP) to enquire as to the inland clearing taking place.

8.4. Piesang River pollution

An email was received from the Clean-up Plett Campaign saying that the group did a clean-up early in September along the banks of the Piesang River opposite The River Club. They found the area to be badly polluted with bags of litter being dumped into the river off the old gravel road which runs along the bank through to the small holdings along Piesang Valley road. They will continue to work there but see it as an ongoing problem and is also concerned with the safety of bathers in the lagoon at Beacon Island. The Forum will write a letter to the municipality to highlight the situation and to request that they regularly send their cleaning teams there and general waste and recycling bins are provided there.

8.5. Seawall Construction, Erf 294/5 Lookout Area: notification of commencement of construction

Jonathan Kingwill (Bluepebble) sent an email to inform the forum that the construction of the approved (in 2009 and amended 2012) seawall on Erf 294/5 in the Lookout Area will commence shortly.

9. Recent updates

9.1 Environmental Authorization: S24G application for Boardwalk from Erf 353, Beachy Head Drive

After considering the Environmental Authorisation (EA) for the boardwalk, the Forum don't see any reason to appeal the decision as the boardwalk has already been constructed (around 50m long) and disturbed areas have been re-vegetated with indigenous vegetation.

9.2 Small Boat Harbour

The official expiry date for submission of a revised scoping report is the 7th of October. Western Cape Marine investments filed a request for an extension for submission of a revised scoping report on Thursday the 2nd of October (filed by their attorneys and not by a new EAP). A meeting of DEA&DP was held on the 6th of October where a decision should have been taken to grant the application or not. The decision made will only be known later in the month.

9.3 Kwela Quarry

The decision was upheld by Minerals and Energy Minister Susan Shabangu not to grant Kwela Quarry the right to mine industrial mineral and sandstone aggregate. Various reasons were given for the decision including that they failed to prove that the mining operations will not result in unacceptable pollution or damage to the environment or be detrimental to the socio-economic conditions of the people affected by the operations.

10.Meeting / Workshop Feedback

10.1 GRI

Feedback was given on the meeting highlighting talks on the Knysna and Plettenberg Bay Hope Spots, the Eden District Coastal Setback Lines process and Maretha Alant's camera trap research in Knysna. The Eden Setback Lines will be developed by a still to be appointed service provider and it is planned to be finalised by March 2016. The development process will also include public participation. The final product will be used as a proactive step to aid future planning e.g. overlays need to be part of SDF and Zonation maps.

11.General

11.1 The Forum should consider options to raise funds as funds are needed. The co-chairs will arrange a meeting to discuss fundraising options.

12. Announcements

13. Date of next meeting

4 November 2014