

Summary of discussions held at the work shop session entitled “Co-Create our Park”
hosted by Friends of Muizenberg Park on Wednesday 3 December 2014 at False Bay
College.

Panel of experts present:

- Paul Booth (CoCT Roads Dept)
- Regional Inspector Dennis Davies (Law Enforcement)
- Dalton Gibbs (CoCT Biodiversity)
- George Hill (Muizenberg Historical Conservation Society & MID)
- Karen Hultzer (MID Gardening & Landscape contractor for Muizenberg)
- Pauline Koch (Landscape Designer)
- Etienne de Kock (Sculptor / Public Art)
- Peter Kruger (Zandvlei Trust)
- Eugene Rayners (CoCT Parks)
- Senior Inspector Arnold Roberts (Law Enforcement)
- Ancunel Steyn (CoCT Urban Planning)

Apologies:

- Enver Duminy (CEO Cape Town Tourism)
- Marijke Honig (Botanist & Landscape Designer)
- Capt Knapp (SAPS)
- Elizabeth Milne (MID)

Eugene Rayners:

City Parks don't define Muizenberg Park (MP) as a park, but instead a public open space. The difference in opinion is due to how the Park is used/what happens in the park - whether there is a fence around the park and play areas in the park. Right now we have none of these, thus it is not classified as a park, which means it receives minimal attention from the Parks Dept. So, in other words, an Open Public Space receives less maintenance & budget allocation than a Park. CoCT CPM (community park maintenance) only includes litter picking, grass cutting & pruning.

If we were to place a fence around MP & play areas for children would MP be able to get reclassified?

Dalton Gibbs:

Urban Conservation areas link parks with conservation. From a conservation perspective, Muizenberg Park doesn't link to anything. It has a type of dead-end location, and thus doesn't warrant full conservation status. But this doesn't mean it's not important.

Muizenberg Park runs from coast to mountain, made up of coastal soil, granite and then a Table Mountain sandstone cap. This influences what vegetation should be planted. The top (meaning from Boyes Drive upwards) would be sandstone fynbos. In the upper reaches of the Park we would have the very rare granite fynbos, eg Silvertree. Then in the lower park (currently maintained part) which has the coastal soil, we would use sandveld fynbos.

Something to note is that milkwoods grow high and heavy pruning is good for it since it's fire resistant.

Dalton provided a list of suitable plants. Please find attached, highlighted in yellow.

Dennis Davies & Arnold Roberts:

The Metro Police area in which MP falls, stretches from Cape Town to Cape Point – a large area that includes most of Table Mountain. There used to be 52 in the team, in our area looking after the Park & the beaches here – now there are only 2.

The new approach now is a decentralised DPU (displaced people's unit) with a community court liaising with a prosecutor. If people do something wrong (for example overnighing in the Park), they are issued a compliance docket. In this way a case can be built against them. It takes time, but once the case is built, the prosecutor can get involved. Of course human rights & constitutional rights need to be considered too.

There are a number of bylaws that apply to MP – Street & Public Places Bylaw, the Park Bylaw. But manpower is limited therefore patrolling is difficult.

We need Social development on board to help solve problems in the Park – their support is needed because house-less (as opposed to homeless) people are a social issue.

We need Solid Waste Dept on board too, because they need to clean up the area.

Can the Health Department get involved? The human waste in the Park could pose a health risk.

What time defines camping & overnighing in the Park? Sunset to sunrise.

Concerns raised about the fact that there is camping right outside the police station, yet nothing is done. No-one from SAPS joined the panel, even though they were invited on several occasions.

Paul Booth & Ancunel Steyn:

There are plans to improve all the pedestrian linkages with the Park, eg York Road linking the Park with the Beach.

Pauline van der Spuy from CoCT Tourism Dept along with the appointed consultant, Adam van Niewenhuizen, have mapped out points of interest in Muizenberg (in order to improve tourism), and the Park forms part of a tourism plan for Muizenberg that should be released soon. In this plan, the beach has been linked with various walks on the mountain, so the Park would play important role here.

Their feeling is that a fence is not the answer – It would simply be taken down. Their suggestion is to increase activities in the Park, get more "life" in the Park, ad play equipment in order to increase activity... all these things will decrease criminal activity.

Etienne de Kock:

Artwork & artistic input can uplift the Park, but only once vagrant issue has been solved. Artists can be asked to design play equipment, sensitive to the environment.

Karen Hultzer:

Toilets are important in the Park

All current ideas in Muizenberg should somehow be linked.

For example, the Surfer's Circle can be linked with mosaic fish that lead from the Park, along York Road, towards the sea. The mosaics can be taken up the steps at the Park, and then an entry way to Peck's Valley could be highlighted with a mosaic arch.

No vegetable gardens are planned for the Park at all – we will concentrate on biodiversity & restoration gardening with correct fynbos and flora that is being planned elsewhere around Muizenberg as well.

Further suggestions from the public:

- School tours during the day with guided walks explaining how you walk in nature without damaging the vegetation, explaining about fynbos, etc.
- If we were to place a fence, we should be clear on what it is for – a fence is only as good as its maintenance. We could have GRIT patrolling the fence. But since the Park is CoCT land, we would need to look at the special legal issues where a private company such as GRIT were to patrol the Park – but it can be done – something similar works well in Zeekoevlei.
- We need to look at how we develop the Park as a physical space, ensuring that resources aren't wasted.
- Music and summer concerts would be a lovely way to encourage people into the Park & raise funds for the Park
- Play areas and bike paths for children is important
- Owl boxes (David Bellamy is willing to sponsor two or so)
- We need to be looking at restoring the vegetation and move towards it being a botanical park
- Some mention was made about not wanting a fence, but that the vagrants and gangsters must be moved out
- A social welfare crisis intervention & processing office is required – though this was discussed by Regional Inspector Davis.

In conclusion:

FoMP will look into the status of Muizenberg Park and whether it is possible to upgrade the Park.

FoMP should place the Park into context, environmentally

FoMP to assist in getting all actors involved incl social services, solid waste, etc.