

Friends of Muizenberg Park Committee Report - 28 August 2018

The Friends of Muizenberg Park (FoMP) wants the Park to be a clean, safe, conserved and beautiful green space, where the community can meet, play and enjoy nature.

To make this happen, we set in motion a strategy to encourage events to promote enjoyment and awareness of the park and ensure that the people who attended the events would start to feel a sense of ownership of the Park. We built relationships with the City of Cape Town to try to create a shared vision for the Park and unlock possible funding, but mostly to get permission to proceed with a cohesive plan that works for everyone in the community. The City has many competing priorities, e.g. providing parks where there have been none, so the community must take ownership of the Park and direct its future. We have hi-lighted opportunities for Muizenberg Park, challenges and possible solutions and felt that we have mobilised energy and focus towards improving the space.

Moving into 2018 with a diminished team we decided to focus our efforts on three key areas:

1. Getting the Master Plan approved by the City
2. Resolving the Bowling Club so that it is safe, maintained and can be utilized by the whole community by submitting alternate proposals to the City.
3. A focus on safety and security in the Park.

Park Design - Over the years

Master Plan

We created a vision board for the recreational area of the Park, based on community discussions and input since 2013. You can find this on our website – www.muizenbergpark.org.za. Based on this the City has created a proposed Master Plan, and submitted it the Heritage approval process apparently in early 2017. We had hoped that this document would allow us to work on various aspects of design and improvement on a piecemeal, and at the same time ensure that we have an integrated long-term vision. Despite numerous follow ups over the last 18 months with the City the process has stalled and the City is silent. FoMP has shared its plans with MID and the MLRA in an effort to get their support and insight

Bowling Club

This remains the most significant barrier to improving the Park. Much of the building appears derelict and the Club seems unable to stop known criminals from living there. FoMP has brought this to the City's, MID's and SAPS attention often. We have also engaged with the Bowling Club committee without success. We have submitted a proposal to the City and are waiting for their response. We follow up regularly, but the wheels turn slowly.

There has been no response on our proposal as it was perceived as difficult to implement. There is a new proposal that it would house the LE Team. We wait for feedback from the City

Gardens

The Freedom Garden and the Mandela Day Garden, have largely survived the drought, but we'd like to do a bit more planting – which is tricky given our water position.

Other key considerations are the bowling club, fencing and alternative safety solutions.

Electricity

FoMP managed to have a prepaid meter installed in the Park. Having this access to electricity cuts down enormous administrative effort in arranging access to electricity on a temporary basis for each event. The prepaid meter means that we can turn on power with the flick of switch for Concerts, Markets, children's parties, Coffee vendors etc. Contact us if you're interested.

Parking Boom

The temporary parking area can now be closed off. The Roads department were supposed to put top soil and seed to encourage grass to grow on the grass bricks, but the drought has interrupted this. City Parks has the key to the boom. The City has not closed off the area so

the temporary parking lot encroaches on the Park space. The City has ignored requests to close the boom.

Paths

Some path maintenance has been done through the conservation area. Accessing City funding is a complex process and there is a huge learning curve from a budgeting, quoting, supplier management and delivery point of view. There has been no progress here in 2018.

Environmental Management

The Upper Reaches

The upper reaches of the Park contain a mix of peninsula Sandstone Fynbos (Endangered) and Peninsula Granite Fynbos (Critically endangered).

Water | Spring

We are investigating what could be a spring in the Park. We will focus on this because of the drought. This was investigated in detail during 2018 by talking to Umvoto consultants and we decided against pursuing using this spring as a water source at this stage.

Controlled Burn

We continue to engage City Parks and Zandvlei Nature Reserve about the appropriate management and long-term conservation of the upper reaches. There is gathering momentum for a controlled burn in the upper reaches in the interests of bio-diversity. We need community participation and discussion, and to go through a complex permit application process. The City does not have the resources to deal with this and they are also do not believe this is possible during times of drought.

Alien Identification Walk and Clearing

We have made progress in identifying and grading the aliens in the Park and have developed a long-term strategy for dealing with them. Some work has happened already. There is a great opportunity for someone with environmental, botanical or landscaping expertise to get involved in developing ideas and looking after this space.

Jurisdiction and Legal

FoMP is now registered as a non-profit organization (NPO) with the Department of Social Development (DSD). As we are formally recognized we must provide a level of financial and administrative reporting, which encourages donors. We have received a proposal to audit our financials in order to submit the required confirmations to the DSD. The lowest cost for this is around R2000. There are currently 7 members of the committee.

Safety and Security

This remains our most pressing issue. After a period where there was no-one living in the Park, and following the work at the Battle fields, and the Peppermint Palace, there has been a huge surge of people living in the Park once more. Tents have been erected, paths are eroded, areas being used as toilets, fynbos is destroyed and it feels threatening and unsafe being in the conservation area. The inhabitants are aggressive. There have been a number of operations by MID, Law Enforcement, City Parks, Grit etc – but the results are short-lived. Resolving crime in our community and in our Park is not a simple matter. It requires ongoing community involvement in support of the City's efforts. We participate in the various local committees (MID operations including SAPS and Law Enforcement, MCSI, Community Police Forum etc) to keep the Park included in their efforts and top of mind. We have noticed the efforts of the Law Enforcement and understand that there is a now a daily patrol through the park.

Communication

We have 991 Facebook followers and send regular newsletters using Mailchimp. This year we started an Instagram account. We have an Instagram account @muizenbergpark to tag your instapics. We aim for coverage in the Echo, Peoples' Post and Corner Chat magazine. Our website requires more active management. <http://muizenbergpark.org.za>. Any volunteers?

Events over the past 12 months

We have had far fewer events over the last 12 months.

- Mandela Day Park Clean up - 22 July 2017
- Spring Hike and Picnic in the Park 2 September 2017
- End of year thank you function in the park to stop and say thanks.
- Concert in the Park (arranged by the festival) – 25 March 2018
- Park Clean up 2 March 2018

Please let us know if you've any ideas – how about Painting in the Park, or Park Yoga? We'd love to hear how you would like to use the space.

Finances

Our current bank balance is R15,837.30. Please see the attached financial report. Key spending has been paying Dawood Daniels an EPWP employee during the months where the City is not able to finance his pay, The MID has agreed to cover this cost this year and next year.

Challenges

The park's potential to be a valuable resource for locals and tourists alike, has not yet been realised. There is more to do. People must feel safe and know the Park exists.

Our key challenges

- Finding a solution to the Bowling Club not being maintained or utilized to its full extent, and dealing with the criminals that are known to live there.
- Progressing our proposals with the City of Cape Town.
- Learning to engage with the City of Cape Town's processes.

Thanks

We bid a sad goodbye and thank you this year to our deputy chairperson Bronwyn Redding -Jones. She has been instrumental in driving FoMP from its inception, ensuring continuity and managing our marketing. A major contribution amongst many was the conceptualization and management of the Fynbos Fair - a triumph for Muizenberg. She is moving out of Muizenberg and will be sorely missed by the broader community as her influence and hard work was felt far and wide.

Any marketing people keen to join and share their talents with FoMP will be welcomed.

Victoria Burnett, a do-er of note also left us earlier in the year. Vic was a brilliant minute-taker, prize-donation-getter – and fetcher-of-tents – you name it – we miss you and thank you.

Thank you to the dedicated members of the FoMP committee, Kerime Sinclair, Clair Timlin, Frank Bokhorst, Heide Goodman, Mariaana Herne, Bronwyn Redding-Jones and George Hill.

I have decided to stand down as chairperson. I believe that it is time for a new strategy, and new vigor. There is talk of the City and the business community being eager to rebuild Muizenberg as tourist destination, so there are is new energy in the community that can be capitalized on. I am happy to remain on the committee to provide some continuity, if required. Thank you for your support.

**Join us in shaping the future of Muizenberg.
We'd love your support and participation – so please do get involved.**