

Minutes of the quarterly eThekweni Biodiversity Forum meeting February 2010

Date: 04 February 2010

Time: 09h00 – 12h00

Venue: Paradise Valley, Durban

Attendance: Richard Boon (RB), Errol Douwes (ED), Natasha Govender (NG), Cameron McLean (CM), Andrew Mather (AM), Jean Lindsey (JL), Martin Clement (MC), Irene Reid (IR), Lesley Frescura (LF), Arnia van Vuuren (AVV), Darren Green (DG), Ed Granger (EG), Jonathan Bond (JB), Hilary Vickers (HV), M. Wilkinson (MW), Derrek Ruiters (DR), Gary Cullen (GR), Jabu Sithole (JS), Sibusiso Mkhwanazi (SMW), Geoff Pullan (GP), Barry Lang (BL), Karl Westphal (KW), Margaret Appleton (MA), Peta Salmon (PS), Kate Richardson (KR), Kirstin Williams (KW), Jeanne Tarrant (JT), Jessica Brislin (JB), Mpume Sithebe (MS), Sandile Mkhize (SM), Preston Chetty (PC), Rodney Bartholomew (RBW), Graham Cairns (GC), Heather Cairns (HC), Sue Shafto (SS), Fran Lewis (FL), Mandy McKeon (MM), Sue George (SG), Saneliswa Miya (SMY).

Apologies: Debra Roberts, Penny Croucamp, Di Dold, Santosh Bachoo, Roddy Ward, Terry Stewart, Gillian Noyce, Alison Young, Lungi Ndlovu, Johan Vermeulen, Reshnee Lalla

1. Welcome and Introductions

NG welcomed all and facilitated introductions.

2. Presentation: Sea level rise and its implications for the natural and built environment: Andrew Mather

AM introduced the 'Viewer', a computer program that through the use of sea-level rise and coastal topography data (among other things), offers a glimpse of how the Durban coastline will be impacted by an increase in sea level. The program will enable a user to select a portion of coastline, choose a sea-level rise scenario (low, medium or high) and examine how much of that part of the coast will be inundated. AM informed the forum that it would eventually be made available to the public and can be used as a key planning tool.

4. Presentation: Urban conservancies: Jean Lindsey

JL gave a brief background on conservancies and the work that they are involved with. HC enquired if it was possible for an 'open space' or 'green belt' to be converted into a conservation area and if Parks Department would be involved. JL replied that conservancies have no legal standing and that the owner of the land would have to make that decision. HC also asked if and how a conservancy could intervene on Metro-owned land. Sibusiso Mkhwanazi, (Manager: Parks) said that any interested conservancy has to make a direct application to the Park Department. RB gave the example of the Impeti Nature Reserve that is council owned but managed by a conservancy. LF asked who the appropriate contact person/department was regarding alien vegetation and JL informed everyone that she has a database of conservancies with contact details of various persons. A question regarding a database of recycling points was raised and JL suggested that one should try the Mondi online database that should contain information on the location of the Mondi recycling bins around the city. GP informed the forum that he has a contact regarding new DSW bins.

7. EMD report backs

a) Green Bylaws and other Town Planning Matters

RB reported that the process has been put on hold until the Department completes other Town Planning initiatives, for example, the integration of the D'MOSS spatial layer into the town planning schemes. Approximately 13 000 letters were sent to landowners informing them of this amendment to the Town Planning schemes and emphasising that D'MOSS is not a zone but a layer that would serve as a trigger of the potentially environmentally sensitive nature of the site should a development application be received. A further town planning initiative that the Department is undertaking is the splitzoning of properties that are adjacent to environmentally sensitive areas.

RB also reported on the progress with the rezoning of the Roosfontein Nature Reserve. Currently there are no major objections other than traffic.

b) Mayoral Biodiversity Award

JB informed the forum of the award categories for this year which are: 1) schools; 2) businesses; 3) private (individuals or families) and 4) NGO's. She stated that a call for nominations would be sent out shortly.

c) Invasive Alien Species Strategy

ED informed the forum that the invasive alien plants control strategy has been finalised and will be sent to council for ratification.

d) KZN Biodiversity Stewardship Programme

DR was continuing to work on proclamation of selected reserves as part of the KZN Biodiversity Stewardship Programme.

e) International Year of Biodiversity

JB reiterated the need to coordinate efforts regarding event planning etc., for the International Year of Biodiversity and said that further meeting will be held with respect to this.

8. General

a) Cutting of trees on municipal property

SMW is to raise the issue at the next Natural Resources Management meeting. The procedure relating to the 'punishment' of offenders i.e., people that cut trees without permission, and enforcement is to be investigated by SMW. JL to write to Debra Roberts (Deputy Head: EPCPD) and Christo Swart (Deputy Head: Parks, Leisure and Cemeteries) to raise this issue.

b) Indigenous planting policy

A query was raised regarding the municipal policy of always planting/landscaping with at least 70 % indigenous plants. A discussion then ensued regarding this being an appropriate figure because many people (individuals/companies) are landscaping with 'problem' plants (emerging and potentially invasive species). It was suggested that this figure be re-examined.

c) Earth Hour

It was brought to the attention of the forum that Durban did not have a city-wide celebration of Earth Hour (A WWF initiative and unofficially deemed the planet's biggest climate awareness campaign) last year and that this year, this should change. A suggestion was the use of the new Moses Mabhida stadium as Durban's iconic site on that day. Some questions were raised regarding potential costs

involved and the feasibility of this endeavour.

d) Sandwinning

GP asked about what could be done about the sandwinning on the Umlaas. RB noted that the appropriate authority to contact is DME (Department of Minerals and Energy).

e) State of Biodiversity Reporting

NG informed the forum of the new format for State of Biodiversity Report and requested that members of the forum please contact her regarding interesting biodiversity related 'stories' that they know of for 2008/2009.

Closing and Date of the next meeting:

NG closed the meeting at 12h00 and thanked everyone for attending.

Next meetings: Thursday, 6 May 2010

Times: 9:00am – 12:00pm

Venue: Paradise Valley

Acronyms used in these (and previous) minutes:

AIO	Alien Invasive Organism
BSAP	Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
BSSA	Biodiversity Stewardship – South Africa
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity (Global)
COP 9	Ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (a CBD initiative)
CARA	Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act (Act 43 of 1983)
DAEA	Department of Agriculture and Environmental Affairs (Provincial)
DEAT	Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (National)
DME	Department of Minerals and Energy
D'MOSS	Durban Metropolitan Open Space System
DUCT	Duzi Umgeni Conservation Trust
DWAF	Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (National)
ECO	Environmental Consultant
EESMP	eThekweni Environmental Services Management Plan
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EKZNW	Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife
EM	eThekweni Municipality
EMD	(eThekweni Municipality) Environmental Management Department
EMP	Environmental Management Plan
GGEP	Giba Gorge Environmental Precinct
GHG	Green House Gases
IAP	Invasive Alien Plant
IAS	Invasive Alien Species
ICLEI	International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives
KZN	KwaZulu Natal
LAB	Local Action for Biodiversity
MOSS	Metropolitan Open Space System
NEMA	National Environmental Management Act (1998)
NEMBA	National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act 10 of 2004)
NGO	Non Government Organisation
NRB	eThekweni Municipality's Natural Resource Branch
SANBI	South African National Biodiversity Institute (National)
SAPTA	South African Pet Traders Association
SCP	Systematic Conservation Planning
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SOER	State of the Environment Report
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal