



PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF THE PHALABORWA WILDLIFE ACTIVITY HUB, KRUGER NATIONAL PARK, LIMPOPO PROVINCE

PPP Meeting Minutes

Prepared for:



Mr James Daniels
James.daniels@sanparks.org
012 426 5280

Prepared by:

Christoff du Plessis
christoff@enviroworks.co.za
021 853 0682

Today's Impact | Tomorrow's Legacy

Project: Phalaborwa Wildlife Activity Hub Pre Application - Public Participation Process Meeting

Date: 29 June 2017

Time: 18h00

Place: Cajori Hotel, 39 Palm Street, Phalaborwa

SANParks Team

- Christoff du Plessis (CdP) – Environmental Assessment Practitioner
- James Daniels (JD) – Project Manager
- Esther Howard (EH) – Administrator

Welcome & Introductions

CdP introduced himself, his professional background and mentioned that he represented Enviroworks as the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) who was appointed by SANParks to conduct the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the proposed Phalaborwa Wildlife Activity Hub (Hub). The agenda for the meeting was presented and he proceeded to welcome all Organs of State as well as Interested & Affected Parties for availing their time to attend the meeting.

CdP discussed the relevant legislation requirements and gave reasons for conducting the Basic Assessment (BA) Process. He continued to mention the listed activities which triggered the development of the proposed Hub and explained why the mentioned listings were highlighted. Permits from various agencies were also required, namely:

1. A Heritage Permit was required from the South African Heritage Resource Agency (SAHRA) and the heritage study was conducted by Dr Lloyd Rossouw.
2. A Water Use License Application, i.e. General Authorisation (GA) was required from the Department of Water & Sanitation (DWS) which Enviroworks would apply for on behalf of SANParks.

The EIA process was decided to undertake a pre-Public Participation Process (PPP) in order to get the feel and comments from I&AP's. CdP informed the meeting of the legislated process for the EIA, including the initial Draft Basic Assessment Report, PPP, the comments from the registered I&AP's would be incorporated into the BA and a Final BA Report would be submitted to Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) for consideration and ultimately, authorisation. He also highlighted the time frames which the EAP and DEA have to comply with during the process. CdP handed over to JD who gave the background & purpose of the Hub.

JD thanked all for attending the meeting and mentioned that a great deal of work had gone into the concept of the Hub including the environmental aspects as the Hub could not continue without the conclusion of the environmental process as well as the input from the community, i.e. what was preferred or not preferred. There were not many changes; however, more detail had gone into the process. He gave feedback on what the Hub entailed as well as what it was not. He highlighted that the Hub was not aimed at competing with existing business within Phalaborwa. The intention was to benefit the entire Phalaborwa, i.e. the communities, existing businesses and SANParks. The intention was to work with the town of Phalaborwa. JD advised the meeting of the current situation within SANParks and it was aimed at diversifying the activities which SANParks could offer its clientele. He

advised that the Hub was aimed, not only to provide investment and income to SANParks, but also to the greater Phalaborwa community. He advised the meeting of the reasons why the development came about, i.e. to provide information to guests not only by increasing activities within SANParks but also tap into the cultural aspects of the surrounding communities. He added that the development would “talk to” the conservation and ethics of South African National Parks, i.e. conservation was the foundation of SANParks but with a socio-beneficiation aspect. JD continued to inform the meeting that the Hub was intended to tap into the tourism aspect where conservation also benefitted from the activity. Guests had posed questions as to what other activities were available to engage in within the Parks, and that was thinking behind the Hub – develop other concepts to keep guests. JD highlighted the different types of visitors and facilities which cater for the various types of guests. There was currently not a niche for backpackers within SANParks and the product development model for SANParks was geared at tapping into the backpackers market. It was the attempt to also tap into the local cuisine market. The high priority and important aspect of the Hub was job creation, SMME creation and to provide different opportunities for jobs. The Hub would be a tourism enabler, i.e. collate activities at the Hub; however, to create the opportunity to venture to other places and enjoy what the area and region has to offer. SANParks Park Management Plan guided the management of the Parks over a 10 year period. This brought about the planning of how SANParks would maintain its conservation mandate which gave rise to activities which would also benefit SANParks. He added that the Hub concept was not unique to Kruger and parks such as Tsitsikamma where activities outside of the park, could be tapped into and guide guests to certain places within the region. JD mentioned that SANParks did not advise guests of the activities within the region as it was unknown to SANParks and it was believed that the Hub concept would address this in order to optimally maximise the visitor experience, not only to SANParks but also the region. He gave a breakdown of the guests who visit Parks, i.e. 75% of guests were South African and 25% were international guests and that activity tourism model had been tapped into not only for local but also international guests.

Albeit that health and education were at the forefront of Government policies, conservation was also perceived as important. Market differentiation – looking at the possibilities that were currently not catered for. He touched on the philanthropic aspect at Marakele where investors purchased land for conservation. JD highlighted reasons for the site selection, i.e. staff accommodation was problematic for SANParks and the peripheral site would address the staff accommodation and was well located within close proximity of the town. He also gave feedback and reasons about the benefits of the selected site. JD received comments from the public with regards to possibilities and business opportunities to tap into for the benefit of the greater Phalaborwa. He added that there were different communities and cultures along the borders of the Kruger National Park and each interpretive centre and information Hub around the parks highlighted the surrounding communities. He provided stats that 177 cars enter the Phalaborwa Gate which head directly to the Letaba Rest Camp. The aim of the Hub would create an opportunity that would provide guests with a greater experience when visiting the Park. The socio-economic model of SANParks was one of the aspects and mission of SANParks. He mentioned that 1% of all tourism fees were returned to the community and SANParks was looking at adding another 1% which would serve land claimants. All commercial activities were targeted at investors in order to give funds to the surrounding communities. Job creation in terms of the SANParks Balance Scorecard was geared at employing people from the local communities. FNB Bank had indicated their willingness to offer training and funding for

entrepreneurs. SANParks would look at various business opportunities for SMME's and highlighted the various possibilities, e.g. golf carts which would be utilised in the Park as well as sharing larger intense capital projects such as the rhino orphanage. It was the intention to look at investors who would work and share with communities. Multiple to get people to come to the town and spend more money while visiting the Hub. JD added that even though the Hub would be activity based, it is aimed to still provide a wilderness experience while engaging in the various activities. JD asked the meeting to provide input regarding activities which would guide SANParks, for example shebeen tours, etc. and it would be a "hop-on hop-off" to opportunities outside of the Park.

He identified what the drop off areas would entail. The sewage seepage into the river was raised and the intention was that the Hub would attempt to address the problem, which would hopefully attract birds to the area again. The backpackers units were proposed to accommodate 72 visitors with communal accommodation, ablutions, eating area, etc. Possibly look at dual function for school groups as an environmental education centre as well as offer backpackers accommodation. He gave reasons for the cool down areas instead of a swimming pools where people tend to gravitate and congregate at the swimming pools. He mentioned the bush braai activity for various reasons such as family cohesion and it was unique to South Africa. JD showcased the preliminary designs from the architects which were considered slightly an overkill but it gave an idea of what could possibly take place.

CdP mentioned that the architect impressions were in the assessment report. He added that he drafted a preferred development footprint from an environmental aspect. The site inspection was conducted in September 2016 and he used satellite imagery to design the layout. He moved the units 50m away from the river in line with the Department of Water & Sanitation's guidelines to an area which would least affect the vegetation. He added that a Visual Impact Assessment was also conducted, however the mine blocked a great deal of the Hub and moved the Hub closer to the fence. He also moved the rhino orphanage 50m away from an area which was identified as an area prone to erosion due to the flow of the river. CdP informed the meeting on the impact before and after mitigating measures. The meeting was requested to look at the mitigation measures in order to ascertain the lowest impact possible. The Environmental Management Plan was a contractual document and must be implemented during both the construction and operational phase. The EA required that an Environmental Control Officer (ECO) be appointed in order to conduct audits to ensure that the least negative impact was attained. He added that in SANParks, the rangers were historically used as ECO's due to their environmental background.

CdP posed that should technical aspects, e.g. engineering services, etc. be required, that an email be sent to him and he would refer the questions to SANParks Technical Department, who would be in a better position to answer any technical questions. He added that the minutes of the meeting would be uploaded onto the Enviroworks website, which could be downloaded. The draft BA was on the website and could be accessed. He welcomed any questions and requested the meeting to email him, which he assured he would respond at his earliest convenience.

Question & Answer Session

Mr Joris Bertens – Phalaborwa Tourism Association

He posed a question regarding an announcement which was made that the National Government had made R28 or R30 million available to develop the Hub. He enquired as to whether the funding

would cover the infrastructure or would SANParks be looking for private investors to build the restaurant, the bar and the rhino orphanage?

JD responded and welcomed Mr Chauke from the National Department of Tourism who provided R25 million which would be used to create infrastructure as far as possible. A portion of the funds were used to appoint consultants, roughly R3.2 million was spent thus far. The remainder of the R25 million would go to, as far as possible, all the landing areas – the roads in the Hub, the bulk services, everything that can be done and then will get private investors to do certain specific things that will be identified as a core area for instance, the rhino orphanage as SANParks would not like to allocate the funding only towards the orphanage which could cost R25 million. The enabling infrastructure of the Hub would be attended to as far as possible and that SANParks would also look at investors which would look at certain models subsequent to spending the R25 million.

Daniela Scattolin – Chairperson for Phalaborwa Accommodation Association

With regards to the infrastructure of backpackers, were statistics done for backpackers? She mentioned that in Phalaborwa, other than the Marula Festival, the town is not full. She posed if the backpackers building was not competition to the town? She was unsure as to whether the statistics were compared with the current backpackers or if the proposed backpackers would be smaller.

Thys Luyt – Forever Resorts

He mentioned that JD referred to the backpackers but spoke of the tented camps. Was it part of the site or is it at a different location?

JD reassured Daniela that SANParks did not want to be competition. SANParks looked at the occupancies and the park was at 85%+ full throughout the year and there was no longer seasonality. Previously only during school holidays the Park was extremely full and then it dips. He added that the only month that had poor occupancy was February and the rest of the year was fairly “straight line”. SANParks thought to create a backpackers market via the Reservations that there was a backpacker’s facility, guests could then book as SANParks currently does not have the option. SANParks does not want to take the town’s customers. It is believed that when guests search on SANParks website, there is no backpackers accommodation available and therefore do not visit and possibly go elsewhere. SANParks thought that it would be a manner in which to attract guests to the area and should the market grow, it would spill over into the town. It was really not to steal customers but more to create a backpackers market for the area and also for national parks.

In terms of the tented camps, SANParks receives requests for tented camps in national parks and SANParks cannot satisfy the demand. The camp was located in the “southern region” of the Hub. He mentioned that the zoning in Kruger National Park determines what can be developed and what cannot be developed. The top area is in a zone that can accommodate the backpackers, however the bottom area is very limited development. We looked at a tented camp because it is in demand, but only 16 beds at most that can be done in the area which would be a phase 2, if the need arises. However, should the backpackers be popular, SANParks would consider replacing the tented camp with an additional backpackers facility but nothing more than 15 beds in the area of the Hub. It would be a small and not big tented camp and only because there was such a demand in national parks.

Zena Smit – ~~unclear~~ Owner of Lodge and backpacker’s accommodation

She stated that backpackers was a very specialised accommodation niche and the problem with backpackers in Phalaborwa, is the distance from Pretoria / Johannesburg and not enough public transport which is what is predominantly used because travel is cheap and then their money is spent on activities. She added that getting guests here (Phalaborwa) was the problem not having them here. It was expensive, either they would have to fly in or hire a car from Johannesburg and drive all the way here (Phalaborwa) which make their expenses much bigger. She added that should SANParks wanted to look at backpackers, extensive “homework” needed to be conducted as it was very much a niche market and cannot be combined with school kids. She added that backpackers are not easy, it sounds like easy money; however, they don’t spend money on accommodation, and they spend their money on activities. Ms Smith mentioned that Hazyview had done huge backpackers because the guests are picked up from OR Tambo and brought here (Hazyview). There was an opportunity for new businesses to fetch the guests and bring them here (Phalaborwa), take them on a tour to the South and do a round trip. Only then would you create a backpacker market, not by giving them another bed. There are a great deal of beds in Phalaborwa. She added that she was in the accommodation business for 25 years and was the first Bed & Breakfast in Phalaborwa. The problem with Phalaborwa is the fact that people drive through and do not stop here. We (Phalaborwa) cannot sell beds, we need to sell an experience and activity. She also mentioned that when she heard of the proposed Hub, she was excited at the prospect of keeping people for 2-3 nights in Phalaborwa; however, the only manner to do it would be to offer quality activities and not focus on accommodation. She suggested that SANParks use Phalaborwa as a peripheral camp for accommodation which is running at less than 15% occupancy throughout the year. The town offered shebeen experiences, 5 star hotels, and more. She suggested that a conservation fee could be charged from “our guys” for accommodation and SANParks could utilise the booking system as additional accommodation for the Park.

Swimming pool – Ms Smith raised that should SANParks want to include and benefit the Phalaborwa community, instead of having 3 small swimming pools, have a slip and slide as the local children have nowhere to go. It (slip and slide) would create an opportunity for children to spend the day in the Kruger National Park, partake in the activities and be educated. SANParks would make money from the local community as well. Should Phalaborwa be utilised as a peripheral park, there would be a need for transport to and from the Park which would create an opportunity for the local taxis to transport the guests to the Park.

Katelgo Malale – Phalaborwa Community Forum

He mentioned the SMME development programme and the development and shared his excitement about the Hub. He implored SANParks to make use of Community Forum to reach out to the community so that they can be part of the development.

CdP addressed Mr Malale and would meet with him after the meeting.

Mr Edwell Matukane – Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET)

Mr Matukane mentioned that he was tempted to comment on the fact that people were focusing on individual pockets whereas the vision was to grow the cake and more activity was needed in the Phalaborwa town in order to bring more people here. He added that it was not only about sleeping

(accommodation) and that there was no diversity of products on offer. He posed the question on how do we get more investors to supplement the town. He enquired the following:

1. Was the Hub was fenced?

JD thanked the 2 previous speakers and cognisance would be taken of what was said. He responded to the question and stated that the Hub would be fenced with predator proof fence only that would still allow certain animals in. A similar fence was erected in Karoo National Park to keep the lions out and it would be the same but further away from the Hub and not visible to the Public, to keep elephants out as well. There would still be movement of animals but not dangerous animals. It would therefore be great to do walking trails in the Hub.

2. Do you have a control of footprint or does it not have a limit in terms of the footprint of the Hub?

JD responded in that the Hub would be limited, the exact location of the fence has been determined and would not extend outside of that.

3. Seeing at the southern part of the Hub, it is close to Merensky golf course, in terms of diversifying and opening up the market, do you think it to be proper to have access so that people are able to play golf and to transverse across that fence?

JD mentioned that SANParks is open to possibl; however, there are security challenges in terms of poaching, etc. SANParks has various models where fences had been moved, typically where the landowner is contracted into the Park. SANParks would look at transverse rights with golf course and give people the opportunity to go into the Hub and go play golf. It had not been included in the proposal at this stage but will look progressively at the option as an enabler to get more people on the golf course. Would not necessarily be an option at this stage but ongoing discussions and it would be the ultimate goal to incorporate it into the Hub.

4. If the Hub is fenced, to have walking trails. Today, we are talking about people who are health conscience and some would like to come to the Hub and just walk down in the form of spiritual healing, health wise.

JD responded above (Question no.1) and that SANParks would definitely look at walking trails.

Mr Joris Bertens

At SANParks Investment Summit, JD announced that a bid for a 100 bed lodge, was that what was actually included in the Hub? Mr Bertens stated that the Public was initially informed that it was proposed for Malalane, would it be moved up to Phalaborwa?

JD informed the meeting that SANParks had an Investment Summit where investors were invited to share SANParks' intention to go out on tender for certain products over the next period of time. One of the products was a Phalaborwa Lodge as well as an Orpen Lodge which were more accommodation driven products but not in this development. There was also the Letaba Concession which were originally given out to the Singita's, etc. There were 8 concessions handed out and 7 were filled and 1 was not – Letaba concession. This is the area in the Park, north of the road up to the

Letaba River. Slightly south of that, also north of the entrance road, there is a portion that SANParks' conservationists have identified as low intensity area that accommodation can be considered if the need arises. I think that was the area that was earmarked for that (100 bed lodge), yes it is close by but not in the Hub, it will be too big and it was not the intention. It is a potential development but not in the Hub. I think it is important to hear your inputs and with the activity hub the emphasis is on the activities. We (SANParks) are trying to get people who want to do more in the Park, they are already sleeping in the Park and we want people that do not necessarily want to do activities to centralise it. We see a development that goes up, e.g. the Info Kiosk or Cultural Centre somewhere, like you've said, people drive pass it and they never stop there and it never gets off the ground. Here, it's a market that we know, use the gate because they stop in any case and then to get them in is much easier than to have some development somewhere here where they just drive past and you never get them to stop. Those tented sites are not in the Hub.

What sort of contractual agreements and duration i.e. concessionaires is SANParks looking at? If one puts up a restaurant, you need capital and aware that SANParks has structured concessions that after 10-15 years that you hand over the infrastructure to SANParks. Is it on a similar basis?

JD mentioned that SANParks has a Business Development Unit that looks at all feasibilities. Depending on the capital and return on investment, that determines the term. Typically, we have lodges at 20 and 25 years but we are also looking at other lodges that could be 40 years. There is no restriction and no limits in our commercialisation strategy to say that it cannot be longer than 20 years or that it must be longer than 5 years. We have a project that is running for 5 years and one that we are looking at that could be 40 years, I think it is in Cape Town somewhere. The duration is based on what capital needs to go in, fair return on investment, fair term to make back your money and we also do a pre-feasibility but we are also informed by feasibilities of the private sector to ensure that we haven't put out a non-feasible product.

Joris Bertens

Do you evaluate every activity, from a tour guides to a restaurant operator, capital outlay and looked at what it will take to recover?

JD responded positively to Mr Bertens question with "Yes".

Ian Ocotram - Bird Life SA

Bird Life SA was possibly looking at raising funds; however, it was still busy with the proposal to develop a programme where community guides or local guides as we call them as bird guides to set up businesses and run guided tours, bird tours or nature tours. Is there scope for them to set up that within the Hub as a central office for their business or not?

JD stated that, that was a perfect example of where the market is there, the gathering is there, skilled people to connect the guest with the guide and take it from there is exactly the type of things SANParks wants, want to enable through this (Hub) – bring them to us, we allocate space and they don't even have to sit there, as soon as we get 10 people, we phone them and say "come, off you go and take the people in on a birding tour". The spin-off will be that the Hub will be the initiator but you will get good guides that can be used in the Park as well and if you are not busy here, let's take you to Letaba so that you can do some birding tours there. He mentioned that it was a wonderful idea.

Mathew McDonald –Nongu (unclear) Safaris

The game drives and tourism for night drives, would you keep it very closed or make your feet bigger for game drive vehicles only for SANParks or would you open it to private safari operators also to do game drives? As well as transport from Johannesburg to Phalaborwa for game drives acting as private tour operators.

JD responded that the Section Rangers and Ranger Corporals are very reluctant to give those types of things away. However, the Managing Executive of Kruger National Park, Glenn Phillips is open minded and he has indicated that if we can get private operators to do a function that we are not doing necessarily well, what we do is push 20 people on a big vehicle, its noisy, it's really not a great experience, you've got the poor customer at the back must light, he doesn't know how to light and the poor customer at the front that must light and he doesn't know how to light and then you drive and shout "stop" if you see something, they don't know what they must see and that's really the case. SANParks does not have the optimal product. Internally, we are looking at better ways to do it. Then we hear about do we need a bird guide and we offer that someone a package where you get onto a vehicle and go out with a person that knows about birds very well. Look at optimally make money but also look at quality. SANParks is definitely looking at a model to look at private operators to do more things optimally, obviously there is a security risk but security is also a management thing. If we know Mr Macdonald comes in at 18h00, this is the route that he will take, when we find him, we know he has 10 people on his 10 seater and that's where you will drive and why not? SANParks is looking at that.

Zena Smit

Ms Smith added to the gentleman's suggestion - there was a need to transport people from the southern part of the Park, i.e. from Hoedspruit and further south to Phalaborwa because there is nothing on the outside. On the inside, the guys drive themselves, it's too far for people to get into Phalaborwa and drive through to Kruger Gate and come out and back again in the same night and they would have to spend time in the Park. If the Hub is available, then people can come from Graskop, Sabi, wherever they can enter the Park or they can drive on the outside to Phalaborwa and visit the Hub and then drive through the Park back home at night which will create a circle route which will help with too many people in the south and too little people to the north but also create a new product and new benefit for the Kruger National Park where you can say this is a new feature that we offer, where you can actually see the outside of the Park as well as the inside with one trip. Little bit inside, little bit outside, with the Hub being here, it is not worth it. Why would you drive to Phalaborwa? You don't see anything except elephant and buffalo but with the Hub here, then you can try and market the circle route.

Isabelle Radebe – Cajori Hotel

Ms Radebe mentioned that everyone was "up in arms" with the backpackers and tented camp and she felt that one of the main reasons was that the industry felt it was competition to their business as the school kids could possibly be accommodated here (hotel) or at one of the existing establishments and then be taken into the activity hub and she also felt that some of the activities had not been looked into because we do have some of those activities like the spa's and all sorts and are obviously under performing at the moment and perhaps more homework could be done to see that all these things that want to be taken place and obviously you can't have an activity hub and not

have a restaurant but perhaps something like an ice-cream place or whatever, very minor things that will not affect Phalaborwa itself because as you've said SANParks is not the beneficiary of the activity hub and believes that all beneficiaries. She also mentioned that the big swimming pool would be a good option as there was nothing to do for the kids in Phalaborwa and friends from Johannesburg do not want to visit as there is nothing to do. Everyone goes out of Phalaborwa to have fun and they would like to stay within Phalaborwa.

JD enquired from CdP whether there would be a problem increase the footprint of the water activity. CdP mentioned that the application had not been lodged as yet and changes can be made.

JD mentioned that the swimming pool was a valid point. SANParks is not saying that if you have a spa, we (SANParks) want a spa to be in competition. What we are saying is you tell us that your spa is struggling, maybe your spa should be in the Hub because then you have a market and you should run it from the Hub. If you can do your business from there it will be great.

Moses Ngobeni – Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment & Tourism

He mentioned that the idea was great and would create a ripple effect. The town or area does not have enough activities to keep people around. He was happy with JD's comment, i.e. anything can be done to make sure that more activities are created. One of the things that were presented in the first meeting at the church was creating a hub where you have lot of activities that goes into the Park and outside also linking the various attractions around here. He mentioned that SANParks was creating a place where similar to the V&A where you might have a lot of operators that would have to come set up various activities in the Hub and going outside. The main Hub that was indicated, is there enough room to do more and provide sufficient space, e.g. small event that won't create noise, etc. Can it be done in terms of the amphitheatre?

JD mentioned that the full extent of the Hub was not showcased. The Activity Hub area is quite extensive where a lot of things can happen. At the beginning of my presentation I mentioned that I think it's actually too big. A lot can happen there and apart from that the physical activities that can take place, we will do that as well in the Hub. Again, noted. I think what we must get out of this is that the emphasis must be on activities, activities, activities.

Moses Ngobeni - LEDET

That will solve the problem that the town has, a lot of the B&B and accommodation, they are battling to have people because a lot of people are passing by, they are going to a destination, whether I like it or not, is inside Kruger. It is the same thing with the airport, from our side we are saying, when you look at Phalaborwa it is strategically located in terms of the Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Park but you don't have a lot of activities, it is not even known, but the good thing is when you look at your statistics, there is more vehicles going inside but what is the impact of that movement here, that's why the local businesses, your accommodation guys are complaining because people are going through because there are no activities. It is a good idea that will make people to stop in Phalaborwa maybe spend a night and then go. It's a different market that stop there because you have created a lot of activities and would solve their problem. They may not see it today, but when it starts happening, they begin to reap the fruit of it.

Ian Ocotram – Bird Life SA

Mr Ocotram mentioned that without being a “prophet of doom”, he did not see the activity hub as being the answer to increasing activity in Phalaborwa. If you want to compete with somewhere like Hazyview, but Hazyview has lots of natural places to go to. Those are the sort of things that need to be developed in Phalaborwa for us to become viable and competitive, and it won’t happen within the 18 hectares. The Hub is really just a place where you come to, to go out to somewhere else but I think we need to remember is that for this to be a success, we need to establish a belief that we can create an activity somewhere in the region and that is where the difficulty lies with Phalaborwa is the lack of somewhere natural to go to. Before people start thinking that this is going to solve everything, I see it as a place to go from to get to an activity.

Edwell Matukane - LEDET

Mr Matukane commented as follows:

Look at Cradle of Humankind, what is there? Nothing. It’s simply an investment in the middle of nowhere and people flock there and sometimes you go there and it’s so full that you cannot go in. Lack of natural attractions in Phalaborwa doesn’t stop investors to be innovative. What we need is investors that come to Phalaborwa and utilise the viewpoint to the hole, what are we doing about the viewpoint? Could do something there that becomes an attraction to get people to stop over, and once people stop over, they stay over and then you become a destination.

Modise Mashale – Phalaborwa Local Municipality

He did not want to open a can of worms but it is to the detriment of the development of the Hub, i.e. sewage slippage. Wanted to find out whether SANParks had communicated to the authorities in writing? If that was done, if it was possible please provide the communicate in order to follow up on the matter. At the present moment it is hearsay and people are shifting the blame.

JD thanked Mr Mashale and stated that he would get hold of the communication. He heard from the ME that there was communication and there will be even more and he would make sure that it reaches the relevant person. He requested the name of the representative after the meeting to make sure that SANParks looks at it as well

Marilda Wiegand – Phalaborwa Tourism Association

Wanted to make a comment and pose 3 questions.

Comment - For those of you who don’t know, in this room right here, we have LEDET is sitting here, we have Foskop, we have the municipality sitting here, we have the Phalaborwa Accommodation Association sitting and we have the Phalaborwa Tourism Association and we’ve got the Phalaborwa Business Fraternal here. We’ve got everybody here that is going to make a difference. If we all work together, if we all buckle down and support this project, indeed Mr Ocotram is right it’s not only going to take the activity hub, it’s going to take all of us and if we can do that, we will not just be a place that you can visit and go through. It will be place that we can all stay and our guests will so my question to Mr Daniels is:

1. You mentioned the 177 vehicles that travel through at this point in time – is there a prediction of visitors that you would possibly be expecting to come to this Activity Hub, is there a rough idea of the expectation of the visitors?

JD thanked Ms Wiegand and mentioned that SANParks conducted a thumb suck based on number of cars, predictions on how many of them will be 25% of the existing ones from overnight visitors, a certain percentage that work in Phalaborwa that want something to do. Based on that, we got to a number and we think that it will be successful and hopefully it will be much more successful. We did a pre-feasibility just by a thumb-suck, i.e. will it be worth it to do it and create x jobs otherwise the R25 million that NDT spends they could spend somewhere else and make better returns. Whether it will work, he hopes it will be much better than that. It is a conservative approach that we've followed.

2. Is there going to be specific operating hours? You mentioned the bush dinners that would obviously be in the evenings. Would we be able to as a community utilise the amphitheatre to do a traditional show or a concert or something like that for our community?

JD mentioned that what we are trying to do is utilise optimally, if it requires later operating times or two shifts for staff to receive people then so be it. It was never the intention for it to be day thing, closing at 16h00 and then it's done. The bush at night is wonderful, fires, spa's under the moonlight, there are a lot of things that you want to do at night, when it's cooler, when it's dark it's wonderful. It was always to be utilised optimally for the benefit of the people coming to the Hub.

3. There is definitely spec for SMME's that is very exciting and guides. My question is the staff that will be used within Hub, will these staff be coming from SANParks or will they be members of our community?

JD responded by stating that it would be new positions and not take existing staff and move them around. New positions, new recruiting again from the community, from this area who will be a SANParks employee but coming from the community.

Zena Smit

The 177 cars, did you measure cars going in and did you also take into consideration the number of cars coming out? In the past, only the cars going in were measured because they (SANParks) had no idea of the number of cars coming out. Ms Smit mentioned that Phalaborwa Gate was quite a popular "coming out" destination.

JD mentioned that it was possibly cars going through the gate as far as he knew it was only the cars coming out but would look at it.

Jors Bertens

Mr Bertens made a statement and a plea that the difference between Kruger Park and Phalaborwa is that Kruger is a brand and you (SANParks) almost run on full occupancy eleven months out of the year. We at Phalaborwa, we are struggling with our image, historically was seen and still is seen as a mining town. A lot of us are trying to get tourism going for more than 25 odd years, what we need is marketing and we need people to contribute to marketing. My plea to SANParks and LEDET and the municipality is that when we have this Hub and it's going to be launched, we need to do our marketing in time. To the trades, to the foreign trades, to the local trades, to South Africans and he was aware that SANParks had access to that. We already have guesthouses, lodges, lots of activities but that's our frustration and we believe big role players like SANParks, like LEDET need to allocate

some funds in order to put us on the map. That will help filling your activities and will help filling up the Bed & Breakfast, the guesthouses, the lodges and so forth. Please consider that as part of the many millions that you are going to develop or that you are going to spend on this development.

JD stated that it was a fair point and thanked Mr Bertens. From SANParks side, there is a big drive to get more people in the north and the south is full. He mentioned that there were limited picnic sites in the north. He mentioned that should you stay in Satara, you have access to 5 different picnic sites. Look at infrastructure to accommodate similar experiences in the south. SANParks was looking at initiatives to visit the north as well. He felt that the marketing drive should be more focussed on the north. There have been discussions within SANParks, for instance bird life people: “what bird species do you get in the north?” and do marketing drive on that. He reiterated that the activity hub was not the “be-all-and-end-all”, it is an initiator that will grow over time and must grow with the times. A product might not be viable and it can be withdrawn or removed and replaced with something else. The passion and intent is seen and he has heard suggestions that the Hub is wanted. Glad to hear that everyone is positive, however negative feedback might be received. The right “make-up” must be found in order for the Hub to work for the town.

Zena Smit

The closing of the Giryando border post has impacted dramatically on accommodation in Phalaborwa. Is there any chance of lifting the ban of traveling through without accommodation in the Park? Alternatively, can Phalaborwa town be registered or used as a peripheral camp to the Kruger National Park, where if you stay a night in Phalaborwa, yes, then you can also travel through as you are allowed to do on the other side in Mozambique. Why can people not spend the night in Phalaborwa and then travel through the Kruger National Park because it has made a serious impact on certain sections of the town.

JD mentioned that Ms Smit had raised the same question previously and some answer was given to him. He ensured the meeting that he would follow up the matter as the argument made sense. He would take the matter up with SANParks management.

Moses Ngobeni - LEDET

Mr Ngobeni reiterated what was previously said with regards to the Hub. He stated, “We are together” and remembered at the first consultative meeting, the MEC was present and he committed Limpopo in terms of marketing, that should there be an activity hub, where various packages had been created, the Province would easily spend Government’s money as what NDT has done with the R25 million allocated to the project. He continued to say that when there are these types of activities, to drive tourism in Limpopo, LEDET would support it. He mentioned that 1 week from the date of the meeting, Limpopo Province would be signing an agreement with South African Tourism to ensure that of the 5 million tourists that South Africa has to ensure, the Province’s contribution would be 500 000 tourists. He made reference to the upgrade of Skukuza, added developments and marketed the upgrade, and even though there were other activities around the Park such as at Graskop, people were not interested in the surroundings, but the icon called Kruger National Park. He added that Limpopo had nothing even though 70% of Kruger was within Limpopo, although there are no boundaries inside Kruger – when in Kruger, you are in Kruger. When an activity hub is created at the gate in Phalaborwa, he was happy with the name of Phalaborwa Wildlife Activity Hub, it began to brand Phalaborwa and suddenly the town would be branded in

association with Kruger which did not happen before. He was elated that SANParks would ensure the promotion and funding in terms of marketing of the Hub. He added that LEDET committed to the marketing of the Hub.

Alex Chauke – Ba-Phalaborwa Local Municipality

1. Is it going to be accessible for children?

JD responded that it will be accessible and it was not developed for adults only. All areas were developed with children in mind. He mentioned that because of the size of the Hub, the “deeper” one moved into the Hub, the quieter one would need to be. The Kruger Park Management Plan meeting highlighted that Kruger was in need of picnic sites where noise levels could not be limited. Can make certain areas with controlled noise levels, e.g. the rhino orphanage and certain where noise levels would not be an issue.

2. Are you going to have more activities for children?

3. For the visitors are they going to pay entrance fee or is it going to be free?

JD mentioned that when the feasibility study was conducted, there was an entrance fee. The initial thinking was that the entrance fee would allow visitors participate in certain activities and other activities, would require additional fees. There was not a detailed study conducted for locals, only an overall study was conducted looking at what people would be prepared to pay. There should be an entrance fee for operational purposes. We need to get to a good model to get optimal people there to participate and to spend money there.

Thys Luyt

Just for clarity, if I enter the Kruger National Park and I’ve paid R540 for the day, and I go to the Hub, will I have to pay another additional entrance fee for the Hub?

JD stated that we’ve got Wild Cards and a few things associated with the Wild Card, so if you’ve got a Wild card we can say it allows you to 2 or 3 entries free per year, after that you pay. We haven’t worked out the details of the fee model as yet but what we said was we want the Hub to be separate from Kruger, even though it will be the same gate, if you want to go into the Hub, you must pay separately. Those pricing models would be established to make the Hub viable.

Thys Luyt

If we charge a conservation levy and pay a percentage levy to you (SANParks), could our guests get free entry into the Hub?

JD agreed with the possibility of the option and SANParks was not opposed to the idea. SANParks was definitely looking at value-added service for guests. He assured the meeting that those types of options would be considered in more detail at a later stage.

CdP closed the Q&A session and informed the meeting of the way forward - the pre-application public process would commence on 29 June and run its course for 30 days, closing on 31 July. He requested that all questions, comments, etc. be forwarded to him and he would respond as soon as

possible. Should no issues arise, the application would then be submitted DEA and the official PPP which was also 30 days, the Final Basic Assessment Report would then be submitted, the environmental authorisation (EA) and all I&AP's would be notified of the EA and the appeal process. He thanked Ms Wiegand for her assistance with the arrangements for the meeting. He provided his contact details as well as the Enviroworks website where the Public could access the Phalaborwa Activity Hub Draft Basic Assessment Report along with its appendices. He thanked all for taking the time to attend the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 20:06.