

## **MINUTES FOR THE PRETORIA SKUKUZA SAFARI LODGE BAR PUBLIC MEETING**

Date: 29 November 2014 Meeting Minutes

Time: 10:10 Place: SANParks Head Office

Attendees that commented (for the full list of attendees kindly refer to the attendance register):

Please refer to attendance register for full list and further attendees details.

Name	Organisation
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David de Waal (DdW)	AECOM (independent facilitator)
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Lanette Smit (LS)	Private
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Gerhard Smit (GS)	AIKONA
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Nigel Fernsby (NF)	Private
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Fred de Groot (FdG)	Africa Wild
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Elise Tempelhoff (ET)	Media 24
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Henk Bredenoord (HB)	Premier Hotels
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Herman Gildenhuys (HG)	Exigo Sustainability
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Tom Hatting (TH)	TH Architects
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Corli Havenga (CH)	Corli Havenga Traffic engineers
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Graham Young (GY)	NLA
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Blake Schraader (BS)	SANParks
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Alan Kemp (AK)	EcoAgent
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Buks Henning (BH)	Exigo Sustainability
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Neels Kruger (NK)	Exigo Sustainability
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Glenn Phillips (GP)	SANParks
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Freek Venter (FV)	SANParks
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Joep Stevens (JS)	SANParks
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Giju Varghese (GV)	SANParks
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Annemi van Jaarsveld (AvJ)	SANParks
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Blake Schraader (BS)	SANParks
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Jutta Berns-Mumbi (JB) Ecolution Consulting, Ecocentric and Solid Green

Andries Venter (AV) Sivest

Apologies

Salomon Joubert Private

Ria Milburn Private

Notes Action

### **1. Introduction and Welcoming**

All the attendees from the applicant and the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) were introduced. David de Waal (DdW) requested the I&APs present to also introduce themselves and state their interest in the project.

### **2. Meeting Formalities (Agenda, Purpose of the Meeting and Meeting Conduct)**

DdW presented that the purpose of the meeting is to give feedback on the studies, discuss potential impacts and discuss the way forward. DdW presented the meeting conduct namely: Fair and structured meeting, Work via the Chairperson, Please switch off cell phones, Don't get personal, Please do not interrupt others, For minute purposes: Briefly introduce yourself (name and interest in the project) before asking a question or making a comment, Please keep questions or comments to the discussion. Only clarification questions are allowed during the presentation and the attendees were requested to keep detailed questions for the discussion at the end. Everyone agreed to the conduct.

The agenda for the meeting was presented and everyone agreed thereto.

### **3. Project description**

Project Overview: Herman Gildenhuys (HG) presented the project localities and description via a Google Earth Satellite Image presentation. HG explained that the project entails various aspects; including the lodge and associated infrastructure. HG showed the boundary of the Skukuza Rest Camp and indicated that the lodge will be situated inside Skukuza Rest Camp, while the 'Back of House' will be located adjacent and within the area used for staff offices. The site is currently used for staff accommodation which is earmarked to be moved outside of the Rest Camp into Skukuza Village. Certain of the lodge staff will not be able to stay outside of the Park due to shifts arrangements and therefore a 16 sleeper unit for staff is proposed next to the lodge. HG further indicated on the satellite image that some of the Scientific Services Offices, Working for Water Offices and a small nursery (used for biological control of alien species) will need to be moved to make way for the lodge. He pointed out the proposed new locations of these structures. He also indicated the location of four staff houses proposed where there are currently Park Homes. He explained that 20 houses for staff is proposed directly to the east of the Living Quarters, as well as a Construction Camp directly to the south. An anaerobic digester is also proposed next to the existing sewage treatment works. HG also indicated the proposed positions of the sewage pipeline, water gravity main, water supply pipeline, new reservoir, and upgrade (new

module) at the water treatment works. He indicated that electrical lines are proposed from the existing Skukuza substation to the lodge. These will be placed underground to minimise the impact.

Design of the lodge: Tom Hattingh (TH) (architect) described the design of the lodge. The concept included to create various loose standing structures opposed to a single block building in order to minimise the visual impact of the lodge. The design also includes the thatched roof sections that are not covering the whole roof. This reduces the height as the thatch roof needs to be at an angle. The amount of rooms and the area provided necessitated a double storey (the building will not be higher than a double storey). The bedroom wings are out to the side. The Lodge will have a courtyard area in the centre. Deliveries during the operational phase will not be through the Rest Camp as all deliveries will be from behind on the service road (through Skukuza Village). During the construction phase all deliveries will be from the west and will also not take place through the Rest Camp. Due to the lodge's introvertic design it will give the guest an outdoor experience without compromising the rest of the camp. Lights will be directed to the centre of the building. Natural material will be used for construction. Five bungalows will have to be removed to accommodate the lodge. There will also be a lattice screen in between the bungalows and the lodge which will act as a visual screen.

Gerhard Smit (GS) wanted to know which bungalows will be removed and asked whether any of the luxury bungalows will be impacted. TH showed the applicable bungalows on the presentation. The luxury bungalows are situated closer to the Sabie River and will not be impacted.

TM referred to the 'virgin view' on slide 10. He showed the lattice screen around the side. Two views of the lodge (from the north and east) were shown in between the current trees. He indicated that balconies are proposed only in the VIP suites.

Green building principles: Jutta Berns-Mumbi (JB) explained that she is part of the sustainability consultants appointed to assist with the green building aspects. They guide the project team on best international green building guidelines. She referred to the Categories listed on slide 11. They are making recommendations to ensure that the design is as green as possible and will also recommend sustainable site erosion control. They assist in ensuring that the project will be socially and environmental acceptable. They also look at minimisation of water consumption including not to use drinking water for non-potable uses. They are also looking at ways to lower energy consumption and to maximise recycling. Recommendations are made regarding the removal of VOCs that is generally found in paint. The aim is to implement international best practice principles and interventions in line with recognised and renowned green building rating systems, as well as SANS 1162:2011 for Responsible Tourism. Services of the lodge: HG stated that sufficient electricity is available from the current Eskom agreement. The electricity provision will be supplemented with solar power. Solar panels to be placed out of view from the tourists staying inside Skukuza Rest Camp. The water required for the lodge will be within the limits set in current water use licence and no additional water abstraction rights from the

Sabie River will be required. Grey water will be re-used where possible. The sewage upgrades will include the pipeline and addition of the anaerobic digester. Henk Bredenoord (HB) wanted to know if there will be a back-up generator. Andries Venter (AV) stated that the existing Skukuza generator still has enough capacity for the lodge as well.

Motivation: GP gave a presentation on the motivation for the project. He explained the demand for this type of development. He also stated that SANParks is promoting the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Events (MICE) market. He added that this is an old concept as there are already conference facilities in the Kruger National Park (KNP). This is used as an exposure mechanism to people who might not on their own visit the National Parks. They offer research conferences and international conferences. He added that Skukuza was selected as a suitable location for the lodge due to various reasons. Firstly to make better use of the conference facility ("use what we have"). **The airport has been re-opened and is currently being used. The Charter services are less now that the airport is open and using scheduled flights.** Unemployment is high around the park and SANParks need to incorporate people and create jobs. The current occupancies in Skukuza is 85% and is steadily growing. GP referred to a graph over the years were the amount of visitors spike every time there is a new addition to infrastructure in the park. GP explained the SANParks' site selection process and explained that transport was the major issue and therefore the proximity to the conference the deciding factor. Alternatives proposed: HG explained that various alternatives were looked at for the placement of the lodge. Glenn Phillips (GP) stated that the site was the most suitable due to the proximity to the conference facility. Two alternative locations were considered: at the Skukuza golf course and directly to the east of Skukuza Rest Camp. Tom Hattingh (TH) added that it reduces the amount of vehicle movement of people in the camp. HG explained that various areas were investigated in terms of housing alternatives in order to ensure that the environmentally most acceptable sites were selected. These sites were identified by means of various factors that included specialist input.

#### **4. Specialist feedback:**

Visual Impact Assessment: Graham Young (GY) explained the visual assessment. He explained that Skukuza is the most 'commercial' of the camps and occurs in the high intensity leisure zone; however it could be vulnerable to change if the proposed develop is inappropriately handled. Protection, restoration and enhancement of the existing character of the camp is therefore important. Areas with the strongest visual and aesthetic appeal are those areas along the Sabie River and the heavily treed areas dotted with the typical round rondavels/bungalows. The landscape in the vicinity of the lodge and housing units have a moderate value as it exhibits some positive character, but there is also evidence of alteration/degradation/erosion of features. GY explained the viewsheds and showed the visual representation of the lodge in the landscape (refer to slide 17-21). He explained that the proposed lodge will have a localised impact. The vegetation and existing rondavels already screen the development. It will however be further mitigated with the planting of vegetation (in particular trees and shrubs). The visual screening methods proposed will be effective. Driving past the lodge to the rondavels in the western section of the camp will generate the main impact. The rondavels are all facing away from the lodge towards the Sabie River and when sitting at the rondavel you won't be able to see the lodge. Natural colours and thatch are proposed to be used for the lodge (as is the case with the existing infrastructure in the camp). With time the thatch will turn to grey as is the case with the existing rondavels.

GS enquired where the parking area is located. GY showed the parking area on the layout (north-west of the lodge).

Fred de Groot (FdG): Referred back to the previous question on which rondavels will be removed and will they be placed elsewhere? GY showed the five rondavels to be removed. GP responded that they won't be built somewhere else **at this stage** as the lodge will cater for the lost accommodation.

### **1. Concern to be noted,..**

@ an average of R1,000.00 per day for two persons and the occupancy rate at 82%, for Skuks,....1x rondavel should generate, 300 days per annum = R300,000.00 X 5 destroyed rondavels, @ R300,000.00 each a total loss of,=R1,500,000.00 Per annum,...

The chairperson needed to direct this question twice at GP and his response still not convincing!!

**"at this stage"!!!,..**

Should the lodge not generate the revenue expected and it is then decided to reconstruct these rondawels for revenue benefit, my concern then, where will this take place within the boundaries of Skukuza???

GS wanted to know if any of the semi-luxury units in the vicinity of the diplomatic camp (dip camp) will be demolished for purposes of the spa. GP explained that the Dip camp is a conference room and not accommodation and that the changes to the Dip Camp will not involve the demolishing of accommodation units.

Traffic Impact Assessment: Corli Havenga (CH) presented the Traffic study. The traffic impact assessment utilized the gate entry data dating 2007 to 2012, the Traffic Impact Study done for the Conference Facility, dated May 2008 as well as the Traffic Assessment (TA) done for the Marula Region Strategic Environmental Assessment Kruger Park, dated July 2008. The measurements were done at the major intersections (refer to slide24 for counting stations). She stated that the guidelines that are normally used are for sub-urban areas which are not applicable in this instance. CH stated that that the Park has decided on density of two vehicles per kilometre as a guideline density measure. Three gates are expected to be (predominantly) used by tourists travelling to the conference facility/lodge; The Numbi, Phabeni and Kruger Gates. Gate data was used from 2008 to derive current expected traffic. Traffic from staff staying outside of the park is expected to be minimal as they will be transported by bus. Currently some conference delegates stay outside the Kruger Park due to lack of appropriate accommodation inside Skukuza, adding additional trips. The provision of the lodge is expected to lower the number of vehicles travelling in and out of the park. Currently a lot of the conference goers also stay inside Skukuza Rest Camp, but drive to the conference facility to avoid the long walk. Driving and parking vehicles inside the camp could be avoided if the lodge is next to Conference Facility. This also creates a shortage in parking space. CH stated that they expect a maximum of 128 trips per day (worst case scenario). In the study they recognise there will be more trips on the (game viewing) roads surrounding Skukuza as a result of the lodge. They have looked at four different scenarios: Scenario 1: All the Safari Lodge guests use the Numbi Gate; Scenario 2: All the Safari Lodge guests use the Phabeni Gate; Scenario 3: All the Safari Lodge guests use the Paul Kruger Gate; Scenario 4: The Safari Lodge guests use all three of the above mentioned gates in equal numbers. CH stated that the road between Kruger Gate and Skukuza is already above the KNP's guideline density (more than 2

vehicles / km). Some mitigation currently proposed include a Park & Ride facility that will be built at the Kruger Gate and those visitors shall be incentivised through an accommodation discounting structure for making use of the Park & Ride facility.

GS: wanted to know what the plans are to reduce the density. Has any allowance been made if everybody is using their own vehicles. CH stated that their report will be updated to make reference to this scenario and it will be taken into account. GS wanted to know if it has been considered. DdW stated that the question and response will be moved to the discussion segment of the meeting. NF asked if it is taken into account that one person will be attending the conference and the person with them will be driving around. DdW stated that only clarity questions are allowed at this stage the question will be moved to the discussion segment.

Heritage Impact Assessment: Neels Kruger (NK) presented the Heritage Impact Assessment component. NK explained that various heritage features were identified in Skukuza, however these are located away from the proposed developments. The surface areas around the proposed lodge site and associated infrastructure are largely disturbed. Two features of potential heritage concern were identified. These are two baobabs which apparently were planted by Col. Stevenson Hamilton. These two baobabs will be retained and be incorporated into the landscaping of the lodge. NF: wanted to know if NK was employed by the Kruger National Park. NK stated that he is an independent outside consultant from Exigo.

NF enquired about the location of Col. Stevenson Hamilton's dwelling. NK wanted to know if NF is talking about his dwelling in 1940. Joep Stevens stated that as far as he is aware his last dwelling was outside the camp.

## **2. Concern to be noted,..**

The question put forward to the chairperson was based on such of common practise, regarding home gardening and tells one that the baobabs were planted in close proximity of a dwelling occupied by Col. Stevens Hamilton..Those trees come from a place, far away and were planted with purpose and intent and probably, he thought, instead they go to waste, plant them somewhere close where they can be nurtured, monitored and protected,... Otherwise why not just plant them where they were found!!!, in a place, far away, where they belong,???

My question directed at the chairperson has to do with this dwelling in particular and simple reasoning tells me that this dwelling was situated very close to these baobabs,...

Reference:- 7.4. Archaeology, Basic draft assessment report,

Stevenson-Hamilton planted two Baobab trees in what was then the front garden of their residence.

My concern here, where is this archaeological site to be found??, even if only the remaining foundations.This new lodge development Could very easily be placed on top of that particular site of heritage value!!! What action has been Undertaken should such a archaeological finding come about during construction phases???. Comments here were not very reassuring.

Flora Impact Assessment: Dr. Buks Henning presented the Flora findings. He stated that the vegetation units vary from completely modified gardens to slightly degraded thickets, open woodland and riparian woodland areas. The preferred sites are mostly degraded. A few alternative sites that were investigated are now not being considered for development due to scarce tree species on those sites. The baobab trees were incorporated into the design of the lodge. Michelle Hoffmeyer (Skukuza Nursery) and her team will move the big trees to the nursery and then replant them after construction. The cycads present on the lodge site do not naturally occur in the area and merely represent garden ornamentals. SANParks do not require a permit for the movement of these cycads. They will be moved and transplanted after construction. Sensitive areas identified in the study area are the Sabie and N'waswitshaka rivers. These areas will largely not be impacted except where the sewage pipeline crosses the N'waswitshaka river. The pipeline crossing over the N'waswitshaka river will be on the existing bridge.

Fauna Impact Assessment: Dr. Alan Kemp (AK) presented the findings regarding vertebrate fauna. He explained that he will be presenting the three groups they have investigated in the study namely Mammals, Avifauna and Herpetofauna.

Mammals: AK stated that the terrestrial habitat has been transformed with the exception being the building plots in the eastern staff village. In the rest camp, administrative and worker compounds, terrestrial habitat is functionally isolated by perimeter fences. 103 mammal species occur in the Skukuza district of which 30 are regarded as Red Data species. None of the red data species are located in the footprint areas. The proposed development is spatially insignificant. The smaller and flying mammals (bats) are not restricted by the fences around the camp. The larger mammals are kept out by the fences around the camp.

Avifauna: AK explained that the most important habitats for avifauna is the widespread bushveld habitat and the riverine wetlands. The area was assessed as follows: Good-medium for local movements and feeding for most species; Less suitable as medium-poor for roosting; Poor for nesting for most of the species. No threatened bird species is expected to be affected by the proposed developments, other than possibly very slightly by the marginal increase in the footprint of the Skukuza complex.

Herpetofauna: AK said that the area is rich in reptile and amphibian species. The three drainage lines, especially the Sabie River, function as important dispersal corridors. 2 red data species is present in the study site and another one has a small possibility of occurrence. None of the Red Data Listed species is expected to be affected by the proposed developments. HG provided a summary of the impacts identified by the specialists. Mitigation measures were

proposed in the Environmental Management Plan (EMP) and these mitigation measures He stated that the EMP will be the "bible" of construction and needs to be implemented. An onsite Environmental Control Officer (ECO) as well as an independent ECO will be involved to ensure implementation of the EMP. No impacts were identified that are not mitigatable or of high significance following mitigation. Fauna and visual impacts during construction are the most significant impacts identified. Long term impacts are expected to be of low to negligible significance.

HG provided an overview of the way forward: The draft Basic Assessment Report (BAR) will be on review until 14 Jan 2015. Another public meeting will be held on the 10th of January in Skukuza. The comments and concerns raised by Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) will be included in the final BAR, which will also be provided to I&APs to comment on. DdW explained the final BAR will show the marked changes. An appeal process is also allowed for under the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA).

#### **5. Discussions:**

HB wanted to know if the meeting on the 10th will be the same as this meeting. DdW confirmed that it will be the same (similar agenda and discussion points).

GS enquired on when the comment period for final BAR will be. HG responded that it will only be after the comments have been incorporated and after the meeting in Skukuza.

GS enquired about the vehicles usage in the traffic study. He stated that game drives of individuals in their own vehicles need to be considered. This comment was noted for action. GS stated that he can see that there is a lot of wonderful work being done and that if the development was outside the park they would have had his full support.

#### **Action to be undertaken:**

**Traffic study to be updated with these comments.**

GS requested that the meeting minutes be sent for review and amended before submission. He requested that a follow up meeting be held where unclear matters can be discussed. This can be done when the final report is available. DdW stated that he thinks it is a valid request for a focus group meeting.

#### **Action to be undertaken:**

**Additional focus group meeting to be held to discuss traffic concerns**

NF stated that in the past they have been invited to meetings for the Malelane project and then also another meeting in Skukuza, however a week before it was supposed to happen the participation was cancelled (informed that they could not attend). DdW wanted to know from the SANParks team for clarification who the applicant is of the Malelane project? GP stated that it is Malelane Safari Lodge Investment. DdW stated that the Malelane issues are to be discussed within the Malelane Environmental Process. Annemi van Jaarsveld (AvJ) added that she is not sure what happened in the past but that she knows that one meeting was held at Groenkloof and one at the Malelane gate. This aspect was noted for discussion on bilateral level. HB requested that they keep the discussion relevant to this project.

#### **Action to be undertaken:**

**SANParks discuss on bilateral level.**



FdG wanted to know if the Traffic assessment has taken the other developments into consideration (including the Malelane project). CH stated that other further projects were not taken into consideration. DdW stated that it will be noted and considered.

**Action to be undertaken:**

**Traffic study to obtain Malelane project info and include in the assessment**

GS stated that he has typed up questions and handed them to the EAP that he would like answers on.

GS asked GP what his title is and since when he has been in that position. GP responded to say that he is Managing Executive of tourism and marketing and he has been in the position since 2002 (12.5 years). DdW wanted to know how the questions are relevant to the project. GS assured him there will be relevance regarding developments in the park.

NF stated that the park is already too over commercialised. Canada's National Parks have been trying to communicate to SANParks regarding over-commercialisation. He mentioned that there are parks in the USA that is also already over commercialised. He said that he can see KNP going in the same direction. In 2010 when they asked the question of how many hotels will be built they heard about 6. And if this is how it is going, we know why "Custos Naturae" has been removed from the logo of SANParks. He requested if anybody can state why it has been removed as it states that SANParks is the custodians of National Parks. He stated that when they did surveys people were against cell phones in KNP and then they still went ahead. The amount of traffic in the southern section of the park is already bad and then people are talking on their cellphones calling other people to sightings. The poachers are also using cell phones. DdW asked that he put this concern in writing and then send it on to SANParks (Glen Phillips).

**Action to be undertaken:**

**NF to provide this comment in writing to SANParks**

FdG wanted to know what SANParks' core mandate is. ....

**3. Concern to be noted,..**

And what percentage of the Sanparks annual budget goes to Tourism and what percentage to conservation. I raised this question trying to determine the greater of two priorities, maintaining And conserving National assets or delving/sourcing for more financial gain out of national assets and heritage sources.

I ask, Renee Kruger ,of the EIP, please may these lines be added to the minutes

GP stated that if they would like him to do his presentation at that stage as it clarifies the questions. DdW stated that they have agreed before the meeting that SANParks will do a presentation after this meeting as a separate meeting to provide clarity on the bigger picture (projects and aspects outside the scope of this Basic Assessment).

After GP completed this presentation, almost faultless and well presented at that, yet in afterthought leaves one pondering and doubtful. At the end GP made a rather subdued remark 50/50 allocation, that the annual Sanparks budget allocation. Makes very much sense insofar that None of the other departments of Sanparks receive anything at all. Logistics, maintenance, operations etc.??? A definite level of neglect in other departments has become very visible. If the lodge development deserves such high level of exposure in the broader Context of Responsible tourism then I feel all national parks are deserving of a financial support as mentioned above. While all new Development gets prime attention by the authorities, other departments get left behind the very Important departments that keep the “ship” floating!!!

It has become very apparent that Sanparks have embarked on a financial mission so as to satisfy other demanding channels, that require funding rather than and over the back of conservation,.

I ask, Renee Kruger ,of the EIP, please may these lines be added to the minutes.

GS enquired who handles the strategic decisions on tourism in the KNP. GP confirmed that it is his team. GS wanted to know if SANParks knew they needed a lodge while working on the conference facility. GP stated that when they were busy with construction of the conference facility it came to light that they might need more accommodation, but they were not sure of what type of accommodation they would need to develop. GS wanted to know why it was not mentioned in that process. DdW wanted to know what his point was in order for everybody to understand. GS stated that they have requested a lot of information in the past and the information was not provided. GS wanted to know when the plans came to light that they need a lodge. GP stated that they knew when they built the conference facility. He added to say he would have rather wanted the accommodation to be sorted before the built the conference facility, but due to funding not being available at the time they needed to go ahead with the conference facility first. DdW stated that the purpose of the meeting is to raise comments on the report that is out on review and not necessarily on the strategic planning of SANParks. GS then wanted to know how he will then go about clearing his answers. DdW stated that SANParks will formally need to respond on the written notes. GP added that the documents have been ready for collection for a long time and that GS was notified of the fact and that it was not yet collected.

FdG said that the people feel that all these developments taking place in KNP is fragmented and they feel they need to be consolidated. DdW explained that the EIA meetings have a very specific focus and that, although cumulative impacts are taken into account, to an extent it is not on a strategic level. He understands the need for a forum where the strategic projects of KNP gets shown and he asked whether a map with all the projects can be added. This will include planned projects. He added that it must be seen as planning and planning can change as well. He added that it is a challenge to consolidate these aspects when different applicants do developments although they might share a similar larger area (e.g. KNP). HG stated that Exigo will, with the assistance of the traffic engineers, talk to the specialist on traffic on the Malelane project and include it in the Skukuza traffic study as a cumulative impact.

**Action to be undertaken:**

**\*A map of all projects to be provided by SANParks – to be included in final BAR.**

**\*Cumulative traffic impact to be incorporated into the BAR**

NF wanted to know what measures have been incorporated into the designs of the lodge for bats to not occupy the roofs. NF said that he feels that the KNP has had a poor history with bats. TH stated that nothing specifically was included; and he has not had problems on the lodges he has designed. He added that where there are normally problems there are dark enclosed spaces in the roofs, which will not be the case here. AK stated that it has been highlighted in their report as an issue. He requested that Dr. Naas Rautenbach, the mammologist on the project, also elaborate. Dr. Rautenbach stated that he was involved in various bat studies in the Kruger National Park. He added that the EAP has requested him to look at bats and they have looked at the design (including the proposed solar panels) and there are no areas that are particularly suitable to act as bat habitats. Blake Schrader (BS) added that bats have been in KNP for a very long time and they will still be long after the people who are presented there are gone. He stated that they have never seen entirely bat proof structures to date; but they are however improving designs continuously. The KNP has a Standard Operating Procedure for handling/managing bats, which can be made available and if there are suggestions they will gladly hear them out.

GS wanted to know within which times the lodge will operate for guests to arrive (gate times). GP confirmed that they will be the same as the normal gate times. GS stated that he is pleased that only normal gate times will be used. GS wanted to know why the Malelane Lodge is different. DdW stated that this is not relevant to this project and that he needs to put the question in writing for response.

GS wanted to know who will transport the staff to the site. BS confirmed it will be by the SANParks staff bus. GS wanted to know if the possible approval of the plans for the Skukuza lodge set a precedent for more hotels/lodges in the KNP. DdW stated that that question will be handled in the SANParks presentation after the meeting.

GS wanted to know where the funds are derived from. Giju Varghese (GV) stated that R240mil is received from the state. The proposed infrastructure will come from state funded money and the revenue derived from it will go to SANParks. GS stated that he would like the budget not to be overspent.

GS said that he is very pleased that the baobabs will be preserved. His concern is however that baobab roots are shallow extensive roots. He was concerned that the roots will be damaged or the roots will cause damage to structures. DdW referred the question to BH. BH stated that he has inspected the design and that it allows for enough space. He added that they have also looked at the protection of the trunks from graffiti. The KNP botanist Michelle Hofmeyer has also indicated that they will landscape the area around the trees with creepers and shrubs to avoid people from going to the trees. GS enquired that due to the fact that the baobabs do not naturally occur in the area; is it not better to move them where they will flourish? DdW asked if it is possible. BH responded that it is possible and that it has been done with great success; however the trees also have heritage value. GS stated that he has much appreciation for the fact that they

will be preserved he is just hoping that they will not in a few years' time see that they should not have done this.

#### **4. Concern to be noted,..**

Boabab have a sense of astuteness/openness that constitutes their existence. By confining these trees in a atrium environment enclosed, will this not be detrimental to their existence???

GS stated that they believe that additional development will lead to:

- ☐ Increased violation to Park Rules given the current approach to control and compliance.
- ☐ Increased potential for poachers and other criminals to lose themselves in the crowd.
- ☐ Increased chemical pollution, combustion fumes and oil spills on roads.
- ☐ Increased visual pollution.
- ☐ Increased light pollution
- ☐ Increased noise pollution
- ☐ Increased human pollution.
- ☐ Increased environmental destruction.
- ☐ Increased road kills to animals by shuttle vehicles.

DdW said that these concerns will be noted.

GS said that a study in 2004 and 1999 by UNISA has stated that the southern part has already been over-utilised and that is their concern. DdW requested that GS send the study to the EAP if they don't have that already.

#### **Action to be undertaken:**

##### **GS to forward study to Exigo**

HB wanted to know if the traffic study was an extrapolation of the current traffic situation in the park or if it has specifically been that of the MICE market. HB explained to same that the traffic from the MICE market differs from the normal traffic patterns in the park. The MICE market tends to be single occupancy and travel in by bus and air. He wanted to know if they looked at the traffic patterns and if the traffic situation will be worsened ('by a certain percentage'). DdW stated that it will be noted for further clarification (in the final BAR). TH stated that the report is clear they have added 128 cars for the 128 rooms and placed that on the existing traffic. TH said that what HB is actually alluding to is that the impact will be much less. DdW stated that even though he was not involved in any survey, he was at a conference at the conference facility at the end of October and about 50% of the people that attended came by organised transport. TH stated that the consultant has looked at the worst case scenario on traffic. Dr. Rautenbach wanted to

know if the amount of vehicles will not be the same as what is now allowed through the gates. BS stated that if they sleep over they will be part of the overnight guests and if they come in as a day visitor to the conference they will be part of the day visitor quotas. FV stated that they are aware that traffic on the Kruger Gate road is already a problem due to services and staff also using that road and that they are looking at options like loop roads for the guest to drive on.

**Action to be undertaken:**

**Clarity to be provided regarding traffic concerns in the final BAR**

GS wanted to know if there are any scientific studies available for the need of lodges in KNP. GP stated that they have received this comment prior to the meeting and that it was included in the comments and response report already, so he will read the response "Various research has been concluded, some by SA Tourism, Universities and internally. Internal surveys to our current customer base (mainly conducted by UNW) do indicate that a lodge is not required and that the current visitor base are happy staying with the current selfcatering options, however, from a business perspective, with occupancies of 88% in Skukuza, additional accommodation is required. As part of our Responsible Tourism Strategy 2022, product diversification is a key component." He stated that SANParks need to be relevant to assure the conservation of the park.

FdG said that his sources told him that the project has been out on tender or awarded? GP stated they should please verify their sources. TH said that all the work being undertaken is of a preliminary concept design nature. Drawings are not yet completed. The project has therefore not been out on tender.

GS wanted to know how many similar developments are proposed. GP stated in the Kruger National park only these two are proposed. GS wanted to know if more lodges have been under discussion. GP denied that more lodges have been discussed.

**5. Concern to be noted,..**

Once again but I do hope not, it seems that the fragmented nature of each EIA or BAR for that matter gets treated as such even though very similar by nature. Rather it seems double standards are applicable here. "EIA meetings have a very specific focus and that, although cumulative impacts are taken into account, to an extent it is not on a strategic level." As per DdW above.

On two occasions on this very soil of Groenkloof were more than two other hotels discussed in Kruger alone! But how can SANPARKS be at all aware of these discussions when never attending any of those meetings. Not one single representative at the Malelane meetings! My concern, this seems rather odd and if Sanparks had it at all to good for all developments taking place within the park then surely at least a representative should be visible.

ET wanted to know when the lodge will open if all goes according to plan. GP states that the plan is to open in June 2017 but that depends on all the approvals being in place. ET wanted to know why only a Basic Impact Assessment was undertaken. HG replied that no listed activities under EIA listed activities(requiring a Scoping and EIA process) have been triggered. ET enquired when the date is of review of the Final BAR. HG said that it depends on the amount of comments and updates required to studies that will need to be done. Only then will the final BAR be placed on

review. He stated that all registered I&APs will be notified once the final BAR is available for review.

FdG asked why some activities are no longer in the listing notice 2 (requiring a Scoping and EIA process). He wanted to know who changes the listed activities in the government notices. DdW stated that it is a government process and explained the process by which regulations are changed.

#### **6. Concern to be noted,..**

It seems my concern was misunderstood/interpreted. I repeat the question,...

Certain government notices, GN listings re; government gazette, were amended and relaxed in favour of these projects. Our .Gov, honourable Edna Molewa on adhoc basis, does not go about changing these listings (NEMA) for the fun of debacle in parliament. Someone needs to apply for these amendments to take place!! My question rephrased, "Who was that entity that applied for Such amendments and why,..??

GS thanked everyone for the opportunity to provide comments. He furthermore stated that not a lot of people are registered on the project because the public is saying "you are wasting your time it will go ahead". DdW stated that his comment was noted.

#### **7. Concern to be noted,..**

A lot was discussed at the meeting which did not appear in these minutes!! Indeed maybe these matters only noticeable in the bigger picture of conservation, yet not relevant under the loupe!! I took the opportunity of reading the first three lines of a letter published on a public forum, to Whom it may concern, hence was noted though I needed the authors consent,....

DdW acknowledged,...

Herewith the full letter and consent,...

[url=<http://sagr.co.za/forum/viewtopic.php?p=230901#p230901>]Subject: General discussion on proposed hotels in KNP[/url]

[quote="PennyinSA"]Shewwww I have just returned from the Park after a two week stay. Skukuza was bursting at the seams - no parking in any of the car parks at the shop and the toilets under huge strain with flushing power a huge issue. The same at Lower Sabie where the toilet facilities just cannot cope. I fell in the dark passage next to the construction taking place behind reception as there was no light. The car park could not have taken one more car with people driving over aloes to park on the curbs. The shop had a queue that snaked around the whole area representing a half an hour wait. The toilets at Nkhulu were NOT functioning at all. Vehicles were turned away where people were desperate to use ablutions but were told that due to water problems they could not. We tried to buy the grandchildren an icecream at 3 p.m. one afternoon when it was over 40 degrees and were told sorry shop is closed for stock take. The same happened at Afsaal where even toilets were locked and only the paraplegic toilet left open which was in a shocking state. There is no way that the infrastructure can cope even now never mind adding another hotel into the mix. I have

filled in feedback forms over the years religiously and despite having had major problems have never even been graced with a reply.

The baboon and vervet problem is out of control in certain areas and has to be addressed before there is a serious incident. We had breakfast regularly in the day visitor's picnic area at Lower Sabie and on the last day (Thursday 9th October) were told to be careful as there was an elephant in the enclosure. We could smell the dung so knew the attendant was speaking the truth. We asked how the elephant got in and were told that the electricity was never switched on feeding the perimeter fence.

The time has come for major attention to be given to upgrading existing accommodation, attending to poor linen, stained mattresses, redecoration and equipment in kitchens and forget about the things we do not need.

I love Kruger Park with all my heart and would hate to see further development ruin my heritage. It is NOT a holiday resort and people who want that kind of holiday should look elsewhere. My January trip is already booked and in November I will be making my bookings for Sept/Oct next year surely Sanparks should be listening to what we the loyal supporters are saying - listen to your people. Ask them what they want and they will probably be surprised to hear many speak with one voice - No more development. Fix what you have and make it work efficiently and you will reap the rewards of occupancy rates nigh on 100% throughout the year.

Its not long now before all the concessions will start to revert to Sanparks - what will happen to the occupancy rate then and who will maintain these?[/quote]

Hi Penny,

You may be confused as to my PM to you,...however allow me too explain,...

You're recent post, as up above, struck me sincerely!!!,....valid content!!!, sparking a initiative,...then I took it one level further, without your consent,.. Please pardon me,...I was due to represent a forum, anti hotel development and further exploitation AW, when in the back of my mind having read your post,...I was to represent with at least some canon fodder,...Your posting came close too hand,...

Yesterday, at the Groenkloof meet, regarding hotel development, I read to all the first two and a half lines of your letter/post and waived the full physical rest too the audience.

It was accepted in the minutes and a copy of the full letter was requested by the chairperson! That to be the last two and a half lines read to a rather predominant crowd. It was very well worth it!!!

May I please have your consent so as to further the full letter too the Environment Practitioners handling the case in study.

According to the chairperson, you opinion carries credibilty and Needs to be taken into account,...

I thank you sincerely and hope you will reply soon,...

The authors reply/consent,..

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- 

## **Re: General discussion on proposed hotels in KNP**

**Sent:** Mon Dec 01, 2014 6:41 am

**From:** [PennyinSA](#)

**To:** [H. erectus](#)

Absolutely with my pleasure - as it comes from my heart and is an honest assessment of what the status quo actually is! Do whatever with it you will - quote it, print it, table it - we have to make them understand what we are talking about.

I have just completed by September/ October reservations and paid Sanparks their R11 000 deposit in advance - I promise you that if any of the accommodation we have during those 5 days falls short in any way I will be up in arms. My levy for Ngwenya Lodge in a three bedroomed, two bathrooms, huge lounge, kitchen with a dishwasher and very well equipped and a verandah overlooking Kruger Park works out to R138,00 per person per day and it sleeps 6.

Keep up the good work - I have less faith than most that anything will come of our protestations but we are certainly not going down without a fight.

I ask, Renee Kruger ,of the EIP, please may these lines be added to the minutes

### **6. Conclusion**

DdW thanked everyone for the attendance and input and closed the meeting . Meetings minutes will be out in 10 working days. HG stated that the review period will fall over the holiday period. GS stated that they are happy to review the minutes over the holidays. The meeting was adjourned at 13:10.

### **Further more,..**

To the reader of this I may point out that I am not of any religious stature of note, however,....

When I do grovel in the dirt and dust of heritage and so meet others,....it comes to mind that there are other folk that dwell these, call it almost sacred grounds of pristine nature and I have no other choice but respect the attitude that they uphold! I would like Sanparks to acknowledge and except such situation that has prevailed for many years!!

Sanparks, bestowed into the palms of your cupped hands,..“You were blessed the curatorship of holy ground”!!! Many peoples and much monies invested all in good faith!!!,.. Some even had to relinquish their origins to that holy ground,...



Commercialisation is a practise set there on common ground for all,..It brushes all over the same comb making room for common practise of utilisation. Pristine wilderness has a practical purpose and intent on this planet to,..for it throws into the beholders face questionable thought of his origins, purposes and intent!!

Commercialisation would be the first and foremost sign of disrespect to any form of faith and will smother this gift to life!!!! It seems that we have lost our moral integrity as conservationist to a ever demanding would be society,. Over menial natural resources left for all to abuse for whatever sake!!!

The very last fibre of life at expo'se,..

A rather awkward thought!!!

Just as much Mr. Glenn Phillips would be rather sick and tired of hearsay,...

The spoken word he himself so good at,...then

**Visuals speak louder than words,..**



Courtesy Richard Prinsloo



Courtesy Hayden



Courtesy Vanessa Butland Gueli



It required local traffic police to step –in



Courtesy Vanessa Butland Gueli



Courtesy Nan



Courtesy



Courtesy Silvia Swoboda





Courtesy Leachy

And somehow man still finds the need to challenge nature!! WHY??

Since life is all about give and take!!!some always need to suffer for the betterment of man on the take,...

**SANDF probe after army truck slams into hippo**



Courtesy News 24,...





**Courtesy pending,.. Twigga, forum member...**

**Further notes of concern, on a larger scale,...**

\* The airport has been re-opened and is currently being used. The Charter services are less now that the airport is open and using scheduled flights.

\*PDZ, Peripheral Development Zone, ...

\*Common cause for attitude in a beckoning society with no real constructive proof that such ideals will benefit conservation.

\*Probably the greatest concern,...Communizing one of the last unspoilt vestiges for political sake,

By means of commercialisation,...

\*A promissory note with no real fundament that Kruger will make life all that better for those in anticipation,..

In conclusion it is very simple to realize that Sanparks are on a mission of accumulating large

Amounts of money, the reasoning behind this no one will ever know!!!

One bold fact does express in as much that leadership in Sanparks are political pawns in a greater make-up of society!!

Thank you Exigo, for all your effort and allowing us room for thought, ...!!!

