

MINUTES FOR THE SKUKUZA SAFARI LODGE BAR PUBLIC MEETING

Date: 10 January 2015

Meeting Minutes

Time: 11:35

Place: Nombolo Mdhuli Conference Centre - Skukuza

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

Name	Organisation
David de Waal (DdW)	AECOM (independent facilitator)
Salomon Joubert (SJ)	Private
Andrew Rossaak (AR)	Emross Consulting on behalf of Lion Sands
Nigel Fernsby (NF)	Private – Aikona Member
Hanti Schrader (HS)	Lowveld Media
Dewald du Plessis (DdP)	Africa Wild
Ian Leach (IL)	Africa Wild
Herman Gildenhuys (HG)	Exigo Sustainability
Reneé Kruger (RK)	Exigo Sustainability
Cobus Havenga (CH)	Corli Havenga Traffic engineers
Graham Young (GY)	NLA
Blake Schraader (BS)	SANParks
Alan Kemp (AK)	EcoAgent
Buks Henning (BH)	Exigo Sustainability
Neels Kruger (NK)	Exigo Sustainability
Glenn Phillips (GP)	SANParks
Freek Venter (FV)	SANParks
Tracy-Lee Petersen (TP)	SANParks
Giju Varghese (GV)	SANParks
Annemi van Jaarsveld (AvJ)	SANParks
Michele Hofmeyer (MH)	SANParks
Apologies	
Tom Hattingh	Private

Notes	Action
<p>1. Introduction and Welcoming</p> <p>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.</p>	

2. Meeting Formalities (Meeting Conduct and Agenda)

DdW stated that when he says that something is noted during the discussions the means that it will be stated in the Comments and response report and be taken into consideration. DdW presented the meeting conduct. He stated that this project effects a variety of stakeholders and all have strong viewpoints that will differ he therefore stated that the following meeting conduct is important: 1) Fair and structured meeting; 2) Work via the Chairperson; 3) Please switch off cell phones; 4) Don't get personal; 5) Please do not interrupt other; 6) For minute purposes: Briefly introduce yourself (name and interest in the project) before asking a question or making a comment; 7) 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.

DdW said that when he says something is noted they are not wiping the issue from the table they will minute the issue and then address it to the best of their ability in the updated Comments and response report (CRR) as part of the final Basic Assessment report (BAR). Herman Gildenhuys (HG) added that the CRR will be updated with the comments after the meeting.

DdW requested consensus on the change of the Agenda to first include the presentation from SANParks on the bigger SANParks "picture". Consensus was reached.

3. SANParks Background Presentation

a. Presentation (Please also refer to Appendix A)

Glenn Phillips (GP) presented a presentation to provide the attendees with a background regarding the challenges that SANParks face and the strategies to battle these challenges. He stated the mission and vision of SANParks. He said that SANParks is doing work to connect to communities outside the park. He explained that SANParks have 22 parks, but that only 5 of them bring in money. The rest is operated at a loss. GP showed and discussed the strategy map for a sustainable park system and listed the challenges; in particular the funding challenges they face. SANParks only receives 12 % from a Government Grant, while the other 88% needs to come from Internal Tourism Revenues. GP discussed SANParks revenue flows and expenditure with the assistance of diagrams. GP said that they have looked at various options to generate funds. Revenue generated from the Kruger National Park and the 4 other "profitable" National Parks has to supplement the remaining, but equally important National Parks. SANParks have a few options: 1) Practice ruthless yield management (push prices up when the demand is high) or 2) Responsibly expand and diversify its product offering in order to meet its mandate of providing equitable access.

GP explained the Responsible Tourism Strategy of SANParks for the period 2012 – 2022 which is informed by the national tourism strategy. He explained that tourism is also a good job creator because a high level of skills is not needed. They have also adapted the Principles and minimum standards of nature based responsible tourism (SANS 1162: 2011) in 2011. SANParks is accountable to meet the standards.

GP said that when working on the "Butlers model" for tourist resort life-cycle model, the Kruger National Park is at the point where it will either stagnate, or with the right strategy could move to rejuvenation.

GP explained that the strategy for the next 10 years consists of connecting to the broader society, diversification of the product offering (not to only be a big 5 destination), to differentiate the parks on natural and cultural attributes and to become sales focused. He also showed the product development framework.

GP showed the visitation numbers breakdown for 2013/2014. He also showed the occupancy rates of SANParks vs the rest of the Tourism industry. GP explained the markets SANParks are targeting. GP also gave a summary of the visitor's protocol. He also discussed the footprint of Kruger infrastructure

as well as tourism trends in the park.

GP explained the parks contribution to the economy and the Public Private Partnerships (PPP). He also added that the concessions have helped them set the bar high environmentally with conditions in their contracts for e.g. the amount of water they are allowed to use per day. He included that in SANParks' history they did not allow the PPP to do something, for example only use a certain amount of water and then in Kruger they would do the opposite, that is however no longer the case.

GP gave an overview of perceptions regarding hotels and the relevance to National Parks. He said that if you look at the definition of 'hotel'; Skukuza is currently one big hotel, but just in a different manner. A hotel style development will have a far smaller footprint than that of a traditional rest camp. He added to say if you look at Mopane, it is 30 ha for the same amount of accommodation as the 1,5 ha for the lodge. Most of the current camps are essentially Hotel developments with a conference centre, restaurants, swimming pool etc. Bulk services are less costly and have less impact and with the use of new technologies are far more energy efficient. He stated that this development will enable SANParks to attract a new market that will not only help to grow revenue but will expose delegates to conservation who will hopefully become future supporters of the National Parks. Skukuza facility will be within the existing Rest Camp and will in fact enhance the area that has been designated for this development which is currently occupied by staff housing and chalets that will be demolished.

He explained that Golden Gate already has a Hotel so Skukuza will not be the first one. He added that that Conference Market is developing very well for them. He also showed that the most recent developments in KNP by SANParks have been the opening of Berg-en-Dal Rest Camp in 1984 and Mopani Rest Camp that opened 1990. No big developments have taken place since then. He explained the rationale behind choosing Skukuza. There was a need for a bigger area for research conferences. GP said that the conference centre was designed to limit the visual impact of the development. When one is driving towards the conference centre one would not expect such a big facility by looking at it. The people that he invited to have a look at the size of the main hall were surprised to see the size of the facility. He added that a development that is designed in the correct way will look and feel appropriate for the setting.

GP gave an overview of the proposed lodge. He explained that most of the information in his presentation will be given in the next presentation (refer to minutes of the Basic Assessment Presentation below).

DdW opened the floor for discussion on the SANParks presentation. DdW stated that he will take 3 questions at a time.

b. Discussion on SANParks Presentation

Dr. Solomon Joubert (SJ) stated his sincere appreciation of what they perceive to be a change in heart from SANParks and that they are allowed to take part in an open debate like this meeting. He added that the public debate on hotels has been on-going for 5 years and that he has requested since then that they open this issue to public debate. He also thanked GP for the presentation given.

SJ stated that everything revolves around money; however from a conservation point of view he has a problem with the developments. He added that during his visit in October last year October there was a programme running at the reception on the mandate – which he endorsed. He said that nowhere in the mandate was anything about commercialisation. He stated that commercialisation as key mandate and then needing money to run the operations are two totally different concepts He added that they understand the need for funding, but that they are dealing with a product that has constraints. The product that they have is the 'wilderness essence'. He said that they see the definite signs of increase in visitors, but that they still need to be aware that they are working with a product that can be damaged. He added that the need for wilderness is in growing demand. People from Gauteng, where they have modern day features, crime etc. , 'make the demand for the escape to wilderness areas all the better'. SJ suggested that people could rather be approached to make contributions to SANParks. There are people out there who would make contributions to funding and help with maintenance and

management. He added that he expects that this 10 year plan (Responsible Tourism Strategy) is something that has been (needs to be) vigorously debated within the organisation. He added that he can see that a lot of work has gone into the planning and that he applauds this, but that outside people needs to be involved to help with the generation of funds. He thinks that they will get international funding if they go that route. He added that he feels Government is getting away with murder on its constitutional obligation regarding conservation. SJ said that when he was still involved, they also did not get enough money and that it is still the case. He said that when the Hotel debate started he went to someone to ask what the national budget is for the country to determine the percentage that SANParks receives. The grant to SANParks was only approx. 0.04 % of the national budget. He said that the grant is still the same, compared to many years ago, and the money in state budget is much more; so the percentage that is given to SANParks is even less now. He added that it shows that government is not supporting the national parks. SJ asked if any one there has heard our President standing up against rhino poaching. He said that he feels that SANParks should make a much stronger stand. He added that they must go to big business and get them on their side. This is putting our parks management under unreasonable pressure and then they start to justify these 'types of thing' (the proposed lodge). There might be ways to better utilise the national parks. There are areas that are underutilised which one can use at a lower density. He ended by thanking SANParks for the presentation. He added that he knows that this is not in concrete and that it will still be reconsidered and worked on. He pleaded that SANParks must just keep to what they stand for.

GP responded that at the stage of initial planning SANParks was bankrupt. McKenzie (author of the report) came and said what should be done. The first thing that came up was fund raising. He added that people unfortunately saw it as an opportunity to make money for themselves. He said that funding is one of the best ways. He referred to the US parks where it is working very well. He referred to the "My acre" which was supposed to generate funds and then money went missing. He applauded the Honorary rangers which is making a big contribution. He added to say there are ways to do it if it is placed in the right hands.

GP said that there have been quite a lot of changes at SANParks and that only two executives are left that have been there over the past few years - the rest have all gone. He said that a lot of the changes will soon be seen, and he personally thinks that SANParks is heading in a good direction.

GP continued to discuss the need for wilderness areas and stated that SANParks is aware that they need to keep Wilderness areas, but in doing so there will be areas that they need to sacrifice in order to allow them to keep the wilderness areas. However they need to be careful of what and how they do this. He explained that there are areas around them they want to expand and that they are busy with this process. They want to expand into Mozambique as well; there are farms they want to move into. He said that he agrees with what SJ has said.

Nigel Furnsby (NF) commented that the graphs in the presentation indicating the growth in visitor numbers are connected to population growth. He stated an example of when Oprah Winfrey asked Jane Fonda what she likes to do in her free time. She said that she likes to go out to the wilderness to camp and fish. Oprah said that she found it strange why white people want to do that as black people want to stay in their homes and that is an international trend. He added that he has taken black people to Pilanesberg and they enjoyed it a lot. He asked that why don't SANParks go out into places like Soweto and Mamelodi and have a road show. GP stated that 'they are there'. NF said he hasn't heard people saying they have been there. GP added that that is why they are growing because they are getting exposure. SJ added that the fact that nearly 30 % of South African visitors to KNP are black is a huge achievement. If you go to the rest of Africa it is not more than 2 % of their people that visit their parks.

Ian Leach (IL) said he agrees with what Nigel Furnsby and Dr. Joubert said. He teaches black kids and they don't go on holiday - they stay at home and that is why they get so bored. He also said to reiterate what Dr. Joubert said that they have a mandate and said we have to sacrifice something's and that they leave it in SANParks judgement to what needs to be sacrificed, but that they don't like sacrifices. IL enquired if the industry costs that he has on the presentation represent only 'high end' hotels or is it

the whole spectrum from high end hotels to B&B. GP stated that everyone operating a tourist destination needs to submit their stats to Stats SA and that is what this is based on. IL added that it seems high to him. GP said that probably corporates submit more than B&B's so it could be a bit off. IL also said that the camp site occupancy is probably more seasonal. GP agreed.

IL wanted to know if it is true that many of the concessions are struggling to fill their beds. GP said that it is not true and that he can show the stats on that. For the first time now their occupancies are in the 60s (60 %). Just after the concessions started it was the recession and their markets are the markets that collapsed and that is why they were then struggling.

IL said on the graphs showing the continuous growth; is there nowhere, where they need to say that the growth now needs to stop? What is the ultimate aim of where growth stops? GP said that they could have said they must stop 20 years ago. The issue is that KNP is a huge destination for the country. It is just that they have to manage it differently. They can still have more people; it is just where they take them to and how they facilitate that. DdW asked if he may add something that was said at the previous meeting? He said that you get to a point where full capacities of the aspects have been met. He stated that that can be seen as the theoretical limit.

IL: Wanted to know what the comparison between Mopane and the Safari lodge were based on (number of beds). GP said that Mopane has the same amount of beds that the proposed lodge will have. IL then said looking at the MICE markets there are talks that internet conferences are taking over and people feel they don't need to have a conference. GP said they have also tried it and it is not working. Hotels are still building the conference facilities. DdW stated that he works for an American company over time business conference started to mostly happen virtually. For instance the decision regarding whether 'we build this or that' can happen over a conference call, however you still need to do the planning and strategic decisions face to face. This is because a big amount of influence and idea forming happens face to face.

Hanti Schrader (HS) wanted some clarity regarding if the "Black diamonds" market have been researched anywhere in the country. GP added that SA Tourism has done some work and a lot of marketing is based on that. They have however based it on the previous census figures, and now that a new census has been undertaken they would have to do new studies to put an exact figure to it. HS wanted to know whether this is the market they would like to attract. GP confirmed.

Dewald du Plessis (DdP) wanted to firstly know if they are not projecting the problems of other parks onto Kruger. Secondly haven't Kruger reached a full house? Thirdly he said that as a point of good news the "Black Diamonds" are starting playing more golf and visiting Loftus so it is improving. He doesn't think we need break our head on how to reach them as they are emerging. GP said that SANParks as their mandate manage a system of national parks. The biodiversity (plant species) is more important in e.g. Tankwa-Karoo than in Kruger. These areas are very important but they can't make money. GP said that he got mad at the previous meetings because there are always these rumours that SANParks are planning more hotels. SANParks only know of two; the ones that have been talked about. He added that it is to a degree their (SANParks') own fault as they started off with arrogance, but that is changing and they are listening to the people and in the end of the day they have to look at things differently and look after all our resources. GP said that on the point of the 'full house' where they will reach capacity, but how do you determine that point? Currently they work on number of cars per kilometre. If they asked the tourist, they are happy with the proposed densities, but there is no real science behind it. So they have to sit down and see how best to manage it. GP used an example of when they were at a geyser at Yellowstone National Park where as more tourists arrived more rangers arrived. In Kruger as soon as you enter you are on your own. If we manage capacity in a scientific way SANParks would be able to manage it a lot better. He added that it is the way it is managed that is important. They can for example on public holidays and long weekends flood the park with rangers and manage the people coming in differently but we don't.

DdP said that morning on the waterhole road to Afsaal there was 16 game vehicles on that road and two SANParks vehicles as well as private vehicles (about 10 or 12). GP confirmed that the open safari

vehicles are a problem. They are in the process of implementing GPS systems on these vehicles to help control them. The new contract will be coming in with better management. They will be able to say that an area has reached capacity so more of the open safari vehicles won't be able to go there. They are hoping to launch the system in May 2015.

SJ said that he wanted to respond to the question by HS as well. SANParks have done surveys on the "black diamonds" which showed they are happy with the current accommodation offering. He stated that with regards to the footprint calculations for KNP that SANParks only measured the physical impact and not the visual and noise impact which is much bigger and that it is therefore not a good argument. GP agreed, but said that Blake was involved with this study and will be able to give more information. SJ said that there are much more scientifically sound ways to determine the saturation point. The study from UNISA showed the Southern areas where they want to build more hotels are already saturated. When referring to the same amount of beds as Mopane you are now creating a Mopane rest camp in an already saturated area. He added that there is a definite difference between this one and the one at Malelane. This one at least has a good motivation. SJ said that when the debate started he was not afraid to say that they have made mistakes in the past. He stated that the conference centre at Berg and Dal was a mistake, although at the time the motivation behind it was sound. Then the board discouraged the use of the conference facility by doubling the prices and it only lasted from one board meeting to the next, but that was history. He said that mistakes have been made with expansions. They did research and excluded a lot of options. He added that the reason he says this is that the money debates have always 'gone on'. He added that it is not just that there are hotels and conference centres; they need to judge each development on its own merits and some areas in the south are sensitive areas.

BS stated that the 0.6 % calculation is on the physical footprint by a surveyor. When he worked on a 50m figure around the roads and camps they calculated a 3 % footprint. They haven't done a survey on 100m only on 50m. SJ said they are not going to argue that point; all they are saying is they can't just look at the physical footprint.

GP said that he values SJ's input as he has been in their shoes, with all the pressures and in the end of the day they need to do what is required from them and see to it that it is done in a responsible manner. The issue was more that the cartoons in the media showed all these tall hotels and it is not what is proposed. NF added that the impact should actually be 100m where it is disturbed and then one is not even taking into account the weed footprint. That also needs to be taken into account. BS added that GP showed the development footprint. So not adding the visual and that he agrees with SJ. NF added that with the servitude the impact is actually larger.

DdW stated that unless an entity such as SANParks is seen as a national treasure or get the "black diamonds" in you will not get the point through to the state to help protect the national parks.

4. Exigo presentation on the Basic Assessment Process

Ddw explained that in an EIA process you have 4 participants that play a role: 1) Authority, 2) Applicant, 3) the Applicant must appoint and pay for an Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP), because the state does not need to pay for people wanting to develop. They then make a recommendation to the Department (of Environmental Affairs), and 4. The Public.

He explained that the conditions in the Environmental Management Programme (EMPr) are to be adhered to. If they give an Environmental Authorisation (EA) it will be under certain conditions. When an EA is given the EMPr becomes binding on the Applicant.

DdP wanted to know how are the EAPs appointed. Do they tender? HG confirmed a tender process was undertaken.

DdW asked if there are any apologies. NF stated that he has two apologies: one for Gerhard Smit and then all persons with interest in SANParks over the age of 45 years. DdW stated that if he would like to

enter them he needs some kind of document to say they nominate him to represent them. NF said that he will get back to the point and why he says he wants to enter them.

DdW explained that there is no legislated period regarding when you need to hold a (public) meeting. NF said that Mr. Smit has requested another meeting. HG wanted to know why he wants to have another meeting. Freek Venter (FV) said that he thinks it was the previous issues. HG confirmed that he is aware that Mr. Smit would like another meeting to specifically discuss the traffic studies issues and that this will be discussed with Mr. Smit.

DdP said that the AIKONA questions will also be the questions of Africa Wild. HG stated that all questions raised will be answered in the CRR that will be attached to the final report. DdW added the public process is public so they will have access to the questions and answers.

5. 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. 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. The site is currently used for staff accommodation which is earmarked to be moved outside of the Rest Camp into Skukuza Village. 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 are 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: HG explained that the design concept included creating 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 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 introverted 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.

Green building principles: HG explained that sustainability consultants were 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 using 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

Exigo to arrange a focus group meeting with Mr. Smit to discuss the updated traffic study.

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 the 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.

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. GP added that it reduces the amount of vehicle movement of people in the camp. It also made sense to place the lodge in an area that is already disturbed rather than to disturb a new area to place the lodge.

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.

6. 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 development 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. As one moves further away from the lodge towards the river, the vegetation and existing rondavels will screen the proposed 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. The proposed staff housing units will be located out of sight of any tourist activity and no negative impact is expected during the construction and operational phases. The pipelines near the 4 way crossing will be visible during the construction phase, but the impact will be of short duration and incremental and it is not expected to constitute a major nuisance.

Traffic Impact Assessment: Cobus Havenga (CH) presented the Traffic study. He stated that the Manual for Traffic Impact Studies (by the Department of Transport) is however not applicable for the KNP and they had to find another way of quantifying the traffic impact of the proposed lodge. They made use of gate entry numbers and the Conference Centre's traffic impact assessment (TIA) and the Marula region TIA to base their study on. They have visited the park when a conference was on to also evaluate the impact. The Marula Region TA measured the current densities and determined acceptable road congestion thresholds, as perceived by visitors. Based on the maximum acceptable number of vehicles at any sighting, a threshold value (guideline density) of 2 vehicles per kilometre was accepted by SANParks. 3 major routes to the lodge have been identified. CH referred to routes 1, 3 and 4 as the shortest routes to Skukuza and that these are the routes that they expect most of the visitors to the proposed lodge will take (refer to map on slide 24). Of the planned 128 staff members a maximum of 48 staff members will be accommodated in Skukuza, the rest will be transported by bus daily. Currently

some conference delegates stay outside the Kruger Park due to lack of appropriate accommodation inside Skukuza, adding additional trips. As a maximum traffic scenario between the gates and Skukuza an expected trip generation of 128 trips per day was used. The trips can be however be distributed over the 3 routes, but they looked at the maximum possible impact that the lodge could have and that is if all the cars use the same access route to get to Skukuza. CH explained a table indicating the density increases that could be expected on the three roads. The said that they have also after the previous meeting looked at the traffic impact on game viewing roads. They went back to the Marula Region Traffic Assessment, included the traffic densities, looked at the number of beds in the camps and used 85% occupancies (refer to SANParks Presentation). From the information it was found that not all people drive their own vehicles, and that 70% of the game view trips are day visitors and only 30% overnight visitors. The impact from traffic generated due to the proposed lodge on the popular tourist routes show that the popular routes will increase by 2,63 to 2, 75 at counting station 2 and 1,57 to 1,63 on station 54 (refer to the positions of the points on the Presentation). They have also taken the Malelane Lodge into account to investigate the cumulative impact. He stated that at Malelane they will make use of the park and ride system and therefore they have assumed there will be 9 additional trips. He again emphasized that this is not an official figure but only their opinion (a different EIA is being undertaken for the proposed Malelane development). He stated that in terms of density the impact will be low. The impacts on gravel roads are also expected to be much lower compared to tar roads. He mentioned various recommendations from their report that will act as mitigation measures. These include a park and ride facility at Kruger gate (which is already in planning); reducing the number of day visitors at Paul Kruger Gate, selling of package deals and providing an alternative route for Road H11 between Skukuza and Road S1.

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 will be incorporated into the landscaping of the lodge.

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 were excluded from the sites proposed for development due to scarce tree species on those sites. The baobab trees were incorporated into the design of the lodge. He stated that Michelle Hoffmeyer (Manager of the Skukuza Indigenous Nursery) and her team will move 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. Dr Henning stated that 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 make use of the existing bridge so it is not expected to result in any additional impacts on the river.

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. He stated that Vertebrate fauna is always better known for an area than the invertebrates, and so serves as a surrogate for a full faunal investigation. They took the findings of the flora assessment into account and then assessed the quantity and quality of vertebrate habitats in and around Skukuza. They then compiled lists for probability of occurrence of vertebrate species, with special reference to threatened or Red Data species under IUCN criteria.

Mammals: AK stated that 3 of 4 major mammal habitats are present on or near the study sites (terrestrial, arboreal and wetland / aquatic). A total of 103 mammal species occur in the Skukuza district of which 30 are regarded as Red Data species. Of the threatened species, 11 are Data Deficient, 10 Near Threatened, 7 Vulnerable and 2 Endangered, mainly carnivores and uncommon antelope.

However, none of the 30 Red-listed species is under abnormal pressures threatening its natural survival potential in the KNP itself.

Avifauna: AK explained that the most important habitats for avifauna are the widespread bushveld habitat and the riverine/riparian habitats. 328 bird species are expected to occur in the area, including 25 Red Data species. Of the threatened species, 6 are Near Threatened, 7 Vulnerable and 12 Endangered, mainly predators and scavengers. None of these threatened species is however expected to be affected by the proposed developments.

Reptiles and Amphibia (Herpetofauna): AK said that the wetland vegetation and natural and man-made arboreal and rupicolous habitats contribute to the herpetofauna species richness. Drainage lines function as important dispersal corridors. 81 reptile and 30 amphibian species were deduced to occupy the study site. The Vulnerable Nile Crocodile is a Red Data species that is present on the study site; however its riverine habitat will not be affected by the proposed developments.

AK concluded by saying that the terrestrial habitats within the greater Skukuza have already been widely degraded and/or transformed. The perimeter fences isolate all but the smallest terrestrial species, from the Skukuza rest camp and staff/administrative compounds. He stated that none of the listed Red Data species is expected to be affected by the proposed developments, which, in the context of the extensive surrounding natural habitats, are considered spatially insignificant and environmentally benign.

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 will be implemented. An on-site 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 were the most significant impacts identified. Long term impacts are expected to be of low to negligible significance.

Way Forward: HG provided an overview of the way forward: The draft Basic Assessment Report (BAR) will be on review until 14 Jan 2015. 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).

7. Discussions:

IL wanted to know if the lodge will be outsourced to another company. He also wanted to know if there will be restrictions on the type of conference and who will do catering in the lodge.

GP responded that the lodge will be managed together with the conference centre. It could be outsource in future, but it is not currently planned. They stated that they will host any conference; however it must be done according to rules of the park. For instance, they will require payment up front and there will also be rules regarding behavioural issues. Tracy Lee Petersen (TP) said that there is a protocol for weddings that includes that only instrumental music is allowed and then also only during the wedding march.

GP said that the catering will be run by SANParks. Currently Cattle Baron does the Conference facility catering. This will be the same as at Golden Gate hotel (SANParks doing the catering themselves). GP said that if the process is done well it can be successfully done.

IL wanted to know if the property tax that SANParks need to pay to the municipality will increase. He also wanted to know if the conference goers pay conservation fees. He enquired whether the price will be the same as for the huts, and if so, would people not rather stay at huts than the lodge?

GP confirmed that SANParks does get property tax invoices from the Municipality but that they are in discussions as they do not 'qualify' to pay them (the Municipality does not provide any service in the National Park).

GP stated that the conference goers will not pay conservation fee as it is in the conference fee and

they are in conference the whole day. He added that there will be incentive of cheaper accommodation when cars are left at the park and ride facility. The lodge will probably be more expensive than the huts due to additional services that will be offered (e.g. Wi-Fi).

SJ wanted to know that, if they target government conferences, are the suites in the lodge all the same or are there suites that will specifically cater for those that require more upper market (luxury) accommodation? He added that attitude surveys have been done and people want a peaceful wilderness experience. He also said that if in the rest camps they see a conference, visually it might be perceived as a disturbance. This is the same for the double storey lodge. He added that this is the highest point in Skukuza. He wanted to know if they have taken into account the northern view. Would it not have been better for more rondavels as the visual impact will be reduced greatly?

GP explained that there are 8 (luxury) suites and then the rest are a cluster of accommodation. He said that should they have proposed rondavels they would have needed at least double the area they are using now. All the doors lead out to the inside courtyard area. This location was the best from an environmental and services perspective. GP said that the survey studies were done on existing markets and not on the new markets they are trying to target. The main aim of the lodge is to provide accommodation during conferences.

SJ wanted to confirm that the surveys were done for the current market? GP confirmed and added that they can't survey a person who doesn't have the knowledge of how national parks are. SJ said that his concern is that the current market is the people coming in and that they won't come anymore. GP added that they currently have 2 main markets. The domestic white and then the international market. They are now targeting the 3rd market namely the conference market and "black diamonds". GP added that himself and Giju drove around the previous day and saw the customer feedback on the new restaurants which are positive after the initial surveys results showed people not wanting them to brand the restaurants.

DdW added that there are different market growth areas and each are different in their needs. He also added that the type of choices made can either make or break it. Further discussions are needed outside this meeting between Glenn Phillips and Dr. Solomon Joubert and that they should have another meeting set on this topic.

BS stated when you look at the visual impact and you look at the design you will see that the design takes into account the height of the trees in the area. So the highest part of the roof will be below the high trees. GY added that when he drove around he was amazed that Skukuza was actually not very visible. In the early days (after construction) when the thatched roof will be yellow it will be more visible but it will go dark soon and the visibility will decrease.

DdP asked whether the lightning protection measures that will be erected won't be higher and more visible. BS stated that they are using much more advanced with only a limited height.

IL wanted to know if he is not a conference goer can he also stay in the lodge? GP confirmed. IL said that if the laundry will be outsourced, would that not lead to more traffic? IL also wanted to know how SANParks will cope with budget increases.

GP said that the lodge is aimed at conferences and that they will however 'keep it out' for conferences (not allow bookings for those not attending conferences) to about 3 months before and then release the accommodation out to the normal market. The accommodation will not become available to the general public prior to this time. He confirmed that the laundry will be outsourced. He added that they are considering having the laundry outside of the camps as currently the laundry is driven between the camps and by outsourcing this they might even reduce the traffic on the roads. GP said that the state provided them with R240 000 000.00 and they manage the budget closely and that they normally keep well within their budgets.

Andrew Rossaak (AR) stated that he is presenting Lion Sands at the meeting. He stated that they are concerned with issues related to visual, noise and nuisance impacts. He requested the Google Earth image be pulled up as he would like to ask questions from there. He stated that the visual study was done close to site and from public roads. He requested that the locality of Tinga be shown on the map and on the other side of the river where there are no public roads. He wanted to know if that view was

used. He stated that the increase in the amount of lights at night may impact on the concessions. They were concerned that the high end concessions choose to host a high end wilderness experience and they are allowed to drive at night. He said that they would like to see the impact on the view shed and that the impact should be indicated without taking large trees into consideration. He added that the naked lights at night need to be shown. He also added that the language associated with mitigation measures in the EMP should be “must” not “maybe” (or should). He stated that in a conflicting situation those mitigation measures indicated as should/maybe would not be implemented. He added that the lodge doesn’t need any flood lighting. GY stated that in the day there will not be an impact on the concessions and the day time impact will be low. He said that the potential for an impact at night will be greater, however he added that the design have provided mitigation to limit the visual impact of lights at night. The designs includes that all lights will be shielded and that only low lighting will be used and at a certain times at night the lights will be switched off. He stated that they always do the view shed naked but will even in winter still be low. AR said that the visual assessment needs to be expanded to take into account viewing points from the Lion Sands concession areas.

AR stated on the noise generating aspects that he is comfortable that noise will be drained out by the rest of the camp. He also added that the air conditioning system is currently chosen by taking noise factors into account (from the design document) and that it should rather firstly be chosen on energy efficiency.

AR expanded on the nuisance factor. He said that the fauna study does not address problem animals except for bats. He wanted to know how they will make sure that the rats, monkeys, squirrels or hyenas are not a problem at the back of the Lodge. They would like to see it addressed. He stated that the human wildlife conflicts need to be addressed. He added that there should not be a solid barrier as the animals get trapped in the fence and therefore ‘your angles need to be right’. He also wanted to know if the traffic impacts before and after the airport has been assessed. AR stated that he would like to see the 20 principles of NEMA to be addressed point per point in the BAR.

AK enquired from SANParks, due to these areas being within the camp, if there is a problem in the camp with the mentioned animals. Freek Venter stated that they have protocols by which they manage problem animals.

NF said that the biggest impact on animals is the trenches and these should be managed. NF wanted to know if, when they say that the water abstraction rates are sufficient in the licence; when last was the instream water flow measured. BS said regarding the trenches they will be closed as soon as possible after opened and they will be checked.

FV said that the river is constantly measured and they know when it reaches the “worry” zones. BS said that Skukuza has 3 abstraction points and we they are only allowed abstraction of certain amounts. They will therefore not be moving out the legal abstraction volumes.

NF said that he is worried that this project is done as a Basic Assessment and should be done as a full EIA. DdW explained that a Basic assessment is not of a lower standard than a full EIA. It has to do with the activities listed. HG confirmed that according to legislation it is a basic assessment. He added that Exigo added an executive summary due to template not really providing for all the specialist inputs. FV also added that they have had consultation with the government departments that advised the process of a basic assessment.

NF stated in the past that documents have been sent to the public protector due to past issues. DdW asked if the issues are with the particular project and stated that he will evaluate the validity of each question on a question by question basis.

AR stated that from a personal point of view he supports non-green fields and densification projects and he appreciates that.

FV said that the only way they can address the higher amount of visitors is by zoning, as it is being done at Skukuza. For the rest of Kruger the wilderness areas have grown and they have lots of plans to create more wilderness areas and therefore they would rather concentrate the developments within the higher density areas.

Exigo to adjust mitigation measures in EMP to be more definite.

Visual Impact Assessment to address the concerns by Lion Sands.

AR to send a list of sensitive viewpoints located on Lion Sand’s concessions to Exigo.

BAR to be updated to take the management of problem animals into account.

BAR to address 20 principles of NEMA.

<p>SJ said that FV is talking about a new topic and said that if the zonation of the park is affected they need to go to the public as well. FV said that he was talking purely strategically. GP stated that they do go to the public (to get the public's input) and that they enjoy the openness of these meetings. They consult the people when they do the park management plans, however it is sad that the people do not attend the meetings where the management plans are discussed. He added that it is key to have public consultation. He said that the next one scheduled for Kruger is in three years' time. SJ asked to be put on a list so they get directly notified.</p> <p>HG and MH said that with the landscaping planned for the lodge the site itself is expected to actually be better visually and ecologically than the current state of the site. MH added that they work on a code of conduct and that this provides them the opportunity to rehabilitate the site. They are also going to include water features to attract birds. The visitors will see the elements of the outside on the inside of the lodge.</p>	
<p>8. Conclusion</p> <p>DdW thanked everyone for the attendance and input and closed the meeting. Meetings minutes will be distributed within 14 days (10 working days). The meeting was adjourned at 15:45</p>	<p>Exigo to provide meeting minutes for comment</p>

Meeting notes by Reneé Kruger