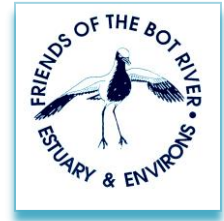


botfriends newsletter



july 2019

Afdaks – Cape Nature reacts

This is a summary of letter 5 July 2019 to Cornerstone Environmental Consultants: **Post-Application Draft Scoping Report for the Proposed Mixed Use Development on Portion 21 of the Farm Afdaksrivier 575, Hermanus (DEA&DP ref. no.: 16/3/3/6/7/2/E2/15/1132/16):**

The letter does not support the development proposal as currently proposed. The previous comments by Cape Nature on the two versions of the scoping reports have not been taken into account and should have included a botanical impact assessment and a freshwater impact assessment.

The corridors linking the Bot River estuary to the mountains have to be accommodated. A conservation area west of the development has not been accommodated. The expanded sewage treatment works intrudes into a wetland area. Concern was also expressed about stormwater outfall into the estuary. The separate sand mine application differs from the above-mentioned application. The rehabilitation of the sand mine area must take into account the changed hydrology from the sand mine operations and accommodate the flora and fauna corridors.

Due to two cases of reported environmental damage on the site and to the fact that the control of invasive species has not occurred, an alien invasive species (AIS) is required for the entire property before the development can be considered further. Attention is drawn to the unacceptable method of bulldozing alien species, the illegal construction at the base of the mountain and a poor fire history.

The conclusion is that these above matters must be addressed in a draft Environmental Assessment before this application can be considered further.

Botfriends had made similar comments on the previous scoping report for this area with more specific details. Our concern is that these comments were ignored and our call for some sort of timeous rectification was not heeded. Our major concern with this Afdaks proposal is not only within the development area but with the effects on the surrounding areas, especially the downstream wetlands and the estuary itself. The proposed

corridors are ill-defined; the EIA for farm portion 6/575 should be amended to accommodate newer information. This proposal ignores or attempts to circumvent the continued environmental damage occurring in this area both below and above the proposed development.

The final conclusion from Cape Nature Conservation Intelligence is that this application cannot be considered further until the above concerns are addressed.; the author supports this.

Michael Austin

LAKE MARINA YACHT & BOAT CLUB: DEVELOPING A NEW RECREATIONAL AREA

A few years ago, I prepared a proposal for what could possibly be done with the existing Yacht Club site, once the current lease had expired. Much of the historical information I used came from an old study carried out by a firm of Town planners from Cape Town back in the 1960s, but, what was abundantly clear even back then, was that the lagoon has tremendous value for Fisherhaven and Ward 8 as a whole, due to the suitability of the lagoon for recreation and water sports, the tranquillity of the environment, the accessibility in respect of Hermanus and Cape Town and the presence of unspoilt natural areas and bird life.

While there were also some negative aspects, these were not insurmountable and could be dealt with in any new development proposal. The 1960 study highlighted the

“outstanding natural beauty’ of the area as one of the most valuable wetlands in the Western Cape, with an ecologically diverse environment: sheltered and shallow water at Afdaksbaai, Rooisand, the Sonesta footbridge and the upper reaches of the Bot River Vlei which are particularly important as birds congregate there for feeding, resting and nesting. Productive beds of submerged plants in the lagoon provide important food resources for plant-eating birds and are an important habitat for schools of small fish. Aesthetically the area is one of the most valuable areas

in the Bot River region and it was felt that human interference could harm bird life severely and that an area of state land – Erf 575/7 be set aside as a permanent nature and bird reserve.”

[from ‘Local Structure Plan’ produced for the Overberg Regional Services Council by a firm of consulting engineers and planners circa 1960.]



The study specifically identified Erf 775 as the focal point for recreation in the area and recommended that it should be optimised; it proposed extending the yachting facilities and converting the clubhouse into a multipurpose facility, with a tea room, yachting clubhouse and public meeting venue. It also pointed out that a large portion of Erf 775 was given over as a caravan park, which it considered as being undesirable in the heart of the village.

The yacht club also provides rescue facilities for recreational users of the lagoon and has been used as a disaster centre for the area; it is therefore extremely important that these facilities are retained. The only other rescue facility is more than 15 kilometres away and therefore a formal boating facility must be maintained which can operate a rescue boat with a trained volunteer crew. This can only be done through a properly-run boating club with launching, boat storage and repair facilities - and be run by local residents, not weekend visitors.

Any proposal for the development of the site has to first address the needs of Fisherhaven and Ward 8, while still offering a developer an opportunity to build and operate a commercial facility which will generate a fair profit. However this development - when it happens - has to be done with the genuine participation by all parties concerned and must not be driven solely by profit. The lagoon is simply far too important to everyone who lives in Ward 8 and we must protect it.

Alan Woolnough

What do readers think about further development in this area- from Hoek van die Berg to Rooisand and towards Bot River, what are the Ward 8 needs, do you think, for this space? How do we protect the natural environment ? Do let us know at botvlei@gmail.com.

On the street where you live ...

Are there invasive species in the gardens or on the road verges on the street block where you live? If you would like to take responsibility for clearing your little area, contact us at botvlei@gmail.com.

A CHALLENGE FROM OUR COMMUNITY LEADERS: working toward a cleaner environment

Botfriends can do clearing of invasive species economically and very effectively: clearing on areas we clear will therefore last longer than clearing done less effectively by others. **Please make a donation to help us do this.** Donations of R200 and above qualify for free membership of Botfriends. If **you** feel the need for us to beautify your surroundings, here are the bank details: Friends of the Bot River Estuary and Environs Standard Bank 185565549 Branch 050312. PLEASE use your name and address as reference. Cash payments: Contact botvlei@gmail.com.

Thanks to Bruce and Daphne Bayer, Geoff Spires, F Stafford, Martin and Shontal Lottering, Nina and Frank VD Velde. Johan Smit, Johan Retief, Hinke and Trevor, Ernst Klein, L Sell, Adele and Tonie Snyman, Brian and Merle Aubrey, Sam Sampson and the FRA (money from the now defunct Overbot Conservancy) for their contributions to the challenge so far, and to the FRA for publicising it. **Look around you and see your surrounds improving.**

Thanks also go to REMAX for the donation of Alien Clearing Boards which have been placed in cleared areas.

Going to do recycling at Walker Bay Recycling and have some room in your vehicle? Tell your neighbour or post on Whats App and take someone else's recycling along too - it will save some fuel as well.



If you wish to have a private plot cleared effectively, contact Michael @ **Greenheart Projects Ph 0832610543.**

Editor: Renee Austin