

Friends of Muizenberg Park Committee Report – 30 June 2016

Why protect Green Spaces?

These are some reasons that resonated for me. What resonates for you?

- Green space draws people outside and fosters social contact and supportive friendly environments.
- Studies find that residents living near green common spaces “had more social activities and more visitors, knew more about their neighbors, reported their neighbors were more concerned with helping and supporting one another and had stronger feelings of belonging” (Environmental News Network).
- Green spaces promote safer neighbourhoods. When residents have vested interests in a place, participation in community vigilance increases and the better maintained a residence or public space is, the safer it is going to be.
- Natural areas promote livability and vitality of communities.

The Friends of Muizenberg Park (FoMP) works to enhance and assist in the maintenance of the Park by representing the interests of all regular users and of the public generally.

Overview

FoMP's strategy continues from its implementation in 2014. We encourage events to promote enjoyment and awareness of the park and create a sense of ownership. We build relationships with the City to ensure that we create a shared vision for the park and unlock possible funding. The City has many competing priorities, e.g. providing parks where there have been none, so it falls to the community to take ownership and direct its future. We highlight opportunities for the park, challenges and possible solutions and feel that we have mobilised energy and focus towards improving the space.

We work with the community and stakeholders within the City. Just as the future of the Park depends on City planning, spending and community support, what happens in the Park affects the wellbeing of the ever-growing community of people enjoying Muizenberg. We would like to connect with any other potential stakeholders we haven't yet considered.

Park Design

The long-term vision of the City is to find ways to connect the sea to the mountain walks. The Park provides the perfect route. City Roads will complete the landscaping on the road frontage that provides an enticing entrance from the semi-pedestrianized York Road, into the Park. And signage is up around Muizenberg indicating the Park as both a destination and a thoroughfare to the Mountain beyond. There is talk of a Lookout point on Boyes Drive and the improvements to the Zigzag paths, particularly looking at connecting the spaces between the lower reaches and the conservation area of the Park by making the paths and stairs more accessible and connecting all the way to the Muizenberg Station. All funding dependent.

The **Freedom Garden** was planted near the entrance to the Police Station as gesture to thank SAPS for their role in protecting our Freedoms. Believe in Shatzi have volunteered to create a **Mandela Day Garden** near the entrance to the Park.

Other key considerations are the bowling club, fencing and alternative safety solutions.

We're engaging City Parks and Zandvlei Nature Reserve about the appropriate management and long term conservation of the upper reaches. An idea to have a controlled burn in the upper reaches in the interests of bio-diversity has been mooted. This will require community participation and discussion.

The ongoing litter problem has been largely brought under control thanks to the hard work of two EPWP employees through the City, who systematically work through the park. We are lucky to have had dedicated staff something most City Parks do not have.

Jurisdiction and Legal

FoMP is formalizing its relationship with the City and plans to register as an NPO in the year ahead. We have systems in place to ensure knowledge exchange and record keeping.

Safety and Security

Resolving crime in our community and in our park is not a simple matter. It requires ongoing community involvement in support of the City's efforts. We participate in the various local committees (MID operations including SAPS and Law Enforcement, MCSI, Community Police Forum etc) to keep the Park included and top of mind.

Communication

We have 607 Facebook followers and send regular newsletters. We aim for coverage in the Echo, Peoples' Post and Corner Chat magazine. Our website requires more active management. <http://muizenbergpark.org.za>. Any volunteers?

Challenges

The park's potential to be a valuable resource for locals and tourists alike, has not yet been realised. There is more to do. People must feel safe and know the park exists. We need to draw more people in. How could we achieve this? **Perhaps the Park needs a more formal play area for children, or a coffee stand?**

Events over the past 12 months

Encouraging diverse groups of people to spend time in the park is a key focus of FoMP. We've worked hard over the last year to arrange events and facilitate activities in the Park through partnerships with many groups.

- **Park Cleanups x 3.** These have been reasonably well attended and with numbers boosted by the YWAM group. Cleanups serve dual purpose of cleaning, and creating a sense of ownership and increased use of space.
- **Concert in the Park 2015** – 2000 people experienced the Park on a glorious day.
- **Community meeting** – Responsible Giving, Birdlife after the Fires and Ujubee Bees
- Opening of the Canon Precinct and the **Making Kos** walk through the Park
- **Muizenberg Youth Project and City of Cape Town Sports and Rec Team** hosted 40 kids for two day in the Park in March 2016.
- **Freedom Garden** was designed, developed and planted by the community
- Paths are being cleared and 'illegal' paths blocked to stop erosion under John Cartwright's supervision. Every two weeks a team of workers from MID's weekend clean up initiative and volunteers tackle the paths. The MID in offers long-term homeless people an opportunity to give back to the community on a weekly basis. Read more here: <http://www.mid.org.za/social-development/>
- **Planned** – Mandela Day event with Believe in Shatzi
- **Planned Muizenberg Festival – Concert in the Park Oct 2016.** While FoMP proved the concept in 2015, this year, due to a lack of volunteer capacity, we have asked the Muizenberg Festival to run and manage it as part of the Festival.

Please let us know if you've any ideas – how about Painting in the Park, or Park Yoga? We'd love to hear how you would like to use the space.

Fundraising

Key initiatives have been the Concert in the Park, The Freedom Day Garden and increased memberships.

Finances

Our current balance is just over R15 000.

Thanks

Big thanks to our hard-working committee, the willingness of the City to engage with us and assist, as well the many volunteers who have contributed time, labour, plants, ideas and motivation. Special thanks to Greg Paton and Bee Phillips for their significant contribution over this last year – you will be missed.

Engaging with the Park gives you the opportunity to play an active role in shaping the future of Muizenberg and the way we live. We'd love your ideas and participation – so please do get involved.