

Princess Vlei Forum Annual Report 2016



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Registration no: 142-542 NPO

2015 /16 Management Committee

Philip Bam – Chairperson

William Leith – Deputy Chairperson

Lorna Houston – Secretary

Emma Oliver – Assistant Secretary

Bridget Pitt - Flight of Dreams co-ordinator

Vilma Maritz - Treasurer

Malcolm Campbell

Gary Stewart – Technical and Planning Subcommittee Chair

George Davis

Elton Rinqest

1 resignation Ebrahim Abrahams; Excused due to travel Ayesha Price

Auditors: DCA Chartered Accountants

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1. Introduction

This year we have continued to be patient as we slowly moved toward the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement with the City of Cape Town and the finalising of the Conceptual Development Framework. These documents signal the greenlight of both the Princess Vlei Forum and the City to proceed with vigour to develop the amenities and projects that will restore the vlei and make it a location that the community can enjoy visiting.

The Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signals the City's recognition of Princess Vlei Forum as a community custodian group of the Greater Princess Vlei Conservation Area (GPVCA). The MOA was signed on 9 December, with local councillor, Kevin Southgate and local leader Paramount Chief Hennie van Wyk from the Gorachouqua tribe in attendance.

Princess Vlei Forum members made representation in May, to Subcouncil 20 to speak in support of the Contextual Development Framework as tabled by the City of Cape Town. The members encouraged the councillors to make budgetary contributions to the projects.

Fundraising will become increasingly important for us and we now have a PBO number.

Ayesha Price, Elton Rinquest, George Davis and Vilma Maritz were coopted onto the Management Committee.

One general meeting was held this year where we began to initiate subcommittees for increased community involvement.

In addition to this work, we have continued to engage the community, particularly its younger members through vibrant events and programmes such as the Clean ups, The Nature Champion Fynbos Garden and the Flight of Dreams programme and Parade, and the Orienteering event.

Princess Vlei Forum has also supported Birdathon hosted by False Bay Ecology Park, PHA Food and Farming Campaign, and the campaign to support Brian Isaacs.

2. Protecting Princess Vlei: Heritage, Community and Environment

2.1 Clean Ups

The Lions Clubs of Groote Schuur and Bergvliet came to clean up the vlei, joined by some of the locals.

A clean up also took place when the schools visited with the Nature Champion Fynbos Garden Programme.



2.2 Events at the Vlei

In October 2015, the Forum worked with Bruce Meier of the Peninsula **Orienteering** Club (PENOC) to host an Orienteering race at Princess Vlei. This very successful event has become a regular feature on the Princess Calendar.

In September 2016 ARD athletics club hosted its annual **3 Vlei race**. The vlei also forms part of the club's weekly training route.

Peninsula Paddling, commemorated Water Day at the vlei.

3. Outreach

The work with local schools expanded considerably this year. We have continued with our Flight of Dreams program, and added another major program, the Nature Champion Fynbos Garden.

3.1 The Nature Champion Fynbos Garden Programme



R15 000 was raised from the Table Mountain Fund for the Nature Champion Fynbos Garden. The project was intended to promote

awareness and knowledge of local indigenous fynbos amongst school children, and beautify and enhance the biodiversity of an urban wetland, Princess Vlei.

On June 2 2016, 110 learners from five different local schools came to Princess Vlei to clean up and plant out an area of the Princess Vlei wetland.

The learners came from Levana Primary, Harmony Primary, Hyde Park Primary, John Graham Primary. 475 plants were planted at the vlei, and eight bags of litter were removed. In addition to planting, the children were given an opportunity to enjoy a canoe ride on the vlei, thanks to Gravity Adventures. Each child was given a certificate, and the teachers were given a hand out with details of all the plants.

R1000 was presented to Lotus High to purchase plants for an indigenous fynbos garden at the school.

Since that time, each school has had a follow up visit to the vlei, to learn about fynbos and biodiversity, monitor the plants and check on the animal life. Sadly, a number of the plants that were planted have been dug up and stolen – we suspect by people hoping to sell them. However, the plants that have remained there are flowering and flourishing, and there is quite active insect life that has been drawn to the area. We hope that the remaining plants will be allowed to remain there, and the children's hard

work will pay off in future months. We also hope to repeat this next year, with additional thought as to how we can prevent the stealing of plants.

We would like to thank the Table Mountain Fund, for making this project possible. In addition, our appreciation goes to the City of Cape Town which supplied tools and expertise, Gravity Adventures, Pick n Pay who supplied food, and Cape Flats Life who supplied plants. A special thanks to the staff and students of Levana Primary, Harmony Primary, Hyde Park Primary and John Graham Primary for making the day a success.

3.2. Flight of Dreams Programme

This dynamic programme has expanded this year to involve six schools, three more than last year. The project is organised in collaboration with the Frank Joubert Art Centre, the Jungle Theatre Company, eMzantsi Carnival with learners from Lotus High, John Graham Primary, Hyde Park Primary, Levana Primary, Harmony Primary and Fairmount high.

2016 marked the fourth year of this programme, which aims to:

- Raise awareness about environmental issues, in particular about the importance of conserving and rehabilitating Princess Vlei.
- Celebrate the natural systems and flora and fauna in our city, in particular the birds.

- Create awareness about our Khoi and San heritage.
- Enable children to express their appreciation of nature through creative projects.

This year, the programme started with a workshop for 60 teachers organised in collaboration with Frank Joubert, in which teachers were shown how to create a wetland food chain mobile from paper plates. This was linked to the Life Sciences and Visual Arts curriculum for the Intermediate Phase. In addition, we have been hosting afternoon workshops on the birds of Princess Vlei for the schools involved. The Princess Vlei Forum has sponsored drama workshops by Jungle Theatre for Lotus High to develop a story-telling performance of the Khoisan legend. “The Great Bird Race”, and drumming workshops for the Fairmount High Marching band.

The Flight of Dreams Parade will take place on 24 September at 3 pm, and will be preceded by an art workshop to decorate puppets and create headdresses. The Fairmount High Marching band will lead the parade, and there will be musical and story-telling performances at Princess Vlei, followed by an art display. We are also organising an exhibition of children’s work at the Grassy Park Library in the following week

The Flight of Dreams has been made possible by huge effort from Princess Vlei Forum volunteers and individuals on our sub-committee –



Liesl Hartmann, Paul Hendricks, Bridget Pitt, Vincent Meyburgh, Lorraine Tanner, and Emma Oliver, as well as teachers from all the schools involved. We would like to thank in particular John Graham Primary for hosting our teacher’s workshop, and Shafiek Isaacs for organising the Lotus High drama group and Roy Prinsloo for rallying the Fairmount High marching band.

Looking ahead

Next year we hope to consolidate and advance both these projects, and to launch a nature club for young people based at Princess Vlei. We also hope to find sponsorship to enable us to continue and expand this work.



4. Negotiating the Transformation: The Technical and Planning committee

In the past year the Technical and Planning Subcommittee has been at the forefront of liaising with the city and developing an implementable vision for transforming Princess Vlei.

4.1 Liaison with the City

We've had a number of meetings with the city to resolve various issues, which have generally taken two forms.

Periodically we've had meetings with Alderman Belinda Walker and senior city officials to iron out various issues like the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), Conceptual Development Framework (CDF) and other major concerns and plans for the vlei. This has been fairly productive in that they have been instrumental in formalising things and laying the groundwork for developing the space.

We've initiated more regular meetings with the operational officials responsible for the vlei along with Councillor Kevin Southgate to clarify the operational plan for the vlei and deal with day to day operational concerns. This has been somewhat productive and has been a bit of a

challenge to maintain an ongoing working relationship due to officials having other commitments and the short term contracts of some officials. We have escalated this issue and in the upcoming year we hope to establish a more sustainable working relationship.

4.1.1 Memorandum of Agreement

For some time we had been in negotiations with the city to formalise our relationship, so that the Princess Vlei Forum (PVF) could become a “friends” group. In December 2015 the Princess Vlei Forum and the City signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) which gives the PVF co-custodial rights with regards the vlei and outlines the City’s and PVF’s responsibilities.



4.1.2 Conceptual Development Framework

Conceptual Development Framework (CDF)

In August 2015 the City presented a draft of a Conceptual Development Framework which would act as an overall “blueprint” for the vlei, demarcating areas for different types of development. This draft CDF was based on various inputs we had made to the City from previous community engagements. Over the year there has been ongoing engagement with the draft CDF, including an Open Day at Retreat Civic Centre, a PVF Workshop and further ongoing negotiations. As a result the final CDF was approved at the local Sub Councils 18 and 20 in May 2016. So now this finalised CDF provides a starting point for developing the space around the vlei.

Professional Services Tenders

The City has put out Professional Services Tenders and appointed consultants to do foundational and design work on what is possible in developing the space around the vlei. The subcommittee hopes to engage with this process in the near future.

4.2 Transformation Projects

In community engagement process in the last few years a number of projects have emerged as being priorities which the community would like to see, which we've termed as Transformation Projects.

Children's Play Park

This would involve creating a vandal-proof, eco-friendly adventure play-park for children on the eastern precinct. This has been one of the more popular community requested projects.

Bridge

Due to the overly extended, and somewhat unsafe walk along the northern end of the vlei, a bridge over the northern inlet has been a frequent request from the community. This would create a more "circular" walk and make it reasonably safer.

Circular Path

The walk along the vlei is sometimes difficult to navigate in certain areas. So a better defined path with constructed walkways would facilitate walks around the vlei which appeals to community members wanting to enjoy the natural environment and keep fit.

Improved Braai Area

Many people come to the vlei to braai at the parking area on the eastern precinct. Unfortunately over the years the braai area has fallen into disrepair. As this has a fairly popular activity, an improved braai area would make for a more pleasant experience and attract families to the space.

Interpretation Centre

Princess Vlei holds a great deal of significance for various reasons. So there have been many requests for a multi-purpose building with installations which explain the cultural, historical and environmental significance of the vlei, which could also be used as a multi-purpose venue for meetings and other activities. This, for now, we've termed as an Interpretation Centre.

Management Post

Currently Princess Vlei is managed by a number of city officials who are also responsible for various sites other than the vlei. This makes interventions to transform the space very difficult to implement and sustain. So getting a dedicated Management Post for Princess Vlei will help to manage the environment, rehabilitation, maintenance and security around the vlei. This will also help create the capacity to transform the vlei to what the community envisions.



Looking ahead

The subcommittee faces a number of major issues and challenges in the upcoming year.

Maintaining a well-functioning relationship with the city remains an ongoing challenge, which also comes from having to work with a number of different departments including City Planning, City Parks, Environmental, as well as elected officials. The last year has taught us a few lessons and

we are optimistic that in the upcoming year we can develop a more sustainable working relationship.

The community is getting anxious about seeing improvement at the vlei. This makes implementing the vision for our Transformation Projects a top priority. This will include involving the community in developing more detailed plans for the projects and managing the process to completion.

Sourcing funding opportunities to make the vision possible will also be necessary. This will involve approaching city and other levels of government, companies and philanthropic organisations and also income generation initiatives, e.g. a market.

It has been a fairly productive if somewhat frustrating year, but progress has been made in establishing a working relationship with the city. The upcoming year will present many exciting opportunities for further engagement to ensure that the community vision is realised.

The members of the committee – Bridget Pitt, Terrence Smith, Malcolm Campbell and Matilda Smith – deserve a great deal thanks for their often unglamorous but essential work which goes into determining and articulating the community's vision.

5. Finances

We started the year with a balance of R51,626 and received R4079 made up of donations and sale of cards. Our main event for the year was the annual Flight of Dreams, which cost R16,666. At all the workshops we raised donations in kind from retailers who supplied food and cold drinks to participants. The deficit for the year is R14,005. For this next year we plan to appoint a fundraising committee to be responsible for events throughout the year. (to be read with full Annual Financial Statement which is in a separate pdf document)

6. Conclusion

The year ahead, will require increased community participation and ownership. Our General Meeting in July has initiated the formation of the following subcommittees: Recreational, Cultural Heritage, Fundraising, Security, Schools, Environmental, Technical and Planning, Market & Business Interests. We invite members to please get involved. We have begun to consider the fundraising needs for our projects and urge those with the appropriate skills, knowledge and resources to come forward and contribute in this way. We believe that the best way forward will be the incorporation of a local community investment of resources to ensure that the vlel remains community property.