

Springerbaai Home Owners Association
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16 August 2018

RE: Springerbaai Fire Risk documents

Dear Members,

Fire Risk

After much review and work (in between our busy schedules) we herewith provide the way forward on the Fire Risk.

1. The **Fire Risk Strategy Document and the Fire Readiness Operational Plan (FROP)** which were approved during April by the Trustees are attached. The only outstanding work is the Water Infrastructure review which will be completed as an annexure. We are in various stages of implementing these strategies and plans. We believe that improvements will be made in due course and we therefore foresee that a revision will probably be made in 1st Quarter of 2019. Your comments are therefore welcome.
2. As an action from the FROP – we include an example of an A2-size **Fire Risk Action poster** that will be printed and distributed by Management. The posters will illustrate some critical actions and information to be aware of and to perform when an actual fire is on the property or nearby. They are:
 - 2.1. Conduct when a Fire is detected
 - 2.2. Critical reactions in a Fire Emergency on the estate
 - 2.3. Evacuation and Escape routes map
 - 2.4. Fire Zones (in case the risk is related to certain zones only and actions are taken to certain zones)

3. Fuel Load reduction & Fire Breaks

- 3.1.** Fire breaks have been cleared on the fences for access to fire vehicles to stop approaching fires. The clearance is between 4 and 5m. Approval from DAFF (Dept of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries) was obtained and where protected bush were in the way of the fire break, the clearance was done around the particular bush. Firebreaks were not extended to the beach due to security considerations.
- 3.2.** Dead bush and Rooikrantz were cleared up to 3m around the Board walks and other structures. In due course, less flammable plant species will be planted to have vegetation around the board walks. This clearance is ongoing. As much as possible clearance of dead bush and very flammable bush will be done around the Reservoir, Septic tanks/solar panels and Contractors Camp. The Estate will continue to eradicate Rooikrantz since it is regarded as a very flammable plant that helps to spread fires.
- 3.3.** Clearance around houses. It is our view that clearance on a Home Owners property is their own preference and as long as DAFF/FMH Conservancy and our EMP (Environmental Management Plan) conditions with regard to protected species are complied with, clearing up to 3m is in order. We however propose the following:
 - 3.3.1.** Dead bush and timber can be and should be removed up to about 5 - 10m from the house. Home owners can do this and place dead bush in or next to their driveways. Management should be contacted to remove the dead bush.
 - 3.3.2.** Very flammable dry bush (like the bitou) but not dead, may also be removed close to the house, but it is preferred to ask the Management to remove them. Protected species may be trimmed/pruned but again rules apply to the trimming and only Management should do that.
 - 3.3.3.** For all protected species, a prior DAFF permit needs to be obtained before removal or trimming beyond the normal rules. Management can be contacted for application of such a permit. An expert also needs to be involved in the removal process. In terms of our EMP, we need to comply with the regulations.
- 3.4.** After advice was received from various sources, we are of the opinion that some species of plant are less flammable than others.
 - 3.4.1.** Predominantly the vegetation in the valleys (Gouritz Dune Thicket or Gouritz Valley Bushveld) which has a higher moisture/water content should burn slower or even stop a fire. (In extreme winds and hot circumstances off course everything will burn.) Home owners should therefore plant less flammable plants near their houses or even replace more flammable plants with less flammable plants.

3.4.2. There is however no clear boundary between flammable and less flammable plant. We have nevertheless asked Management to try and provide some guidance through the following lists:

3.4.2.1. Protected plant species (Annexure A - RED)

3.4.2.2. Less flammable plants (Annexure A - Blue)

3.4.3. We remind you of the Estate's nursery at the gate where certain of the less flammable plants can be purchased for planting around your house.

4. Controlled Fire Burn

4.1. Our Fire Risk Management Plan of 2007 indicates that we should consider Controlled Fire Burn as precaution and fire risk management tool. In addition, in the Springerbaai Renoster-Thicket it is a necessary and natural ecological and environmental event that develops the vegetation and is necessary for certain species to exist and expand.

4.2. We know the issue is sensitive due to the risk of a Controlled burn and the visual consequences for a few months after the burn, as well as the small animals that might be affected by the fire. We will however research this further and bring a proposal to the AGM which could be voted on. It will cover the following:

4.2.1. Area to be covered and specific location

4.2.2. Method used e.g. Very small sections burnt at a time to ensure control

4.2.3. Using the first burns as a test case to see how veld changes.

4.2.4. Timing of such a burn e.g. After April holidays, before winter rain.

4.2.5. Precautions and measures with Fire Department support and regional

4.2.6. Possibility of irrigation to help veld recover quickly.

4.3. We will in any case start with controlled burns on the grazing veld which has less risk and is deemed to be necessary for the grass to recover. We will do this on a test basis in small areas.

5. Evacuation Roads, Escape Routes and Fire breaks

5.1. Fire Breaks on fences

- 5.1.1.** Fire breaks were opened along the fences in the bush/fynbos areas and will be maintained by Management as part of normal procedures and activities. The reason is partly for stopping fires from crossing from neighbouring areas but also more importantly for fire trucks and our water cart to get access to a fire area.
- 5.1.2.** The Fire break however does not extend all the way along the fence, on the Nautilus side, up to the Estate Entrance Gate. We have decided to extend a road along the fence which will allow easier access on the fence in case of a fire from Nautilus. It could also serve as an evacuation route and finally is useful from a security point to do patrols etc. Zuurvygie which is costly to remove will be dumped in a 3m strip next to the road and fence which will also serve as a fire break.

5.2. Evacuation Roads

- 5.2.1.** The key evacuation roads (additional to our main gravel roads) will be improved to allow for direct evacuation to control points (like the Bird hide) or to simply avoid congestion of firefight traffic on the Kleinbos side. These roads will lead up to the Bird Hide and past the reservoir from the Skilpadplaas and Melkhouthoek phases and should be drivable by normal car.
- 5.2.2.** The Evacuation Roads are shown on the Evacuation map and will be sign-posted as such.

5.3. Emergency Escape Routes

- 5.3.1.** Our Risk reports and Management Plans indicate that due to the layout of our estate, there is high risk that in a severe fire situation, certain access roads to a zone might be completely blocked. Therefore, the dead ends and cull de sacs might not have other access out of the fire risk area.
- 5.3.2.** We have identified certain emergency escape possibilities that will at least provide an escape/access to a nearby road. We indicate these as escape routes.
- 5.3.3.** These routes will not be open for driving but they will be prepared to allow an escape should this be necessary. This means the big bush will be removed to allow access for a car if need be and might have a walking path in the meantime.
- 5.3.4.** In doing these routes, we will consult with the owners in the vicinity to have as little as possible disturbance from such a route. It will also be done over time and in areas where there are no houses currently, the routes will not be opened.

5.4. The Boardwalks may also be used as escape routes.

6. Communication Plan in emergencies

- 6.1.** Estate management have started recording visitors/contractors/guests/owners in a database on a PC at the gatehouse (was previously done in a manual book) by the Gate Controller. It will contain names, contact nrs, car registration of the visitor next to the property. The database will also have all the names, numbers, email addresses of HO. This allows us to have a list of people on the estate in electronic format (so that it is easy to print or forward per email).
- 6.2.** Edwin Everts (Gate Controller) will during the week have the emergency phone with all numbers of HO in order to WhatsApp, sms or phone during emergency in the week. The visitors'/contractors' numbers will be available (from the database) for addition to the phone or for calling. During the week Edwin will therefore do any communication in a Fire Emergency since he sleeps on the Estate.
- 6.3.** On weekends, Edwin will email the list to the Emergency Fire Response team member who handles communication (Riana Rosenbaum/Marille Bass). They will use the list to make contact to HO and visitors if an emergency situation occurs over the weekend. When estate management and fire assistance arrive, the lists can be transferred to the person who takes over the communication role.
- 6.4.** In a Fire Emergency – the list should be printed and taken to the assembly point for roll call and determination if any humans are missing.

7. Evacuation Plans

- 7.1.** Evacuation plans are as set out in the FROP and the Poster. In evacuation people need to report to assembly points in order that management knows who is missing.
- 7.2.** Fire Risk and Evacuation instructions will be provided by the communications team depending on the assessment of the risk.
- 7.3.** Management will undergo training with trial runs.
- 7.4.** A fire drill in December is considered. We are also considering a siren near each phase in case of bad reception.

8. Regulations and Advice

After long consideration, the Trustees have decided the following:

- 8.1. The Estate will provide regulations and actions where the Trustees regard the risk of **causing/starting a fire** to be high. These instances can include:
 - 8.1.1. Hot works (welding) by contractors/owners
 - 8.1.2. Storage of highly Flammable substances (gas, fuel for generators)
 - 8.1.3. Infrastructure that could ignite a fire (Gas, electrical, solar, batteries)
 - 8.1.4. Fire places and handling of hot ash
- 8.2. These areas of compliance may include compliance checks, building directives/rules, operational/storage directives and the provision of equipment.
 - 8.2.1. The Estate will propose approved contractors and guidance on compliance audits. But compliance audits will have to be performed by the owners on their costs.
 - 8.2.2. Once compliance audits have been done, the estate needs to be copied on the new compliance certificates.
 - 8.2.3. We are currently reviewing the compliance guidelines.
- 8.3. The Trustees will in due course work through the Regulations and Procedures and provide the necessary changes to regulations, new regulations or guidance. Since it is time consuming this will not happen immediately.
- 8.4. Aspects relating to protecting a HO private property will be left **as advice** and the estate will not pay or regulate such suggestions (each HO should discuss with his Insurance broker what measures they might require). We recognize there are pros and cons for all risk mitigation measures but advise that following measures should be considered.
 - 8.4.1. Sprayers on roofs
 - 8.4.2. Protective coating on the thatch
 - 8.4.3. Water tanks, hose reels at your property
 - 8.4.4. Smoke detectors and alarms at your property

8.5. Private insurance aspects. The Trustees believe the Fire Risk Strategy and FROP are documents that can be provided to HO private brokers and insurers, if difficulties are experienced with insurers. In addition, any measures requested by insurers are a private matter and should be a cost decision for each owner. We have shown to the estate's insurers that we have taken Fire Risk and the Risk Reports serious and hence the reaction by the estate. This should be of value in private insurance negotiations. But we must confirm the principle that HO Insurance is a private matter to be negotiated by each person.

9. Water Supply and Water infrastructure

9.1. The Estate assumes the responsibility to provide the water infrastructure and substances to fight fires with as the budget permits. This would include; Water infrastructure (reservoir, pipes, hydrants, etc), the supply of water, other firefighting equipment.

9.2. Our current capacities are as follows: The cement reservoir holds 250 000l and is always kept at full through automatic filling with the municipal supply. The Jojo tanks at the Construction camp have a capacity of 40 000l and is also kept at max levels. The Tanks and Reservoir are backup for each other due to separate pipes running to the property areas. We are dependent for water on the municipality.

9.3. The Estate is still busy with an assessment of the Water infrastructure which will include the following:

9.3.1. Proper assessment of the current infrastructure, supply, flow, pressure, etc.

9.3.2. Confirmation of the Legal requirements that should be met on our development

9.3.3. Definition of what we as Trustees believe our additional requirements above legal standard are, in order to safeguard the estate and properties to the satisfaction of our home owners. This can then be voted on at the AGM.

9.3.4. The additional infrastructure and capital required to bring us up to the standard of what Springerbaai requires. This might include additional water storage, changes in the water infrastructure or improving flow or pressure.

9.4. In the mean time the following steps are already being undertaken to improve our firefighting ability:

9.4.1. Connecting a hose reel point at the gate house for fighting a fire in that area.

9.4.2. Buying an additional Water cart (Bakkie Sakkie) of 650 – 750 liters that will be kept at the reservoir and pulled by a Pick-up/Bakkie in case of an immediate fire reaction.

- 9.4.3.** Adding an additional fire hydrant in Skilpadplaas near the fence.
- 9.4.4.** Reviewing the amount of fire beaters and hose reels including the various inspections.
- 9.4.5.** Reviewing the type of medical kits (fire injury focused) to be available on estate and where.
- 9.5.** We also believe that until we improve the water supply and pressure, that it is prudent for HO to install Water tanks around their houses. We are investigation ways of making it more affordable to install storage tanks around the properties. This could include above ground, appropriate storage tanks. We believe that purpose fit shapes and sizes can be considered that will be less obtrusive and can be screened with latte and vegetation. Proposals will be considered by the BAC. This will increase the water availability amongst the houses in case of an emergency.
- 9.6.** In the medium term we need to consider other sources and storage options like bore holes and dams to counter the risk of long droughts, cuts in municipality water, etc. Catching rainwater is part of those considerations and proposals will be considered and provided.

The Trustees and Management have embarked on the Fire Risk work in good faith and proposed the best solution that we could based on advice and reports supplied to us. We nevertheless have to qualify all our proposals and decisions with following disclaimer:

THE HOA AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVES, IN TAKING THESE PRECAUTIONS AND IMPLEMENTING THESE CRITICAL FIRE RISK STRATEGIES, REACTION PLANS AND PROPOSALS IN GOOD FAITH AND DILIGENCE DO NOT ACCEPT ANY LIABILITY WHATSOEVER FOR ANY INJURY OR DEATH OF ANY PERSON OR THE LOSS OR DESTRUCTION OF OR DAMAGE TO ANY PROPERTY, WHETHER ARISING FROM FIRE, FIRE FIGHTING OR ANY OTHER CAUSE WHATSOEVER AND BY WHOMSOEVER CAUSED OR ARISING FROM NEGLIGENCE OR GROSS NEGLIGENCE BY THE HOA AND OR THEIR REPRESENTATIVES OR ANY EMPLOYEES. BY ENTERING THE SPRINGERBAAI PREMISES YOU OR YOUR HEIRS, EXECUTORS AND ADMINISTRATORS ALSO AGREE THAT YOU WILL INDEMNIFY THE HOA AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVES AND HOLD THEM HARMLESS AGAINST ANY CLAIM WHICH MAY BE MADE AS A RESULT OF SUCH LOSS, DAMAGE, DESTRUCTION, DEATH OR BODILY INJURY.

Kind regards

Board of Trustees
Springerbaai Home Owners Association