



14 December 2023

Private and Confidential

Zwaanswyk owners and residents update: Baboons & Security

Dear Property Owner,

The ZAPO board met on the 5th and 13th of December 2023 to discuss baboon matters, security, feedback on the research and to agree on action plans.

Baboon Matters

The Zwaanswyk troop has returned to the section of the Park alongside the fence after a month of relative quiet & no baboon incursions. There has been conflict between the male members of the troop, probably with the alpha male, and several of the male baboons have been injured, one fatally. The less dominant males leave the troop to disperse, but are unable to do so having nowhere to go - the available territory is hemmed in by wine farms, suburbia and adjacent troops. This has increased the pressure on these males, and added to their motivation to come into Zwaanswyk and other suburbs.

ZAPO's mandate, approved by the majority of residents when it was established in 2011 and as per the business plan approved by the City of Cape Town, is to **erect and maintain a baboon deterrent fence**. The ongoing maintenance of the fence includes a full check by Premier once a week, a ZAPO employee working one day a week to clean the fence, install galvanised pegs, trim foliage etc, and a ZAPO member, Premier and/or a contractor on standby to respond to fence alerts and alarms.

In addition to maintaining the fence, ZAPO has added additional elements and electrification over the years to counter baboons who are continually trying to find a way over, under or around.

The neighbourhood has an obvious weak point being Zwaanswyk Road and more recently Steenberg Green (SBG) and the section of the fence damaged in the landslide (which baboons may use in an attempt to access the resident's property).



It is clear that the fence is only one element that needs to be in place to ensure that baboons remain on “their side” in the park and out of the neighbourhood. There are no natural baboon predators on Table Mountain and abundant food resources are available in the suburbs causing the population to grow unchecked. Baboon-human conflicts will therefore be inevitable unless a baboon management plan is put in place by the relevant authorities. This must address:

1. Population Management - possible options include: sterilisation, contraception, relocation, kill/cull and/or euthanasia.
2. The number of troops - each troop requires its own range
3. Dispersing male baboon management
4. Access prevention methods
5. Baboon proof homes and baboon proof rubbish (so that baboons venturing into the suburb aren't rewarded with a high value meal which incentivizes them to return)

Our baboon proof fence has proven to be extremely successful in preventing the 50+ strong troop of baboons from entering Zwaanswyk..

ZAPO cannot provide the other essential elements of baboon management (1 - 3 above). Unfortunately therefore, ZAPO cannot guarantee that baboons will not enter the neighbourhood. Once in, it is very hard to eject them.

The quality of life of residents is severely affected by baboons being in the neighbourhood, and **there is a call for ZAPO to do more than the original mandate** of providing a baboon proof fence.

In the absence of a comprehensive Baboon Management Plan from City of Cape Town, CapeNature and Sanparks, we can do the following:

- A. Increase the level of deterrence offered by the fence by addressing any weak spots.
- B. Engage NCC baboon monitors (ongoing)
- C. Add our own baboon monitors (already underway)
- D. Authorities - we need to apply pressure to the authorities (SANParks, City of Cape Town and Cape Nature) and stress the urgency of finalising and implementing the (long overdue) Baboon Management Plan - ALL RESIDENTS can assist with this.
- E. Incident tracking - we need to track issues where baboons are causing human or animal injuries or destroying property - ZAPO will set up a mechanism to do this.
- F. Bins - ensure bins are baboon proof and put out at the last moment.

In order to increase the deterrence provided by the fence, the ZAPO Board resolved that:

1. Additional Baboon Monitors will be deployed

The monitor has already been posted and will support the ZAPO and SBG Premier Guards and NCC rangers on a trial basis.

A team of 2 will provide 7 days a week daily coverage and be trained. The monitor will communicate via radio and work with the SBG & Premier Guards and NCC rangers to prevent any baboons coming up the road from gaining access to Zwaanswyk either via the road or by jumping over the gate into SBG.

Any sightings of a baboon coming up the road or heading for the SBG corner from the Park side (which is monitored via camera by the SBG guard) will be communicated via radio to the other team members who will all respond to deter the baboon(s) from gaining access to Zwaanswyk or SBG, in accordance with the protocol for paintball gun use.

If a baboon has gained access to the neighbourhood, NCC to be informed - they must eject the baboon, our Zwaanswyk baboon monitor can assist NCC.

2. Investigation into extending the existing fence with a virtual fence trial

The Board agreed to investigate the possibility of extending the fence with a virtual fence from Steenberg Green (SBG) for the stretch down to the bend of Zwaanswyk road and then effectively across Zwaanswyk road (on a trial basis). ZAPO does not have jurisdiction to erect a physical or virtual fence outside of our ZAPO boundary, so this would require special agreement with the Baboon Joint Task Team, SANParks and City of Cape Town.

The principle behind a virtual fence is that raiding & dispersing males would be fitted with trackers which will alert us to their presence. A deterrent noise will also sound when they get too close to the fence or the road. The ZAPO Guard, SBG Guard and any additional baboon monitors on duty can respond to the alert.

The cost of darting, obtaining permits and putting tracking collars on the baboons is approximately R25k per baboon plus R260 000 capital outlay for the system. The number of baboons entering Zwaanswyk appears to be at least 5 currently, possibly as many as 10 different individuals, putting the cost at around R500k.

An on/off button at pedestrian and horse rider height will be installed at both ends of the fence on the road side and the sand track side so that dog walkers and riders can de-activate to allow them to pass through.



3. ZAPO Community education and co-operation

Once a baboon has gained access into the suburb, it is exceedingly difficult to eject him. It is therefore worth increasing our efforts to prevent them from entering the neighbourhood, as to locate and exit him once he has started hopping between the properties is much more problematic. However despite our best efforts, baboons are ingenious and determined, and from time to time, these raiding individuals are going to find a way in. The best we can do is reduce the frequency of these raids, and eject the baboon as quickly as possible (by working together and coordinating with NCC and the monitor) so that the raid is unsuccessful, reducing the chance that they will try to return. To this end, we have to remove the huge motivation that they have to return to the neighbourhood, namely food.

This requires:

1. Managing rubbish bins better (baboon proof bins)
2. Removing temptations (visible fruit & food in houses)
3. Picking all the fruit off fruit trees, baboon proofing the property or area with the fruit trees or removing them.

To assist residents who come across a baboon in their property or home, we can arrange an educational session with NCC on a Saturday. During this session, NCC can also guide us on how to cooperate with each other and the ranger in order to eject the baboon from the neighbourhood most effectively.

Security

Zwaanswyk is a small suburb, part of the greater Tokai area, nestled between Steenberg Estate and the Table Mountain National Park (TMNP). The suburb backs onto the Park which poses an obvious security risk. Since the fence's erection in 2011, Zwaanswyk has been mostly incident free however we must not be lulled into a false sense of security.

The board and contractors are conducting a security review and will be developing a long term security plan.

We currently have the following:

- Electrified & monitored perimeter fence, fully maintained, inspected weekly and swift reaction to alarms.
- Automated access gates onto TMNP
- Common area security 24x7x365
 - Permanent guard and patrol vehicle
 - Regular patrols during the night
 - Vehicle control from 10pm to 5am at the guard hut
 - Backup response security from Premier from Tokai vehicles
 - Response calls for residents for anything from snakes to baboons to security
- Multiple cameras monitored from our guard house
- Licence plate recognition to alert the guard of any non-resident vehicles
- Temporary guard at the top of Zwaanswyk Road

In order to improve security, the Board has already identified several possible improvements that have been utilised in other estates for perimeter and internal security. Upgrading the fence, thermal cameras for detection of humans in all weather, speakers, lighting, radar, offsite camera monitoring and additional patrol guards have all been discussed.

A main gate/boom has been proposed at the bottom of Zwaanswyk road, and has also been considered by ZAPO over the years. However Zwaanswyk Road and the roads within Zwaanswyk are public roads and access may not be restricted with a boom or gate. To declare Zwaanswyk a "gated community" (in order to restrict access) is a huge undertaking and very difficult to achieve, it also has significant cost implications for residents, City services etc. Never-the-less, the possibility of becoming a gated community will be investigated further.

It was resolved that:

1. Security Contractors will be engaged to propose upgraded security measures.
2. Measures that are fundable from existing budgets will be considered by the Board.
3. Additional measures not fundable within the existing budget will be discussed and proposed to ZAPO members.

We are sensitive to cost increases. However, to do major upgrades, such as a steenberg type fence with high tech thermal camera security, offsite monitoring and/or additional 24x7 guards on a permanent basis, will require additional budget from property owners through an increase to the SID levy. Once we have a view of the costs we will assess the implications and communicate our recommendation to the Zwaanswyk Property Owners for their consideration.

We wish you a wonderful festive season!

Regards,

The ZAPO Board