



MINUTES

BOARD OF ZOO COMMISSIONERS OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2012 – 10:00 AM

Los Angeles Zoo
Grand Room
5333 Zoo Drive
Los Angeles, California 90027

*“Nurturing
wildlife
and enriching
the human
experience”*

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Antonio R. Villaraigosa
Mayor

Tom LaBonge
Council Member
4th District

Zoo Commissioners

Karen B. Winnick
President

Bernardo Silva
Vice President

Elaine Baylor

Sue Downing, D.V.M.

Kimberly Marteau

Richard Lichtenstein
ex officio member

John R. Lewis
Zoo Director

MEMBERS PRESENT

Karen B. Winnick
Sue Downing, D.V.M.
Kimberly Marteau
Bernardo Silva
Elaine Baylor

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

EX OFFICIO MEMBER PRESENT

Richard Lichtenstein

COMMISSION STAFF

John R. Lewis
Lisa Gerencser

CITY ATTORNEY LIAISON

Dov Lesel

AGENDA ITEM 1

CALL TO ORDER

Commission President Winnick called the meeting to order at 10:10 AM.

AGENDA ITEM 2

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 18, 2012

Commission President Winnick moved to approve the minutes of September 18, 2012 Commissioner Silva so moved, Commissioner Baylor seconded and the motion passed.

AGENDA ITEM 3

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

None

VISITORS

Rex Link
Jim Bickhart
Seffy Wiles
Delilah Puche

MEDIA

None signed in.



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AGENDA ITEM 4
ZOO GOVERNANCE UPDATE AND DISCUSSION

Zoo Director John Lewis stated that GLAZA has pulled out of the RFP negotiations regarding the alternative management structure for the Zoo. Assistant City Attorney Dov Lesel explained there was a governance issue related to the supervision of City employees which is set in the City's Charter. The City Administrative Officer (CAO) has requested the City Attorney submit their opinion in writing; City Attorney is currently drafting their response.

Commission President Winnick asked how the City's limitations compare to the County's model which was used for Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). Mr. Lesel explained that the County is not governed by the same Charter as the City. Commission President Winnick asked if a Charter Amendment could be done. Mr. Lesel explained an election would be necessary to amend the City Charter; an amendment to the Charter would affect the entire Civil Service employment of all City employees. Ms. Lesel stated the City Attorney did suggest governance models to GLAZA, but GLAZA did not find these suggested models to be acceptable. Ex-Officio Member Lichtenstein inquired as to the specific sections of the Charter the City Attorney found restrictive. Mr. Lesel explained it was several sections of the Charter related to Civil Service and Ethics; sections 506-510 are Civil Service sections. Government code 1090 specifically relates to ethic issues. Commission Vice President Silva asked if there could be a charter amendment specifically just for the Zoo. Mr. Lesel explained you can not make an amendment that specifies one group of City employees.

President Winnick asked about firing the City employees and having GLAZA rehire the staff. Mr. Lesel noted the City could terminate all staff, but City would still own all assets, and the termination of employees would be become a political issue. Mr. Lichtenstein noted there is currently a public/private partnership for one of the City's Animal Shelters. Mr. Lesel explained the difference between running one shelter as opposed to running a Department. Mr. Lesel also noted that the current operator of the City Shelter is not operating the shelter in the typical City manner; there are no City employees working at that facility. Mr. Lichtenstein asked about the RFP for the Los Angeles Convention Center; Mr. Lesel noted he had no knowledge of that RFP. President Winnick asked if firing and allowing GLAZA to rehire the employees would work. Mr. Lesel noted again it would be a political issue to fire employees.

Mr. Lesel reiterated that governance models were suggested to GLAZA, but GLAZA found those models to be unacceptable. Mr. Lichtenstein opined, as the President of the GLAZA Board of Trustees, that the negotiations between the City and GLAZA were 95% complete leaving only the governance of employees to decide. Mr. Lichtenstein believes the City Attorney's office was resistant in giving their specific opinion on employment. Mr. Lichtenstein feels the City Attorney office misled GLAZA. Mr. Lesel stated all the issues regarding governance had been discussed before the release of the RFP and therefore the City Attorney's office did not feel a written explanation was necessary. Mr. Lesel noted that GLAZA was unhappy without a written explanation of the issues with City Charter and the Government Code.

Mr. Lesel stated the City Attorney's office is currently drafting their response to the CAO. Vice President Silva asked if that letter would be a public document; Mr. Lesel was unaware if it would be or if it would be protected under client/attorney provisions. A copy will be provided to the Commission if it is allowable. Vice President Silva asked if a Charter amendment would need to go before the City Council. Mr. Lesel added it could be amended through referendum.

President Winnick asked what GLAZA's suggested governance model was. Dawn Petersen-Amend, Project Manager of Privatization for GLAZA, stated GLAZA wanted a model similar to LACMA with the Zoo Director being a dual employee of both GLAZA and the City. The issue was no City employees could report to non-City supervisors. Mr. Lichtenstein commented that the City Council would still have decision making powers for the Zoo and this defeats the purpose of GLAZA running the Zoo. Discussion ensued regarding economic impacts.

Commissioner Baylor asked about LACMA structure. Mr. Lesel noted that the LACMA model was developed in the 1970s, since the 1970s there have been changes to ethic codes; also the State gave LACMA a civil service exemption. Commissioner Marteau asked if the Attorney General could be contacted for an exemption for the Zoo. Mr. Lesel noted conflict with Government Code 1090. Discussion about laws and legislative amendments. Mr. Lichtenstein commented that he is disappointed this has taken so long and that employees are in limbo; the City needs to get comfortable with a new governance structure.

AGENDA ITEM 5 ZOO MASTER PLAN

In 1992 the Zoo Master Plan was created and then updated in 1998. The Master Plan laid out the Zoo geographically (Asia, Australia, South America, etc). With most of the items from the original Master Plan having been completed, it is time again to revise the Plan. To date, projects that have been completed are as follows:

1. Great Ape Exhibits – Chimpanzees (1998), Orangutan (2000), Gorillas (2007)
2. Winnick Family Children's Zoo (2001)
3. Front Entrance, CDC, Education Offices, Sea Life Cliffs (2005)
4. Elephants of Asia (2010)
5. Living Amphibian Invertebrate and Reptile Center (LAIR) (2012)
6. Komodo Dragon exhibit renovation
7. Gottlieb Health Center (2002)
8. Conservation Carousel (2012)

Currently the Rainforest of the Americas is under construction and expected to open spring 2013. The World of Birds show is under renovation. There are many ideas and items to discuss for the revised Master Plan. Mr. Lewis indicated the Commission would be included in the Master Plan discussions.

**AGENDA ITEM 6
UNCOMMITTED CAPITAL FUNDS**

Mr. Lewis discussed the uncommitted funds left over from capital projects. There is approximately \$5.8 million to be spent; \$1.9 million in Prop CC funds and \$3.9 million in MICLA funds. To date, it is not known exactly how much money the Zoo will be allowed to expend. Mr. Lewis had three suggestions for uncommitted funds:

- Jaguar Exhibit (3 options for exhibit space) – Cost est. \$3-5 million
- Create a picnic/event venue in the space behind the CDC – Cost est. \$900,000
- Hire a consultant to hire to develop the Zoo's Master Plan – Cost est. \$250,000

The Commission engaged in discussion about priorities and preferences for the Master Plan and the uncommitted funds.

**AGENDA ITEM 7
ZOOBIQUITY CONFERENCE SUMMARY**

Dr. Curtis Eng, Chief Veterinarian gave an overview of the Zoobiquity conference that was held on September 29, 2012. There were over 220 attendees. Zoobiquity is the gathering of medical doctors and veterinarians to discuss medical issues and care among humans and animals alike.

**AGENDA ITEM 8
GENERAL MANAGER REPORTS**

A. Capital Projects

Rebecca Abano with the Bureau of Engineering gave a brief update on the following Zoo projects accompanied with a slide show of the work progression:

- *Rainforest of the Americas* project is 48% complete.
- Working on underground utilities, structures, and otter pool

B. Animal Transactions

Jeff Holland, Curator of Mammals, discussed the latest animal transactions. Some highlights include:

- Sending a female markhor to the Bronx Zoo
- Female gazelle will be transferred to the San Diego Zoo
- Two gerenuks will be going to the Berlin Zoo
- A barbirusa piglet was born
- Harbor seals and grey seals have been integrated into the Sea Life Cliffs exhibit

Commission President Winnick asked if there is a plan to obtain lions. Mr. Lewis noted that the Curator has already made initial phone calls and is working on obtaining lions. There will need to be some exhibit modifications before the Zoo can bring in younger lions.

C. GLAZA Update

GLAZA Vice President Genie Vasels gave a quick update on GLAZA activities.

- Received \$250,000 for aquarium and stilt house naming opportunities at the *Rainforest of the Americas* exhibit
- Working with a foundation to secure \$750,000 for the naming of the giant otter exhibit

- Only three animals still available on the carousel

D. Budget Update

Denise Verret, Assistant General Manager, gave an overview of the current and forthcoming budgets.

As of 12:05 PM there was no longer a quorum with only President Winnick and Vice President Silva remaining.

E. Zoo Director Reports

Zoo Director John Lewis commented on the following:

- The 99 cent stores have agreed to sponsor *Boo at the Zoo*
- Another wave of *LAIR* advertising for fall season
- Several filmings have taken place including an entire episode of “The New Girl”

Mr. Lewis noted the next Commission meeting is scheduled for the same week as Thanksgiving and he will not be in town. President Winnick suggested moving the meeting back a week to November 27. Mr. Lesel clarified that since there is no longer a quorum, Mr. Lewis could send an email to the rest of the Commissioners to note the change in date.

**AGENDA ITEM 9
OLD BUSINESS**

None

**AGENDA ITEM 10
ADJOURNMENT**

There being no more business to come before the Commission President Winnick called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Vice President Silva moved to adjourn, and the meeting adjourned at 12:08 PM.

ATTEST:

PRESIDENT

SECRETARY