MINUTES
BOARD OF ZOO COMMISSIONERS
OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES
TUESDAY, APRIL 9, 2019 – 10:00 AM

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

MEMBERS PRESENT
Karen B. Winnick
Bernardo Silva
Margot Armbruster
Christopher Hopkins
Daryl Smith

VISITORS
None signed in

EX OFFICIO MEMBER PRESENT
Richard Lichtenstein

COMMISSION STAFF
Denise M. Verret
Denise Tamura

MEDIA
None signed in

ZOO GENERAL COUNSEL
Laurie Rittenberg

AGENDA ITEM 1
CALL TO ORDER
Commission President Winnick called the meeting to order at 10:03AM.

AGENDA ITEM 2
APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR MEETING OF MARCH 12, 2019
Commission President Winnick moved to approve the minutes of March 12, 2019. Commissioner Christopher Hopkins so moved, Commissioner Margot Armbruster seconded and the motion passed.

AGENDA ITEM 3
GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT
No comments.

NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
No comments.
AGENDA ITEM 4 – PRESENTATION – Pan African Sanctuary Alliance Partnership Project in Cameroon

Candace Sclimenti, Curator of Mammals, provided a brief overview of the Zoo’s partnership with Pan African Sanctuary Alliance Partnership project in Cameroon. The Zoo has provided support to this project for several years. Ms. Sclimenti visited Limbe Wildlife Center to assist staff with training, enhance their behavioral enrichment program, and share experience about caring for primates such as guenons, gorillas, drills and chimpanzees. A significant concern that Ms. Sclimenti was able to assist with was escaping chimpanzees; she helped identify why chimps were escaping, develop escape protocols and now escapes have lessened. She also educated staff on the importance of nutrition, enrichment, and health and hygiene practices when working with primates. There are no plans to return these animals into the wild due to deforestation and habitat destruction.

Another project that Ms. Sclimenti visited during her month-long trip in Cameroon was Mefou African Park as part of Ape Africa Action. This park is part of a partnership with the Government of Cameroon so there is a military presence to keep the staff and animals safe. This facility houses gorillas, chimps, mandrills and other primates. Ms. Sclimenti was able to conduct staff training and assist with animal/human relationships to build trust. With experience gained by working with great apes at the LA Zoo, she was able to demonstrate how animals positively respond when trained with positive reinforcement rather than utilizing other methods. Deforestation and the creation of multiple palm oil plantations make returning these animals back into the wild nearly impossible.

Staff at these facilities are very interested in keeper exchange programs, but have only been able to participate with closer zoos located in Europe due to lack of funding.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – RECOGNITION OF COMMISSIONER NICOLE CHASE

Commission President Winnick presented former Commissioner Chase with a plaque and shared the Commission’s appreciation for her work on the Zoo Commission. Interim Zoo Director, Denise Verret, presented the former Commissioner with a proclamation from Councilmember Ryu and thanked her for her service on the Zoo Commission. Everyone wished Ms. Chase well on her future endeavor at the Recreation and Parks’ Commission. Ms. Chase thanked the Commission and Zoo staff and noted she would continue to support the Zoo.

AGENDA ITEM 6
GENERAL MANAGER REPORTS
A. Animal Transactions
Beth Schaefer, General Curator, discussed the latest animal transactions. Some highlights include:
- Donation of four Ethiopian mountain adders
- Donation of male Caiman lizard for Rainforest of Americas
- Sale of female ostrich; she is not working out with current group
- Donation of toco toucan for Bird Show
- Donation of male Boelen’s python for breeding
- Donation of female green aracari for breeding at Rainforest of the Americas
- Purchase of 4000 Cardinal tetra and 15 freshwater angelfish to create mixed species exhibit with Caiman lizard
Recent births include a Southern pudu, Southern gerenuk, Yarrow’s spiny lizard, meerkat, yellow-footed rock wallaby, three bighorn sheep and a female zebra foal – first zebra birth at LA Zoo in over 20 years.

Commission President Winnick inquired about obtaining rhino for LA Zoo. Ms. Schaefer replied that there are rhinos available, but exhibit modifications are necessary before bringing this species back into the collection.

B. GLAZA Update
Dawn Petersen-Amend, Interim GLAZA President, provided an update:
- GLAZA has exceeded their annual restricted goal of $3.5M this year by $163,000
- Gifts this past month include $6,000 for peninsular pronghorn, $5,000 for ZooPals and $10,000 for LAIR

Invitations are being sent out this week for Beastly Ball on May 18, 2019.

C. Zoo Director Reports
Denise Verret, Interim Zoo Director, commented on the following:
- The Zoo partnered with California Poison Control with a press briefing held last month reminding all residents to be aware of rattlesnakes waking up from hibernation
- March attendance was above projections and Zoo is on track for year-to-date projections
- March revenue was below projections and year-to-date remain below projections
- Spring attendance is going well
- Developed partnership with Los Angeles City libraries to provide low cost/free passes for library patrons, limited to City residents, which resulted in almost 600 visits from December through February. Will evaluate to determine if we continue to offer program
- Ms. Verret is a member of AZA Government Affairs Committee. Was able to secure Congressmember Schiff as part of Zoo & Aquarium Caucus. Will be attending AZA Advocacy Days next month in Washington DC to further nurture relationships between legislators and zoos.

Ex-Officio member Lichtenstein asked about the status of the Vision Plan EIR process. Ms. Verret replied that a technical studies draft should be completed in the fall and will be presented to the Commission at that time.

AGENDA ITEM 7
OLD BUSINESS
None

AGENDA ITEM 8
ADJOURNMENT
There being no more business to come before, Commission President Winnick motioned to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Smith so moved and Commissioner Armbruster seconded; the meeting was adjourned at 10:57AM.

ATTEST:

__________________________________  __________________________________
PRESIDENT      SECRETARY