MINUTES
BOARD OF ZOO COMMISSIONERS
OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES
TUESDAY, MAY 21, 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
Daryl Smith

VISITORS
None signed in

MEMBER ABSENT
Christopher Hopkins

EX OFFICIO MEMBER ABSENT
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 10:07AM.

AGENDA ITEM 2
APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR MEETING OF APRIL 9, 2019
Commission President Winnick moved to approve the minutes of April 9, 2019. Commissioner Margot Armbruster so moved, Vice President Bernardo Silva seconded and the motion passed.

AGENDA ITEM 3
GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT
No comments.

NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
No comments.
AGENDA ITEM 5 – PRESENTATION – California Condor Program Update
Mike Maxcy, Curator of Birds, provided a brief overview of the Zoo's involvement with the California Condor program over the last 50 years. This program started with 27 birds and now there are over 500 birds. In 2019, the Zoo hatched its 190th condor chick. Lead toxicity continues to have a detrimental effect and often times result in death. California has banned lead ammunition which should help to decrease lead toxicity. Mr. Maxcy briefly explained the method of raising condors from eggs until they are ready for release in the wild. Double or triple clutching eggs produces more than one egg during a season resulting in more chicks than parents so staff puppet-rears these chicks which is labor and time intensive. Staff tried placing two chicks under a parent pair, which would not be done in the wild, and it has been successful. This year, six chicks are being raised with three parent pairs. This results in chicks with less human imprinting and more condor-like behavior which aids in their success in surviving in the wild upon release. Zoo staff also assists USFWS with nest entries at local sites to check the health and growth of chicks at regular intervals.

In addition to breeding California condors at the Zoo, our veterinary staff is responsible for medical treatment of birds at local sites. Over 200 birds have received medical treatment including one year treating over 40 birds for lead toxicity.

One bird that arrived for medical treatment due to a wing injury was “Dolly”. Unfortunately, the injuries were so severe that she would not be able to be released back into the wild so staff worked with her closely and now she is an Ambassador for the species and is able to educate people in the community about condors. Another bird, “Hope”, was brought in from the wild with a wing injury that was repaired but would not be able to be released into the wild. Staff worked with her and she is now able to participate and fly small distances in our Bird Show. There is nowhere else in the world that the public can get an up-close look at these birds to learn more about them. These innovative practices demonstrate our staff’s dedication to ensuring the well-being of these birds within their care.

AGENDA ITEM 5
GENERAL MANAGER REPORTS
A. Animal Transactions
Beth Schaefer, General Curator, discussed the latest animal transactions. Some highlights include:
- Purchase of striped skunk for ambassador program
- Acquisition of male tamandua for breeding

Recent births include a male Grevy’s zebra, gerenuk being hand raised at nursery, Cape vulture chick hatched from egg received from St. Augustine.

B. GLAZA Update
Dawn Petersen-Amend, Interim GLAZA President, provided an update:
- New gifts include $5,000 for ZooPals, $11,000 for peninsular pronghorn, $35,000 for student volunteer program

Beastly Ball was held last Saturday night and went well. There will be more information provided at next month’s Commission meeting.
C. Marketing and Events Update
Emily Marrin, GLAZA Marketing and Communications Manager, shared information about the recent promotion “Spring Fling”. The Zoo offered a month of activities between March and April to try and accommodate the varied school breaks. This year the focus was on pollinators and their importance to the planet. Overall, this provided an increase in website visits, ticket sales and higher attendance than last year for the same period.

The Zoo is also participating in “Party for the Planet” by partnering with the Aquarium of the Pacific funded by grant money from Disney. The focus of this promotion is protecting Earth’s biodiversity by encouraging the public to spring into action and volunteer in various activities throughout the City.

Earlier this month, Haechan from K-pop band “NCT127” came to the Zoo to visit the infant pudu named after him from a Zoo-sponsored crowdsource fundraiser. Overall, this activity created a lot of media attention and an increase of visitors to our pudu exhibit.

The Zoo is entering its fifth year of sponsorship with SoCal Honda and will have a new game for visitor participation. Also, First 5 LA is the new sponsor for Papiano PlayPark.

D. Zoo Director Reports
Denise Verret, Interim Zoo Director, commented on the following:

- April attendance and revenue were below projections along with year-to-date actuals below projections.
- Provided a summary of her participation in AZA Advocacy days earlier this month. Met with several legislative offices which noted their support of zoos. Some issues she discussed included continued federal support, our vision plan and the audience we serve.
- Press release sent out earlier this month highlighting the new breeding technique that Mr. Maxcy discussed earlier in the meeting

Vice President Silva inquired what occurs if the Zoo doesn’t meet its budget projections. Ms. Verret explained that there is a reserve account shared with GLAZA that ensures the Zoo meets budgeted projections.

AGENDA ITEM 6
OLD BUSINESS
None

AGENDA ITEM 7
ADJOURNMENT
There being no more business to come before, Commission President Winnick motioned to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Armbruster so moved and Commissioner Smith seconded; the meeting was adjourned at 10:58AM.

ATTEST:

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PRESIDENT                        SECRETARY