MINUTES
BOARD OF ZOO COMMISSIONERS
OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES
VIRTUAL MEETING*
TUESDAY, May 19, 2020 – 10:00 AM

* IN CONFORMITY WITH THE GOVERNOR’S EXECUTIVE ORDER N-29-20 (MARCH 17, 2020) AND DUE TO CONCERNS OVER COVID-19, THIS BOARD MEETING WAS HELD ENTIRELY TELEPHONICALLY VIA GOOGLE MEET.

“Creating dynamic experiences to connect people and animals”
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Eric Garcetti
Mayor

David E. Ryu
Council Member
4th District

Zoo Commissioners
Karen B. Winnick
President

Bernardo Silva
Vice President

Margot Armbruster

Christopher Hopkins

Daryl Smith

Richard Lichtenstein
ex officio member

Denise M. Verret
Chief Executive Officer
& Zoo Director

An Equal Employment Opportunity Employer

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

VISITORS
No response

EX OFFICIO MEMBER PRESENT
Richard Lichtenstein

COMMISSION STAFF
Denise Verret
Denise Tamura

MEDIA
No response

AGENDA ITEM 1
CALL TO ORDER
Commission President Winnick called the meeting to order at 10:01 AM.

AGENDA ITEM 2
APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR MEETING OF APRIL 21, 2020
Commission President Winnick moved to approve April 21, 2020 minutes. Commission Vice President Silva so moved, Commissioner Armbruster seconded and the motion passed.

AGENDA ITEM 3
GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT
No Comments

LOBBYING NOTICE
No Comments

NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
No Comments

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Accredited by the American Association of Museums
Member of the California Association of Zoos and Aquariums
AGENDA ITEM 4
ZOO DIRECTOR’S UPDATE ON ZOO OPERATIONS AND RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Denise Verret, Zoo Director, provided an update on the Zoo’s operation and response to the COVID-19 pandemic emergency that began in March. The Zoo continues to remain closed and essential workers are reporting to work or telecommuting. Some non-essential employees continue to work as part of the City’s Disaster Service Worker program. The animals continue to do well during this time and continue to receive the best care from our staff.

The State and County has identified the reopening of the Zoo in the later phases of recovery. All City departments were asked to submit reopening plans to the Mayor’s office with final approval expected in mid-June.

The Zoo is identifying what appropriate safety measures will need to be in place before reopening. Most likely, some areas will remain closed to adhere to appropriate distancing measures. Staff is working towards the ability to open as soon as it is safe to do so.

Ms. Verret responded to various questions from the Commissioners regarding reopening plans, fiscal impact and supply chain resources and availability.

AGENDA ITEM 5
GENERAL MANAGER REPORTS

A. Animal Updates
Beth Schaefer, General Curator, noted that several animal transactions continue to be on hold due to COVID-19 pandemic emergency. It was noted that births and deaths on the report will now reflect the previous month. Some animal highlights include:

- Record number of California condor eggs were laid this season.
- Male bighorn sheep born
- Several frog and bird species have been reproducing this season

Commission President Winnick inquired about recent reports of rabbit hemmorhagic disease. Dr. Keller provided some background noting it has only been found in rabbit species and has not spread to other species. The Zoo’s rabbits are isolated and not exposed to wild hares. It could become problematic if it disrupts the food chain. She will continue to monitor the situation.

B. GLAZA Update
Tom Jacobson, GLAZA President, provided the following update on GLAZA:

- Received Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) funding
- Spring appeal exceeded expectations
- The virtual Beastly Ball held last Friday was a success and exceeded expectations
- Board of Trustees will be meeting next month to discuss/approve 2020/21 budget

Kait Hiliard, GLAZA VP of Marketing, provided a summary of the various virtual engagements and special events the Zoo has developed during its closure. This allows the Zoo to continue
to be available to visitors and guests virtually and to garner excitement for when the Zoo reopens.

C. Zoo Director Reports
Denise Verret, Zoo Director, reported the Mayor’s proposed budget provided general funding for the Zoo while it remains closed in addition to provide funding when we reopen, since it is anticipated we will not be operating at full capacity. Other cost saving measures include a hard hiring freeze and implementation of 26 furlough days for every employee. Staffing will be staggered to ensure animal health and welfare is not negatively affected by the furloughs or the closure. The City’s Budget & Finance Council Committee will continue to monitor and meet about the City’s budget as needed to ensure any shortcomings are addressed and amend the budget as needed.

AGENDA ITEM 6
OLD BUSINESS
None

AGENDA ITEM 7
ADJOURNMENT
There being no more business to come before, President Winnick motioned to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Vice President Silva so moved and Commissioner Smith seconded; the meeting was adjourned at 10:47AM.

ATTEST:

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PRESIDENT                              SECRETARY