MINUTES
BOARD OF ZOO COMMISSIONERS
OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES
VIRTUAL MEETING*
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 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 ZOOM.

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

EX OFFICIO MEMBER PRESENT
Richard Lichtenstein

COMMISSION STAFF
Denise Verret
Denise Tamura

ZOO GENERAL COUNSEL
Steve Houchin

AGENDA ITEM 1
CALL TO ORDER
Commission President Winnick called the meeting to order at 10:11 AM.

AGENDA ITEM 2
APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR MEETING OF OCTOBER 20, 2020
Commission President Winnick moved to approve October 20, 2020 minutes. Commissioner Smith so moved, Vice President Silva seconded, and the motion passed.

AGENDA ITEM 3
GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT
Caller: Phone #88 – Sustainability student from CSUN asked the Zoo to discontinue use of single use plastics as we are a conservation committed organization.

LOBBYING NOTICE
No Comments

NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
No Comments
AGENDA ITEM 4
PROPOSED ZOO COMMISSION MEETING DATES FOR 2021
President Winnick asked for approval of the proposed meeting dates for 2021. Vice President Silva so moved and Commissioner Hopkins seconded; Commission dates approved for 2021.

AGENDA ITEM 5
PRESENTATION – WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING – ZOOS AND THEIR IMPACT
Dr. Jake Owens, Director of Conservation, began the presentation with a discussion on the “Global Value Chain”. Wildlife trafficking is a global issue that includes animals for general consumption, medicinal/miracle cures, poaching for tusks, horns, pelts, and bushmeat. Dr. Owens utilized the current Covid-19 pandemic to highlight how wildlife trafficking can be detrimental to humans as well as animals; Covid-19 is believed to have originated in a bat, was transmitted to a pangolin, and a person in Wuhan, China purchased that pangolin at a wet market and the virus began to spread. Over 60% of all human diseases originated from animals and over 70% of those originated from wildlife. Dr. Owens discussed his field work on Bioko Island researching mandrills and the bushmeat trade. Wildlife trafficking is sometimes cultural or a person’s only means of income; economic inequality is another driving factor. Approximately $23 billion is generated annually from wildlife trafficking.

Los Angeles is the top city in the U.S. for illegal trafficking. The Los Angeles Zoo works closely with all enforcement agencies to assist with identification, housing, and rehabilitation of confiscated animals. This Zoo is also committed to visiting places around the globe to help educate people about conservation and the importance of human/animal coexistence.

Beth Schaefer, Director of Animal Programs, gave an overview of the Southern California Confiscation Network and the Zoo’s role in assisting other agencies with wildlife related crimes. Ms. Schaefer noted the Zoo has been assisting enforcement agencies with animal confiscations since the 1960s. In the last decade, the Zoo has assisted with over 200 animals; ranging from someone not knowing ferrets are illegal as pets to full FBI investigations. Any confiscated animals that stay at the Zoo become ambassadors for their species as well as for wildlife trafficking. One example is a macaw that is currently part of the bird show.

The goal of the Southern California Confiscation Network (SCCN) is to quickly assist California Fish & Wildlife, US Fish & Wildlife, and other enforcement agencies with receipt, identification, housing, and rehabilitation of animals. This frees the enforcement agencies time to continue going after illegal traffickers while the animal experts work on aiding the animals received. SCCN goals are to increase public awareness of wildlife trafficking and improve national regulations regarding wildlife.

AGENDA ITEM 6
GENERAL MANAGER REPORTS
A. Animal Updates
Beth Schaefer, Director of Animal Programs, gave the following transaction updates:
- Male CA condor going to Santa Barbara Zoo to be a mentor for their younger cohort group
- Congo peafowl going to PA
- Received male black and white colobus to add to our group
B. GLAZA Update
GLAZA President Tom Jacobson gave the following update:

- Restricted fundraising is at 22% of the yearly goal for current year
- Received over $100,000 in gifts for Animal Care, Condor Observation, Education, and Feasibility Campaign
- Currently have over 49,000 households with Memberships, but continue to have customer service issues as the Zoo can meet Members demands to visit due to capacity limits
- “Drive-In Nights at the Zoo” were successfully and GLAZA may be doing additional holiday themed drive-ins if weather and County Health Mandate permits

C. Zoo Director Update
Zoo Director, Denise Verret noted that on the Veteran’s Holiday (11/11/20) we had our highest attendance since we reopened with 2,313 visitors; averaging 12,000 visitors per week. Mrs. Verret discussed a briefing she was participated in earlier this week about the surge in positive Covid-19 cases in Los Angeles; the next two weeks will be monitored by the County/City closely and decided if more restrictions will be put in place. Additional information shared was regarding staff working at polling places and the Zoo article in Forbes magazine.

Vice President Silva asked for an update on the EIR. Mrs. Verret noted the draft should be ready next month and that BOE will be making a presentation to the Commission.

AGENDA ITEM 7
OLD BUSINESS
None

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

ATTEST:

PRESIDENT

SECRETARY