



MINUTES
BOARD OF ZOO COMMISSIONERS
OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES
VIRTUAL MEETING*
TUESDAY, AUGUST 16, 2022 – 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.

“Creating dynamic experiences to connect people and animals”

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Eric Garcetti
Mayor

Nithya Raman
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
Bernardo Silva
Margot Armbruster
Christopher Hopkins
Daryl Smith

VISITORS

No response

EX OFFICIO MEMBER PRESENT

Richard Lichtenstein

COMMISSION STAFF

Denise Verret
Denise Tamura
Lisa Gerencser

MEDIA

No response

ZOO GENERAL COUNSEL

Steve Houchin

**AGENDA ITEM 1
CALL TO ORDER**

Commission President Winnick called the meeting to order at 10:02 AM.

**AGENDA ITEM 2
APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR MEETING OF JULY 19, 2022**

Commission President Winnick moved to approve the minutes of the last meeting. Vice President Silva so moved, Commissioner Smith seconded. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

**AGENDA ITEM 3
GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

No Comments

LOBBYING NOTICE

No Comments

NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

No Comments

Accredited by the Association
of Zoos and Aquariums

Accredited by the American
Association of Museums

Member of the California
Association of Zoos and Aquariums

AGENDA ITEM 4

**FINDINGS TO CONTINUE TELECONFERENCE MEETINGS PURSUANT TO
ASSEMBLY BILL 361 / GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 54953(e)(3)**

President Winnick asked for a motion to approve findings that virtual meetings are still necessary. Vice President Silva so moved, Commissioner Hopkins seconded. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

AGENDA ITEM 5

PRESENTATION – PAID INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Jess Kohring, Director of Equity Programs, provided an overview of the Zoo's first Paid Internship Program. This 10 week program comprised of 14 local college students provided hands on experience within Conservation, Learning and Engagement, and Zoo Nutrition divisions. Highlights of intern presentations included:

- Gustavo, Conservation Intern, discussed the importance of hands on experience as well as learning a sense of belonging and being able to show Queer Latino representation in the science fields. Bringing this representation back to his community will be a great experience.
- Anthony, Conservation Intern, also discussed the learning from research experience, but also noted that he gained other skills such as resume writing. Thanked everyone for the experience and helping him grow.
- Jerimiah, Learning and Engagement Intern, discussed active learning and educating, and mentioned that a Masai giraffe eats 75 lbs. of leaves a day – knowledge he now has because one of the children he was working with asked.
- Trinity, Learning and Engagement Intern, was impacted by directly working with children.
- Brandon, Nutrition Intern, discussed various diets. This program provides experience as well as character building.

All the interns thanked the Zoo and specifically their mentors for this fantastic experience.

Anna Becker, Conservation Curator, is an Intern Mentor. Anna discussed the importance of fostering a sense of belonging and individual representation. The focus of the program is Social and Environmental Justice. Anna was very impressed with this group of interns as she watched them learn, grow and create life long bonds with people.

Renae Cotero, Learning and Engagement Curator, is an Intern Mentor. Renae discussed the role of engaging children with active learning. Renae is very proud of this group of interns and the growth they showed over the course of the program.

Commissioner Smith thanked all the interns and mentors. Congratulated the Zoo on program that will be impactful and bring about change.

President Winnick asked what the stipend was for the interns and how they were recruited. Mrs. Kohring stated they received \$16.10 per hour which is the City of L.A. student worker rate. This program is funded by the City through the Zoo's budget. Interns had to be residents of Los Angeles and attend college for the Spring 2022 semester. The Zoo worked with Council Districts and the Community College System to recruit interns. This will be annual program, and if funding and staffing are provided, we plan on expanding the program.

AGENDA ITEM 6

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON VISION PLAN EIR PROJECT ALTERNATIVE 1.5, THE CALIFORNIA FOCUSED CONSERVATION ALTERNATIVE

Zoo Director Denise Verret, provided a summary of changes that are present in Alternative 1.5. There will be no aerial tram, public park or parking structure in the parking lot, and the vineyards will be replaced with CA native landscaping. Without the parking structure, the Zoo will implement a visitor management program with required reservations for peak attendance days. The Zoo is not expanding into Griffith Park; all work is within the Zoo's existing footprint. The rock climbing wall still exists to give visitors the chance to experience what CA Condor keepers experience when releasing, retrieving or observing birds in the wild. Mrs. Verret noted that public comment on the EIR began in July and ends on August 29, 2022. Public can email BOE or add comments to the Council File. A public meeting was held on August 15, 2022 where BOE and the Zoo presented the project and heard comments from attendees.

President Winnick asked the Commissioners if they were in support of this new plan. After some discussion Commissioner Armbruster motioned to support the plan, Vice President Silva seconded. Motion passed unanimously. President Winnick asked if the Commissioners are in support of sending a letter to the City Council and that she be allowed to sign the letter on behalf of the entire Commission. Vice President Silva so moved, Commissioner Armbruster seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 7

GENERAL MANAGER REPORTS

A. Animal Updates

Beth Schaefer, General Curator, gave the following transaction updates:

- Incoming black tailed pit viper and Mexican lance-headed rattlesnake
- Young male Masai giraffe is going to Oregon
- Gray's monitor going to Brookfield
- Incoming sunbittern as breeding recommendation
- Mountain yellow legged frogs – thousands of hatchlings

Vice President Silva asked about the harbor seal death. Dr. Keller explained his health had been declining and he was suffering from kidney stones. After an examination he did recover from anesthesia and passed away.

B. GLAZA Update

GLAZA President Tom Jacobson gave the following update:

- Achieved 163% (\$2.4 million) of total restricted fundraising goal for FY 22
- Membership is just under 44,000 households
- Attendance and revenue finished well ahead of projections for FY 22
- GLAZA will provide audited numbers for FY 22 this winter
- Press conference this past Friday with Senator Portantino relative to the State budgeting \$2.2 million for the Zoo in this year's budget
- New event, Zoo Friday Nights, was well attended and just had the first Brew at the Zoo in two years

Ex-Officio Member Lichtenstein asked how many members attended the early morning event. Approximately 3,000.

C. Zoo Director Update

Zoo Director Denise Verret provided the following updates:

- Thanked the Commission for their support of Alternative 1.5 Vision Plan Project
- The Zoo is a DWP Recycled Water fill station location on Mondays through November
- DWP Commission has approved the Solar Carport Project and we should have an executed MOU soon
- Noted Commissioner Armbruster has been reappointed to another five year term on the Board of Zoo Commissioners

**AGENDA ITEM 8
OLD BUSINESS**

None

**AGENDA ITEM 9
ADJOURNMENT**

There being no more business to come before, President Winnick motioned to adjourn the meeting; Vice President Silva so moved, and Commissioner Smith seconded. By unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned at 10:57 AM.

ATTEST:

PRESIDENT

SECRETARY