



*"Creating a just and sustainable world where people and wildlife thrive together."*

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Karen Bass  
Mayor

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Council Member  
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Zoo Commissioners

Karen B. Winnick  
President

Bernardo Silva  
Vice President

Mark Gonzalez

Daryl Smith

Elnie Vannatim

Richard Lichtenstein  
Ex Officio Member

Denise M. Verret  
Chief Executive Officer  
& Zoo Director

# MINUTES

## BOARD OF ZOO COMMISSIONERS OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2024 – 10:00 AM

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

### MEMBERS PRESENT

Karen Winnick  
Bernardo Silva  
Daryl Smith  
Elnie Vannatim  
Mark Gonzalez

### VISITORS

None signed in

### EX OFFICIO MEMBER PRESENT

None Present

### COMMISSION STAFF

Denise Verret  
Cristina Flores

### MEDIA

None signed in

### ZOO GENERAL COUNSEL

Steve Houchin

### AGENDA ITEM 1

#### CALL TO ORDER

Commission President Winnick called the meeting to order at 10:01

### AGENDA ITEM 2

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR MEETING OF JANUARY 16, 2024

Commission President Winnick requested a motion to approve the minutes of the past meeting. Commissioner Vannatim so moved, Commissioner Smith seconded. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

### AGENDA ITEM 3

#### GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

No Comments

### NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

No Comments

### AGENDA ITEM 4

#### PRESENTATION – L.A. ZOO LIGHTS: ANIMALS AGLOW WRAP UP

Sara Rodriguez, GLAZA Vice President of Special Events and Emily Marrin, GLAZA Director of Marketing & Communications made a presentation on the following:



- Ms. Rodriguez highlighted some of the most popular aspects of the L.A. Zoo Lights: Animals Aglow event, noting the extremely successful s'mores station as well as the various photo opportunities throughout the event.
- This year's event was a big success reaching its financial goal by the 34<sup>th</sup> night of its 42-night run. The event's success included over 20 private events, sold out Happy Hour Nights, Member Appreciation Night, Sensory Inclusive Night in partnership with the Department on Disability, Pride Night in Partnership with LA Pride and Christopher West and sold out night Family New Year's Eve Night.
- Sponsors such as Sketchers, Netflix, Amazon Prime and Disney provided fun and engaging activations on select nights. Ms. Rodriguez expressed gratitude for U.S. Bank, the presenting sponsor for their support in the success of this event.
- Ms. Marrin discussed the event's earnings, noting that the event grossed \$5.14 million, 13% above goal, attendance also came in at 13% above expectancy.
- U.S. Bank was our first ever presenting sponsor generating \$240,000 in sponsor revenue.
- Ms. Marrin discussed the various marketing approaches which included, television spots, bus shelter ads, social media, earned media and radio spots. Marketing focused on high quality imaging, strategic messaging such as highlighting the Zoo's unique attractions like the conservation carousel, churros and free parking.
- Overall survey responses after the event for satisfaction was high, with one of the biggest attractions noted to be free parking, perception of the Zoo was high and overall responses for whether guests would be inclined to return to next year's event and to the Zoo during the day were high.

## **AGENDA ITEM 5**

### **PRESENTATION – NOONKOTIAK CONSERVATION PROJECT FIELD VISIT**

Dr. Jake Owens, Director of Conservation and Anna Becker, Community Conservation Coordinator made a presentation on the following:

- Dr. Owens discussed how the project came as part of the L.A. Zoo Conservation Strategic Plan (CSP). The African Conservation Center reached out to the Zoo to collaborate after the launch of the CSP to develop the Noonkotia Conservation Project. The goal of the project is to facilitate advancement of community livelihood, sustainable resource management, and human and wildlife coexistence. It will also create a physical space to support research policy work and provide educational opportunity, knowledge sharing and income generating community projects.
- Dr. Owens explained how the development of this project was also a part of the Amboseli Ecosystem Management Plan which aligns with our CSP, focusing on social and environmental justice, human and wildlife coexistence and evidence-based conservation.
- The partnership was solidified in September 2023 and as part of this process, Dr. Owens explained the importance of creating a business plan to ensure a sustainable plan and the longevity of this project.
- Dr. Owens shared renderings of the plans for the center and explained how the plan will work around the natural landscapes and trees in the designated area. The site will include an Education & Training Center, Information & Research Center and a Cultural Center.
- Ms. Becker talked about their visit to Amboseli where they met with national and local leaders and community members as well as visiting a primary school close to the project site.

- Ms. Becker discussed their visit to the Chyulu Wilderness camp an award winning eco lodge. The purpose of the visit to Chyulu Wilderness camp was to see the structure, to take note and observe the structural properties in preparation for the project build.
- The next stop was to Twala Tenebo Womens Center a woman owned and operated center established 20 years ago. This center has provided significant cultural changes such as a reduction in arranged childhood marriages and genital mutilation. Ms. Becker explained how this center will serve as an example and resource for the Noonkotiak project.
- Dr. Owens discussed the benefit of this trip for development of this project and how significant the visit to the site was to get this project off the ground.

## **AGENDA ITEM 5**

### **GENERAL MANAGER REPORTS**

- a. Animal Updates  
Director of Animal Programs, Beth Schaefer, provided the following Animal updates:
  - Seven Vampire Crabs hatched
- b. GLAZA Updates  
GLAZA Interim President, Dawn Petersen-Amend gave the following updates:
  - At the half way mark of the fiscal year and GLAZA has raised 65% of annual fundraising goal.
  - Three December gifts completed the fundraising goal for the sensory Activation Vehicle
  - Revenue is low this month which is typical for this time of year, however member households are 4,000 higher than last year at this time and our highest total since May 2023.
- c. Zoo Director Updates  
Zoo Director, Denise Verret gave the following updates:
  - 2024 condor egg laying season has produced five viable eggs out of eight eggs laid.
  - The Zoo was hit a severe storm but our strong emergency preparedness efforts protected the Zoo from major damages. Sandbags, generators, supplies were all in place along with a ride out team that remained on site to monitor & respond rapidly. The Zoo made it through with only a few downed trees after a two-day closure.
  - The Zoo participated in the Air Land & Sea Program in partnership with the Department of Recreation & Parks at Harvard Park Recreation Center in Council District 8 where the Learning and Engagement Team talked to children about native species with biofacts and focused on coexistence with native species of Los Angeles.
  - Visitor engagement is back for the first time since 2020 with a visitor engagement schedule now live on the website.
  - The Zoo was featured on various local news outlets for the Lunar New Year Event celebrating the Asian American and Pacific Islander community and welcoming the Year of the Dragon.

## **AGENDA ITEM 6**

### **OLD BUSINESS**

None

**AGENDA ITEM 7**  
**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Commission President Winnick requested a motion to adjourn the meeting; Commission Vice President Silva so moved and Commissioner Vannatim seconded; the meeting was adjourned at 11:02AM.

ATTEST:

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PRESIDENT

\_\_\_\_\_  
SECRETARY