



# MINUTES

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

TUESDAY, December 19, 2023 – 10:00 AM

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

*“Creating a just and sustainable world where people and wildlife, thrive, together.”*

Los Angeles Zoo  
5333 Zoo Drive  
Los Angeles  
California 90027  
323/644-4200  
Fax 323/662-9786  
www.lazoo.org

### MEMBERS PRESENT

Karen Winnick  
Bernardo Silva  
Daryl Smith  
Elnie Vannatim

### VISITORS

None signed in

Karen Bass  
Mayor

### EX OFFICIO MEMBER PRESENT

Not present

Nithya Raman  
Council Member  
4<sup>th</sup> District

### COMMISSION STAFF

Denise Verret  
Cristina Flores

### MEDIA

None signed in

Zoo Commissioners

Karen B. Winnick  
President

### ZOO GENERAL COUNSEL

Steve Houchin

Bernardo Silva  
Vice President

### AGENDA ITEM 1

#### CALL TO ORDER

Commission President Winnick called the meeting to order at 10:11 am.

Mark Gonzalez

Daryl Smith

### AGENDA ITEM 2

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR MEETING OF NOVEMBER 21, 2023.

Commission President Winnick requested approval of the minutes of the past meeting. Commission Vice President Silva so moved, Commissioner Smith seconded. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Elnie Vannatim

Richard Lichtenstein  
Ex Officio Member

### AGENDA ITEM 3

#### GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

No Comments

Denise M. Verret  
Chief Executive Officer  
& Zoo Director

### NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

No Comments

### AGENDA ITEM 4

#### PRESENTATION – ANIMAL WELLBEING: A VETERINARY CASE STUDY

Dr. Dominique Keller, Director of Animal Health and Wellness made a presentation on the following:



- Dr. Keller discussed Rosie, the Los Angeles Zoo's orangutans' medical case. Detailing Rosie's history over nearly twenty years of having fibroids in her uterus, Dr. Keller explained how a large fibroid/tumor was discovered and how the plan for treatment unfolded.
- The Zoo's veterinary team worked to compile an innovative team of 19 veterinarians and human doctors, including OBGYN specialists, urologists, surgeons and anesthesiologists along with nurses and veterinary technicians.
- Rosie's fibroid/tumor was discovered in June of 2023 after a CT and MRI exam. The benign tumor weighed two and a half pounds, about as large as a small melon or large grapefruit inside of her uterus, pressing on her bladder and gastrointestinal tract.
- Dr. Keller explained how as part of preparation for the surgery the Zoo's male orangutan, Isim, donated blood. Leading up to the surgery Rosie did in fact need the blood donated by Isim as tests leading up to the surgery showed that Rosie was anemic.
- Dr. Keller described the planning and coordination that led to the day of surgery and the ultimate success in removing the benign tumor. She emphasized the success of this procedure is equated to the saying "it takes a village and is a testament to the commitment of care and wellbeing of the animals by the Zoo".
- At 108 days post-op Dr. Keller reported that Rosie is doing great and she is back on exhibit.

## **AGENDA ITEM 5**

### **GENERAL MANAGER REPORTS**

#### **a. ANIMAL UPDATES**

Director of Animal Programs, Beth Schaefer, provided Animal Updates:

- Loans/Sales
  - California Condor male and female on loan to the Santa Barbara Zoo as recommended by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.
  - Female Aruba Island rattlesnake returned to Toledo Zoological Gardens.
  - Twelve Mexican Giant horned lizards went to their new homes, six to San Diego Zoo and six to the Gladys Porter Zoo in Brownsville, Texas.
  - Female Eastern Bongo returned to San Diego Zoo Safari Park as recommended as part of the Species Survival Plan
- Births/Hatchlings
  - Six more Mexican Giant horned lizards hatched
  - Two green and black poison dart frogs hatched

#### **b. GLAZA Updates**

GLAZA Interim President, Dawn Petersen-Amend gave the following update:

- Fund raising goals are above the goal, with a large percentage raised by advancement to fund various projects including a cooler for elephant browse, washer and dryer for the Great Apes and a sensory vehicle.
- Membership numbers are slightly low but steady and are still expected to reach the goal.
- Attendance, site rentals and concessions are above goal for the fiscal year.

- Zoo lights, with a few weeks left is already 18% above the revenue goal and 17% above attendance goals.
- c. Zoo Director Updates  
Zoo Director, Denise Verret gave the following updates:
- LA Zoo teamed up with LA Comic Con, participated on a panel and hosted a bioblitz at Los Angeles Historic Park, using the iNaturalist app to engage the community.
  - The Family Nature Club met in November with a Thankful for Nature theme. Participants continue to enjoy and engage in this monthly event, expressing interest in the club being available weekly or with more frequency.
  - The Zoo also participated in the Ciclavia event in the Leimert Park area where the team continues to bring awareness to the Discover and Go program in partnership with the LA Public Library.
  - The Zoo was recognized as one of the top 17 Zoo's & Aquariums in the United States committed to conservation.
  - The new giraffe shade structure is up and the elephant shade structure is underway.
  - The Zoo's Conservation Strategic Plan was released on World Wild Life Day which was featured on KNX.
  - The Zoo also received media coverage for Zoo Lights and for the announcement of our Ocelot Kitten through various media outlets.

**AGENDA ITEM 6  
OLD BUSINESS**

None

**AGENDA ITEM 7  
ADJOURNMENT**

There being no more business to come before the Commission, President Winnick requested a motion to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Smith so moved and Commission Vice President Silva seconded; the meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote at 10:55AM.

ATTEST:

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PRESIDENT

\_\_\_\_\_  
SECRETARY