



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

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Bernardo Silva
Vice President

Justin Mikita

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, MARCH 18 ,2025 – 10:00 AM

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

MEMBERS PRESENT

Karen Winnick
Bernardo Silva
Justin Mikita
Daryl Smith
Elnie Vannatim 10:05 arrival

VISITORS

None signed in

EX OFFICIO MEMBER PRESENT

Richard Lichtenstein

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 10:00_AM.

AGENDA ITEM 2

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 18, 2025

Commission President Winnick requested a Motion to approve the minutes of the February 18, 2025 meeting. Commission Vice President Silva so moved, Commissioner Mikita seconded. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

AGENDA ITEM 3

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

No Comments

NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

No Comments

AGENDA ITEM 4

PRESENTATION – TAPIR CONSERVATION PROJECT



Dr. Jake Owens, Director of Conservation and Dr. Jordan Davis-Powell, Senior Veterinarian gave the following presentation regarding their recent trip to South America, where they worked on the mountain tapir conservation project in Colombia:

- Mountain Tapir Conservation Efforts
 - Mountain tapirs are critically endangered, with fewer than 2,500 individuals left in the wild. Efforts to protect them are underway, including partnerships with various organizations to address urgent conservation needs and threats to the species.
- Mountain Tapir Task Force
 - Last year, the Mountain Tapir Survival Alliance was formed and is now renamed the Mountain Tapir Task Force to focus on more urgent conservation efforts for the species.
 - The goal is a short-term, high-priority project in Colombia, home to one of the last tapir populations, to demonstrate success.
 - Key partners include the Los Angeles Zoo, Wild Nature Foundation, Cali Zoo, the Smithsonian National Zoo, and the IUCN Tapir Specialist Group.
- Screw Worm and Its Impact on Mountain Tapirs
 - Screw worms infest tapirs' injuries, often caused by stray dogs or barbed wire, leading to fatal open wounds.
 - The project includes vaccinating stray dogs and educating communities to reduce the risk of injury and infections.
- Actions Taken
 - Dr. Owens and Dr. Davis-Powell signed agreements with the Regional Autonomous Corporation of Risaralda (CARDER) in Risaralda to prioritize tapir protection.
 - A focus is reducing stray dogs, which are a significant threat to tapirs.
 - A public awareness campaign, including educational materials, is raising awareness about protecting tapirs and controlling stray dogs.
 - They surveyed tapir populations in Colombia to focus conservation efforts in key regions.
 - The team visited Cali Zoo and CARDER to discuss tapir care and refine strategies for managing screw worm infestations.
- Challenges with Stray Dogs
 - Stray dogs harm wildlife by attacking tapirs and spreading screw worm infestations.
 - Local authorities are slow to address this due to concerns from animal rights groups.
 - The solution involves relocating dogs to shelters instead of euthanizing them, respecting ethical standards.
- Campo Alegre Reserve and New Preservation Areas
 - The team visited the Campo Alegre Reserve, an important tapir habitat, and is working on restoring degraded land and removing harmful barbed wire.
 - Stray dogs are monitored with camera traps to assess their impact on tapirs, while reserve infrastructure is being strengthened.
- Future Plans
 - A mountain tapir treatment center will be established near the hotel where tapirs are cared for, allowing easier treatment and monitoring.

- Local hotel staff will assist with basic tapir care, while CARDER veterinarians will oversee treatment.
 - The center will track tapir movements using GPS collars for better conservation management.
- Conservation Efforts and Corridors
 - Colombia aims to protect 30% of its land by 2030, with Risaralda setting a goal of 43%.
 - The project focuses on creating wildlife corridors to allow tapirs to move safely between protected areas, ensuring genetic diversity and species survival.
- Conservation Significance
 - Mountain tapirs help regenerate forests by dispersing seeds and maintaining ecosystem health.
 - This ecological function is central to public relations campaigns to garner support for tapir conservation.
- Dog Management Strategy
 - Free-roaming dogs owned by local farmers pose a threat to wildlife.
 - The solution includes trapping and relocating dogs to shelters with government support.
 - Local farmers are motivated to control the stray dog population, but government action is needed for a larger-scale solution.

AGENDA ITEM 5

GENERAL MANAGER REPORTS

a. Animal Updates

Misha Body, Deputy Director of Animal Programs provided an update which focused on the following:

- Two female crested oropendola will be received as part of a breeding recommendation to pair with the existing male.
- They are found in South America, from Costa Rica to Argentina.
- The L.A. Zoo has cared for this species since the early 1960s.
- They are known for their unique, well-engineered nests shaped like 3-6 foot long raindrops with an opening at the top.
- They are found in the rainforests of the Americas, but you are more likely to hear them before seeing them.
- Their distinctive call has been described as descending laser beams, clacking, and liquid, vibrating, rattling sounds.

b. GLAZA Updates

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

- Restricted fundraising for the first seven months of the fiscal year came in at 105% of the \$2.687 million goal.
- Membership revenue in January:
 - Only reached 68% of the \$378,000 budget.
 - Primary cause: Zoo closure for 13 days due to wildfires and winds.
 - Member households ended at 37,653, a decrease of 669.
 - Year-to-date membership is at 89% of the budget.
 - Fall campaign brought in 3,411 new memberships.

- Spring campaign just launched, with mail hitting mailboxes this week, hoping for a strong response.
- Attendance:
 - Down due to the Zoo closure, at 63% of the monthly budget.
 - Year-over-year attendance in January was at 59%.
- Admission revenue:
 - January revenue was at 59% of the monthly budget.
 - Year-to-date, it is at 89% of the budget.
 - GLAZA revenue to the Zoo for January came in at 86% of the budget.
- c. Zoo Director Updates
 - Condor Egg Laying Season:
 - Nine viable and fertile eggs laid so far.
 - Egg laying will continue for the next several weeks, with hopes for a good group of chicks for future releases in the wild.
 - Part of the Zoo's commitment to the California Condor Recovery Program.
 - Teen Council for Conservation Symposium:
 - Hosted by the Zoo, attended by over 100 youth (31% increase from last year).
 - Theme created by the teen council: MAGIC (Mindful choices, Advocacy for nature, Growing sustainability, Innovative solutions, and Community impact).
 - Participants heard from inspiring leaders and took part in interactive workshops aimed at sparking new ideas and empowering youth to take action in their communities.
 - Community Outreach Efforts:
 - Rockstar Learning and Engagement Outreach Team:
 - Attended the West Adams hub of Ciclaviva and engaged nearly 750 attendees, the largest engagement for this fiscal year.
 - Also attended the Firecracker Festival 5K Run in LA's Chinatown district, engaging 630 attendees with a Year of the Snake theme and snake-related exhibits.
 - Participated in LA STEM event with 80 STEM organizations to support youth STEM education, especially for marginalized and under-resourced communities.
 - Braille Institute Partnership:
 - Attended the annual Braille Challenge at the Braille Institute.
 - Provided labeled biofacts (zoo specimens) in Braille, allowing students to feel and learn about the items.
 - Parents were appreciative of the opportunity to for their children to engage with the Zoo in this way.
 - Glendale Community College Partnership:
 - Partnered with Glendale Community College, a Hispanic-serving institution, on a teen internship program that provides paid experience and college credit.
 - The interns are tasked with finding ways to increase engagement and attendance at the Zoo within a 30-minute radius.
 - Proposed solutions will be presented at the end of the semester.

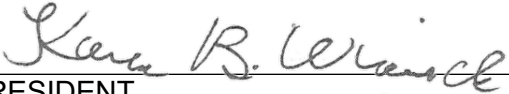
**AGENDA ITEM 6
OLD BUSINESS**

None

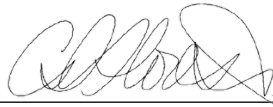
**AGENDA ITEM 7
ADJOURNMENT**

There being no more business to come before the Commission, President Winnick requested a motion to adjourn the meeting; Commission, Vice President Silva so moved and Commissioner Mikita seconded; the motion passed by unanimous vote and the meeting was adjourned at 10:47 AM.

ATTEST:



PRESIDENT



SECRETARY