



MINUTES

BOARD OF ZOO COMMISSIONERS OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES

TUESDAY, JUNE 20, 2023 – 10:00 AM
IN-PERSON MEETING
Los Angeles Zoo
Grand Room
5333 Zoo Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90027

“Creating
dynamic
experiences
to connect
people and
animals”

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

Karen Bass
Mayor

Nithya Raman
Council Member
4th District

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

COMMENTS BY THE PUBLIC ON AGENDA ITEMS WILL BE HEARD ONLY AT THE TIME THE RESPECTIVE ITEM IS CONSIDERED. COMMENTS BY THE PUBLIC ON ALL OTHER MATTERS WITHIN THE SUBJECT MATTER JURISDICTION OF THE BOARD WILL BE HEARD DURING THE “PUBLIC COMMENTS” PERIOD DESIGNATED ON THIS AGENDA. THE PUBLIC IS REQUESTED TO FILL OUT A SPEAKER CARD TO ADDRESS ANY AGENDA ITEMS.

Note: Sign Language Interpreters, assistive listening devices, or other auxiliary aids and/or services may be provided upon request. To ensure availability, you are advised to make your request at least 72-hours prior to the meeting you wish to attend. For additional information, please contact the Commission office at (323) 644-4218. TDD available at (323) 644-6688.

1. CALL TO ORDER – President Winnick called the meeting to order at 10:03 AM
2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR MEETING OF MAY 16, 2023
Commission President Winnick requested approval of the minutes of the last meeting. Vice President Silva moved, Commissioner Vannatim seconded. The motion passed by unanimous vote

3. PUBLIC COMMENT
Public comments are limited to a total of three minutes per person.

No Comments

NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL COMMENTS

Discussion with Neighborhood council representatives on Neighborhood Council Resolutions or Community Impact Statements filed with the City Clerk which relate to any agenda item listed or being considered on this agenda.

No Comments

4. PRESENTATION – BUDGET 2023-24
Deputy Director, Mei Kwan discussed the 2023-24 Budget
 - Projections made for this budget took into consideration that economic growth is low, no new exhibits, continued management of health and safety protocols and limited value-added guest experiences
 - The Zoo’s Budget increased by 12% with a total Operating budget of \$31,015,509.
 - Key Budget initiatives include, Animal Wellbeing, Facilities Maintenance & Capital Improvements as well as Accessibility Programs.



- Goals for this budget include the following:
 - Expanding our commitment to animal care and welfare
 - Broadening community-based programming, partnerships and accessibility.
 - Address deferred maintenance and interim capital infrastructure projects with continued focus on sustainability.
 - Continue to evolve our guest engagement programs to rebuild our attendance base.

5. PRESENTATION – ROTI ISLAND SNAKE-NECKED TURTLE

Curator of Amphibians, Reptiles and Fish, Ian Recchio discussed the Zoo's work with the Roti Island Snaked-Neck Turtle

- In 1994 the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) listed this turtle as Vulnerable and in 2000 the IUCN listed it as critically endangered.
- This turtle became vulnerable because of the Indonesian pet dealers who began exporting them between the 1970's and 1980's. The species was also affected by the non-native fish that was introduced to the area in the 1960's.
- The Roti Island Snake Necked turtle became extinct in the wild in approximately 2016-17.
- Fifty professional institutions worldwide, including nineteen Association of Zoos and Aquariums institutions are working together and currently holding a total of 414 individual turtles as part of the work done for the turtle's Species Survival Plan (SSP)
- The Los Angeles Zoo first received these turtles in 2007 and has produced 22 of these turtles since 2011
- In 2022, 36 Zoo bred specimens have been sent to Singapore Zoo for pre-release evaluation, with the goal of re-releasing them into the wild. This year 8 of our hatchlings will be sent to the Bronx Zoo before being sent to release into the wild as well.

6. GENERAL MANAGER REPORTS

a. Animal Updates

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

- Expected Rhino has not yet arrived, as he did not cooperate when loading at his current Zoo in Nebraska. A second attempt was made however we will now have to wait until the hauler has availability
- Non-breeding Maned Wolf, male will be going to Sunset Zoo as a companion and their breeding male will come to the LA Zoo.
- We are currently holding a spider monkey in quarantine in coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife after receiving a call about a primate running around in a house alone. The spider monkey will be going to Florida after its quarantine.
- Two additional Big Horn Sheep were born.

b. GLAZA Updates

GLAZA President, Tom Jacobson gave the following update:

- By the end of May, the goal of \$3.2 Million funds raised had been exceeded and the trends continue upward.
- The funds raised should be near the annual goal by the end of June
- Betty White's estate donated towards the Zoo Pals program, the program has been renamed "Betty White's Zoo Pals" in her honor.
- This year's Beastly Ball raised a historic amount this year helping push well past the goal for June.

c. Zoo Director Updates

Zoo Director, Denise Verret gave the following updates:

- Animal News
 - On Friday, May 19th, which was also Endangered Species Day, National Geographic and NatGeo photographer Joel Sartore unveiled the Los Angeles Zoo's Indochinese green magpie, Jolie, as the 14,000th species to board the PhotoArkConservation.
 - A soft open of visitor experiences such as, Muriel's Ranch and the Giraffe feeding had a soft opening. Over 1,000 people visited the contact yard in the first week of the soft opening.
- Partnership Outreach & Engagement
 - The Zoo partnered with the LA Pride and included the group in a Griffith Park Habitat Restoration Project event, providing a safe and welcoming space and creating new relationships.
 - This month our Los Angeles Zoo Paid Internship Program started as part of our commitment to equity and inclusion in the Zoo
 - Family Nature Club, in collaboration with Rec and Parks held it's last event in May and will return in the fall as it was a big success.
 - "Summer with the Library" is a partnership program with the City's Library Department, creating additional opportunity for outreach, educating and building relationships with the diverse communities of Los Angeles.
- In the News
 - North Hollywood High Zoo Magnet School was recognized at City Council by Councilmember Raman for receiving the 2023 Dr. Ronald P. Simpson Merit Award of Excellence, the most prestigious award given by the Magnet Schools of America.
 - This award recognizes magnet schools for their commitment to high academic standards, school diversity, specialized curricula and instruction, family engagement, and community partnerships.
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7. OLD BUSINESS
None

8. ADJOURNMENT – 10:49

There being no more business to come before the Zoo Commission, President Winnick asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Smith so moved, and Vice President Silva seconded. By unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned at 10:49 AM