

RECREATION AND PARK DEPARTMENT

Minutes of the Joint Zoo Committee Meeting

April 22, 2010

City Hall, Room 416

2:00 p.m.

Roll Call:

Recreation and Park Commissioner, David Lee, Chair

Recreation and Park Commissioner, Gloria Bonilla

Recreation and Park Commissioner, Michael Sullivan

Zoological Society Board, Bill Beech

Zoological Society Board, Elena Asturias

Zoological Society Board, Deborah Robbins

Dr. Joseph Spinelli, Veterinarian Advisor

1. Joint Zoo Committee Meeting Minutes (Action Item)

Adoption of Minutes of the March 25, 2010 Committee Meeting

ACTION: MSA

Member of Public, Mark Ennis, stated he feels these minutes are much better than in the past and he appreciates that and realizes it takes time to prepare them. He thanked the Secretary for preparing them with more detail. He referenced in Section 9 that he did make the specific comment that he was disappointed with the Advisors to the Committee, Veterinarian Advisor, Dr. Spinelli and Animal Welfare Advisor, Sally Stephens. He wanted to clarify that his disappointment with them is greater than with the members of the Committee His disappointment was that he felt when he asked for explanations on animal related issues they should have requested Mr. Jenkins come to the podium and address these issues for inclusion in the public record. Commissioner Bonilla also wanted to thank staff for the minutes and she looks forward to future minutes containing the same thoroughness.

2. San Francisco Zoo Director's Report (Discussion)

Tanya M. Peterson, Executive Director, SFZS

Director Peterson reported that in celebration of Earth Day, five STAR schools from SFUSD visited the Zoo with students making bird feeders and planting seeds in the Conservation Corner exhibit area of the Zoo. April attendance through April 18 is 51,406 versus budget of 55,140, generating an unfavorable variance of 3,734 visitors. Rainy weather and closure of the Great Highway contributed to the lower than expected numbers. On May 22 the Zoo will transform a section of its parking lot into a pet adoption center in conjunction with Animal Care & Control and other recognized bay area rescue and adoption organizations. Director Peterson took the opportunity to thank the Installation Art Class from the Academy of Art University for their contribution of sculptures displayed around the Zoo's Lion Fountain. In response to a question raised by a member of the public at a previous meeting regarding long-term plans for the incoming capybara, the capybara are planned to reside in the outdoor exhibit immediately adjacent to the South American Tropical Building, which has been closed for repairs. The SFZS has raised monies to restore and rebuild the building. Regarding the habitat and breeding of the Zoo's Giant Anteater, the animal does have access to the large yard area during most of the day. In the late afternoon, before feeding time, he also has access to the small yard, which he sometimes prefers. There is a recommendation to breed the male.

Commissioner Lee stated that it has been reported in the Examiner that cultural institutions have benefited in the last year of an increase in visitor ship and asked if and how the Zoo is

reaching out to the audience base that visits cultural institutions. Director Peterson responded that the Zoo is continuing to reach out to increase visitor ship through different public events appealing to a varied audience. One of the challenges facing the Zoo is its location in the City with transportation issues as well as the impact of the recession on the public making decisions on what venues to visit.

Member of Public, Mark Ennis, asked for clarification on the giant anteaters.

3. Animal Transactions. (Action Item)

ACTION: MSA

Bob Jenkins, VP – Institutional Advancement, SFZS

**SAN FRANCISCO ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS
ANIMAL TRANSACTION RATIFICATION - April 2010**

DONATION TO:

Caldwell Zoo	0.0.2	Sun Conure	NIL	NIL
PO Box 4785.		<i>Aratinga solstitialis</i>		
Tyler, TX 75712				
Tele - 903-595-0121				
Fax – 903-595-5083				
USDA # 74-C-0367				

4. Animal Updates. (Discussion)

Bob Jenkins, VP – Gov’t & External Affairs, SFZS

Mr. Jenkins first clarified that the acquisition of the male giant anteater was approved by the Committee at a previous meeting for accepting the donation of the animal which has been in residence at SFZ for a period of time so the animal would be officially listed as part of the collection at the SFZ. The female anteater listed is the one brought in from the San Diego Zoo that has recently passed quarantine and is now at the Puente exhibit and during times when the male anteater is off exhibit in the afternoons she is being introduced to the exhibit. All is going well and hopes are for offspring in about a year from now. He hopes this clarifies the issue that there are currently two giant anteaters at the San Francisco Zoo.

DATE	SEX	ANIMALS	TRANSACTION		COMMENTS
		ACQUISITIONS			
1	1.0	Giant anteater	Dona		Fresno-changefromB/L
4	0.1	Hamerkop	Breeding Loan		San Diego WAP
4	0.1	Giant anteater	Breeding Loan		San Diego Zoo
20	0.0.1	Hadada ibis	Birth		
22	0.0.1	Hadada ibis	Birth		
23	2.3	Giunea pig	Dona		Dropped off at Zoo
23	0.0.1	Hadada ibis	Birth		
31/	0.0.3	Black-tailed prairie dog	Birth		1 st observed
		DISPOSITIONS		Age at Death	
1	1.0	Black-tailed prairie dog	Death	4y	Pending
17	0.1	Francois monkey	Dona		San Diego Zoo

25	0.0.1	Western toad	Death	10y	Pending
28	0.0.1	Hadada ibis	Death	0y 0m 6d	Pending-b 3/22/10
30	0.1	Patas monkey	Death	24y 2m 27d	Euthanized-pending
31	0.0.1	Hadada ibis	Death	0y 0m 8d	Pending-b 3/23/10

(Commissioner Lee took a moment to introduce Commissioner Michael Sullivan as the newest member of the Committee.)

SFZ member Deborah Robbins asked Mr. Jenkins if neoplasia he cited in the death of the Patas monkey is cancer. Mr. Jenkins responded that yes it is a particularly nasty cancer. Member of Public, Mark Ennis, again asked for clarification of the anteater population at the Zoo. Mr. Jenkins clarified that the male has been at the zoo for over 5 years and the transaction is a paper change because of the requirement that all the animals at the SFZ be the property of the City & County of San Francisco. There are currently two giant anteaters at the San Francisco Zoo.

4. Current Status of San Francisco Zoo Master Plan (Information Only)

David Stanton, Vice Chair, Board of Directors, SFZS

Vice Chair David Stanton reviewed the handout updating the status of the Master Plan for the San Francisco Zoo. (Attachment 1). Mr. Stanton is the past Chair of the Business Plan Committee and it is in that capacity that he presented the update. He pointed out that the main challenge facing the SFZ is the infrastructure of the facility. To that point he stated that half the square footage of the zoo is over 15 years old, and of that half, 80% is over 30 years old and 65% is over 60 years old. This is the fundamental challenge in fulfilling the mission statement and the ethos described in the quote (slide 1) of David Hancocks. In the City Budget Analyst Report of 1999, it was reported that the Zoo is an aging facility which has experienced years of unfunded and deferred maintenance and that the problems caused by deferred maintenance have been compounded by aging facilities, limited funding and a harsh ocean climate. This is the situation that the master plan intends to rectify over the next several years. In 1994, an extensive Master Plan was developed and an update was done in late 2007. Due to the tiger incident and financial challenges with the economy through that time period the Society developed a business plan which is to take the many hundreds of recommendations from the update of the Master Plan and prioritize, codify, draw schematics for them and cost them so they can actually be taken forward. The status is that these steps have been done and a massive amount of information is accessible to the Zoological Society Board. This plan is a step in a process similar in analogy to the Golden Gate Bridge in that you have to finish and once finished you start over again. The point is that this business plan is not a finished result. Advisor, Dr. Spinelli, asked questions forwarded to him by Advisor Stephens who could not be present at this meeting. (1) Is it still the Zoo's intent to become an accredited botanical garden? Mr. Stanton answered that in the prioritizing of segments the accreditation as a botanical garden is low on the list although not abandoned; (2) Where does the polar bear exhibit fit in the plan? Mr. Stanton stated that this is one of the top segments in priority; Dr. Spinelli asked if the other bears are listed at the top of the listing as well. Mr. Stanton stated that they are; (3) What criteria is being used to determine the order the segments are prioritized? Mr. Stanton said there is a listing of 15 criteria including animal welfare, public safety, operational support, support of the mission statement, feasibility, desirability, that is used in determination of priority; (4) How do you justify spending money on visitor amenities such as the train or playground when the animals are in such need? Part of the mission statement is the connection between the human and animal worlds and that connection does not take place antispectically and there is an element of entertainment and amenities that must exist to draw the public in and without those elements they will not come and therefore cannot experience that connection; Dr. Spinelli asked if environmental enrichment enters into the

master plan? Mr. Stanton answered that enrichment is one of the criteria with examination of current methods used throughout the zoo community to give optimum results including the funding of an animal enrichment seat to support this aspect of care; Dr. Spinelli asked if animal care staff had an active participation in the fact gathering for the business plan. In answer, Mr. Stanton stated that a panel consisting of Board members and animal care staff participated in the schematic level of the plan and specialists in various fields (i.e. Hospital veterinary care) were brought in to give input. Tying this into the structural and construction aspect of the plan is major in the final outcome. Commissioner Lee asked if the plan represents an increase or decrease of the footprint Mr. Stanton stated that the decision was made to use the current footprint that we do have to its fullest extent. Commissioner Lee asked if the public bond mentioned in the plan has been determined to what extent and amount. Mr. Stanton answered that the idea is that funding would be half public and half private bonds but to what extent and amount is not determined at this time. Commissioner Lee alluded to the previous public bond and the projects targeted that were not done and what is the intent for future bond issues. Mr. Stanton responded that the plan is to not assign specific projects to the funds as factors develop that would negate or alter specific projects being done. Commissioner Lee asked for clarification of the donor base referred to in the plan and the capital campaign. Mr. Stanton clarified that the first phase in which donors are listed refers to those dozen Zoo donors who are steady in their support of the Zoo. The capital campaign has not begun as yet. Member of Public, Deniz Bolbol, voiced her dissatisfaction with the presentation and the content of the report on the current status of the master plan. She feels that the plan as presented is inadequate in presenting the final update of the plan and shows that the zoo which is in total disarray is talking about bringing in new animals and she cannot believe that Director Peterson does not see that the path the zoo is taking is a path of doom. She does not feel that the majority of San Franciscans want business to continue “as usual” and rather than the Committee worrying about the footprint of the zoo the focus should be on the direction “they are taking the City owned zoo”. Ms. Bolbol questioned the right Mr. Stanton and the Board feels their contribution to the zoo gives them entitlement to make decisions for a publicly owned zoo. Commissioner Lee told Ms. Bolbol to address her comments to the Committee and not private individuals. Ms. Bolbol did state that she is encouraged that the report does state that half the zoo has been rebuilt which has been heard before but that means half the zoo has not been rebuilt. She also stated that she looks forward to accessing the information that Mr. Stanton stated was available to the Board and will be requesting this information through California Public Records Act as all documents are public documents and she cannot believe that the Committee is not “laughing” at the thought of going to the public requesting \$100million when the zoo has already wasted \$100million in the past years. Member of Public, Mark Ennis, stated that Mr. Stanton eloquently expressed what the Zoological Society feels about animal welfare when he stated without apology that if people are not entertained they will not come. This demonstrates the Society is more concerned about entertaining people than the welfare of the animals. He also stated that the report as given in a cursory outline in ten minutes is ridiculous. Member of Public, Pat Cuviallo, feels the zoo has a prime opportunity and is disappointed to see the same plan that is failing – zoos are failing all over the country spending 10’s of millions of dollars on small exhibits. He feels the Society should take the zoo in a new progressive direction beyond the AZA who doesn’t care about the animals and that the citizens of San Francisco want this direction for the zoo. Bigger exhibit areas should be made for specific animals so that when people come to San Francisco they would visit the zoo knowing it is known, for example, for its large, state-of-the-art polar bear exhibit rather than small, dismal exhibits. Member of Public, Andrea Brooks, would like more information on the exhibit scope and timeline as well as the whole plan.

5. Announcements (Information only)

Mr. Jenkins made the announcement that the next Joint Zoo Committee meeting will be held at the San Francisco Zoo on May 11, 2010 beginning at 5pm.

6. Chair's Announcements (Information only)

7. New Business/Future Agenda Items (Information only)

Society member, Deborah Robbins, stated that at a previous meeting further information was requested on three items and she would appreciate them being on next meeting agenda: (1) Blackbuck muntjac pathway closure; (2) Chimpanzee climbing structure reduction; (3) Plans for Asian Rhino.

8. Public Comments: Members of the public may address the committee on matters that are within the committee's jurisdiction and are not on today's agenda.

Member of Public, Deniz Bolbol, wanted to state that the item in the minutes that the giraffe will not be sent to the Naples Zoo until that exhibit is completed is a good thing: however, she would like to state her disappointment in sending the giraffe to that zoo as it is an amusement park type zoo where they give camel rides and things that are not done for animal welfare or educational purposes. Member of Public, Mark Ennis, stated he feels Director Peterson and the Society has been given the opportunity to show that they would like to make animal welfare a priority by expanding the new rhino exhibit, expanding into the giant eland exhibit and increasing the area available to the giant anteater. He is disappointed to hear that capybara will be brought back into the small space and hopes the plan will be reconsidered. He again asked if there are any pregnant giraffes currently at the zoo. Mr. Jenkins first clarified again that the giant anteaters have access to the entire Puente exhibit and are no longer kept in separation and the intent is that the capybara will have access to the whole area as well. There are no confirmed pregnancies at this time but it is the season and there are suspicions but no confirmation. Commissioner Bonilla asked if it would be possible for a tour of areas in the zoo discussed be conducted previous to the beginning of the May meeting.

Commissioner Lee requested that an alternate date be chosen for the meeting as he would like to go on the tour.

9. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 3:05pm.