

RECREATION AND PARK DEPARTMENT

Minutes of the Joint Zoo Committee Meeting

July 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, Maria Alvarez

Zoological Society Board, Elena Asturias

Zoological Society Board, Bill Beech

Dr. Joseph Spinelli, Veterinarian Advisor

Ms. Sally Stephens, Advisor

1. Joint Zoo Committee Meeting Minutes (Action Item)

Adoption of Minutes of the June 17, 2010 Committee Meeting

ACTION: MSA

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

Tanya Peterson, Executive Director & President, SFZS

Director Peterson reported that the west side of the City is being impacted by roadwork from a major rail project. West Portal merchants have seen a decline in business of 20%. The Zoo has also been affected by this project with lower attendance. This past weekend, however, was successful with the annual Teddy Bear Festival event. A total of 11,336 visitors came out for this event which was an increase of 1,000 over last year's event. Changes have been made with the concessioner in the area of food service focusing on a simpler and healthier diet. Food revenues have increased by 44% over the past weeks over last year's sales. SFZ is in the midst of Zoo Keeper Week which is a national effort to thank animal caregivers. Letters and cards have come into the zoo thanking these professionals as well as great keeper talks. The Docents of SFZ are hosting a Zookeeper lunch tomorrow. Some unfortunate news is that "Goober" the Bairds tapir has taken a turn for the worst with a tumor being found in his upper mouth. Tissue samples have been sent and the indication is that it is cancerous. He is a 16 year old animal and discussions have been ongoing as to where he would be located in the zoo but at this point he will remain where he is until the medical evaluation is complete. Commissioner Lee directed a question to Dr. Spinelli on what the lifespan is for a tapir. Dr. Spinelli responded that 16 years is a long lifespan for the animal. Commissioner Lee also commented on the affect that the roadwork has had on disruption of attendance numbers. Director Peterson responded that both the rail project at Sloat Blvd and Portola and the southbound lane of the Great Highway being closed seem to have had an impact. May zoo attendance was good and the project began in June and there was a definite decline in attendance. The project is due to be completed by September. The zoo administration is trying to come up with promotions to draw the public. Commissioner Lee suggested the possibility of using entrances to the Zoo on Sloat Blvd and Herbst Road which are not being used due to ADA requirements. He voiced concern over the low attendance numbers during summer months which are usually high attendance months. Advisor Stephens suggested the possible use of special signage in

conjunction with SFMTA. Commissioner Sullivan asked what percentage of revenue is attributed to attendance. Director Peterson responded that it is one-third of the revenue figures.

3. Animal Transactions. (Action Item)

ACTION: MSA

Bob Jenkins, VP – Institutional Advancement, SFZS

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

DONATION TO:			PRICE	TOTAL
John Schwartzler 5081 Bleu Mont Rd Greenwood, CA 95635-9645 USDA – N/A	1.0	Horse(American cream draft) <i>Equus caballus</i>	NIL	N/A

DONATION FROM:			PRICE	TOTAL
Six Flags Discovery Kingdom 1001 Fairgrounds Dr. Vallejo, CA 94589 Tele – 707-644-4000 Fax – 707-644-0241 USDA - # 93-C-0809	0.2	Capybara <i>Hydrochaeris hydrochaeris</i>	NIL	N/A

Advisor Stephens asked why the horse was transferred. Mr. Jenkins responded that the animal had grown to a size that he needed more space than was available at SFZ as well as the decision that he should be in an environment where he could be trained as a draft horse, be with other horses and for his overall well-being.

5. Animal Updates. (Discussion)

Bob Jenkins, VP – Institutional Advancement, SFZS

DATE	SEX	ANIMALS	TRANSACTION		COMMENTS
ACQUISITIONS					
1	0.0.1	Waldrapp ibis	Birth		
2	0.2	Capybara	Donation		SixFlagsDiscoveryKingdom
15	0.0.6	Goldodulcean poison dart frog	Birth		
21	0.0.2	Waldrapp ibis	Birth		
DISPOSITIONS					
				Age at Death	
1	1.0	Ocelot	Loan transfer		North Carolina State Zoo
1	0.1	Ocelot	Donation		North Carolina State Zoo
3	0.1	Mandrill	Breeding loan		Columbus Zoo
10	1.0	(Indian runner) Duck	Death	9y0m25d	Pending

14	0.1	Waldrapp ibis	Death	0y0m21d	Pending
15	0.0.2	Turkey vulture	Loan return		CAS-Steinhart Aquarium
22	1.0	Amur tiger	Death/Euth	18y3m1d	Pending
28	1.0	North American ruddy	Disappeared	10y0m11d	Presumed Dead
30	0.1	(Cochin) Chicken	Death	5y1m29d	Pending

Mr. Jenkins commented on the condition of the Bairds tapir. The tumor is listed as cancer in the biological sense which means it is an abnormal growth and it has not been determined if it is malignant or benign. Commissioner Sullivan asked where the ibis is native. The ibis is native to North Africa. Member of Public, Mark Ennis, asked what type of symptoms the Amur tiger was displaying which led to the decision of euthanasia. Mr. Jenkins responded that he was showing all the earmark signs of dementia, was very lethargic and not being able to void and clean himself properly afterwards. These are signs of what is often referred to as TBF (total body failure). An extensive post mortem examination is being conducted to gather the most information possible of his condition as animal dementia has not been readily diagnosed.

8. Summer Marketing Program Report (Discussion)

Lora LaMarca, VP-Marketing & PR, SFZ

Ms. LaMarca reported that due to the small advertising budget the strategy is to have events throughout the year thus maximizing the available funds. An example of this is the high attendance for Teddy Bear Festival. Half of the budget is dedicated to the summer months when attendance is usually higher. In between times when a new exhibit is open it is all more important to keep awareness of the zoo in the public view. Without opening new exhibits lower attendance figures are visible. The last major exhibit which opened was Hearst Grizzly Gulch in 2007. Teddy Bear Festival highlights the bears with extra enrichment and educational components for the public to enjoy. Unfortunately, six months later the tiger incident occurred followed by the economic downswing. That summer the campaign was Critter Quest. An all city banner program is always initiated to promote awareness. Banners are placed across the City in all supervisors districts. 2009 was a great year with the birth of many animals including gorilla, Hasani. The campaign focused on the babies and was a big success. Since that time attendance has been declining or remaining flat. This year, with the addition of Membership coming under the jurisdiction of Marketing the decision was made to focus on the idea that Kids Rule at the San Francisco Zoo targeting children which represents a large segment of the demographics visiting the facility. Radio and Television (Comcast & KTVU) are utilized with negotiations with the media representing dollar-for-dollar advertising trades to maximize coverage. Print is done as far as San Jose and due to lower rates ads are in the Chronicle. Online communication outlets are also being utilized. Promotion is not done to the tourist industries with the exception of discount offers in hotels and motels. With the Kids Rule program a direct mail campaign promoting membership was developed using artwork that was created by students in various zoo programs. Three pieces were chosen and used in the direct mailing campaign, banners and advertising. An Activity Guide was developed and distributed to guests on arrival. These are developed for each summer program and are a good sponsorship tool and reminder to return to the zoo. Signs throughout the zoo were placed at children level and have been very successful. Events are also scheduled during the summer. Two events are planned: (1) Annual Teddy Bear Festival, and (2) Fisher Price Power Wheel Weekend. Fisher-Price pays a sponsorship fee and both of these events are extremely successful. Also, with the downswing in the economy the decision is to offer free children's admission during the month of August so that families can still come to the Zoo.

Dr. Spinelli asked if the discounts at hotels/motels are rack cards displayed in the lobby areas.

Ms. LaMarca stated that this is true. The return on these discount coupons is approximately

1% which is a very good percentage. Ms. LaMarca was asked if, along with tracking the coupons results at other zoos nationwide are examined. She responded that they are and surprisingly trends are showing that discounts are being offered for the summer at facilities that traditionally do not do this to draw visitors. Many zoos are also looking into traveling exhibits to attract visitors. Discussion continued on various strategies used to increase awareness. Advisor Stephens asked in reference to the Activity Guide, who writes it and if it is done in house. Ms. LaMarca responded that the guides are prepared in house utilizing educators on staff. Ms. Stephens asked if packages with various attractions in the area such as the golf course to attract visitors. Such ideas have been addressed and at the recent President's Cup Tournament discount coupons were included in participants packets. Packages with city museums are another option being explored. Also, various travelling exhibits actually include live animals which are more appealing to a zoo audience. Social media is also being used by the Zoo using Twitter and Facebook with the results that it is a good awareness media but not really an attendance generating tool. Member of Public, Mark Ennis, stated his opinion that the reason Zoos are not doing well is that they do not promote education on conservation issues and the public is aware of this and that displaying animals is not the way to education people and that people would come out to the Zoo if the animals were treated better and that it was obvious that animal welfare is the main focus. He feels that a new set of standards not associated with AZA should be developed and people will come to zoos. He is disappointed that the proposal of SFZ becoming a rescue zoo was not adopted. Member of Public, Philip Gerrie stated that he has visited the Zoo and it is a hard place to visit because of the small number of animals on display and with the presence of the train it seems not realistic to call it a zoo but rather that it is going more towards the idea of an amusement park.

9. Chair's Announcements. (Information only)

Chairman Lee welcomed new SFZ committee member, Maria Alvarez.

10. Old Business. (Discussion)

Mr. Jenkins stated that the site tour at the zoo which was cancelled due to inclement weather is to be rescheduled either in September or October. Preference was given for a September date.

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

Commissioner Bonilla asked if recognition has been done for the Docents who donate many hours to the operation of the Zoo and feels this should be considered in the future. Mr. Jenkins stated being as animal age was discussed at this meeting clarification should be made that there are two areas covered: (1) longevity of the animal, which represents how long an individual of a species could live; and, (2) average lifespan, which represents that half the animals in a population died before that age and half died after that age.

12. 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, Philip Gerrie, stated that he thinks the zoo tour should go on no matter what weather conditions exist. Member of Public, Mark Ennis, would like to request that the night quarters for the animals be included in the tour.

13. Adjournment.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:53pm.