

**RECREATION AND PARK DEPARTMENT**

Minutes of the Joint Zoo Committee Meeting

September 16, 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, Mark Buell

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 July 17, 2010 Committee Meeting

**ACTION: MSAA**

Committee Advisor Spinelli wanted to correct the information on the life span of the tapir. The actual estimation given in research records is 25 – 30 years.

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

**Tanya Peterson, Executive Director & President, SFZS**

Director Peterson reported that the SFZS lost one of its strongest supporters and Board members, Mr. Fred Carroll. Mr. Carroll was instrumental in the SFZS acquiring two Grizzly Bear cubs and saving them from being euthanized. Ms. Peterson stated he would be missed greatly and extended a thank you for his continued dedication. Peterson reported summer attendance had been below budget; however, September attendance to date is above budget by 9.5% with admissions revenue over projection by 27.5% for the first twelve days of the month. She also thanked MTA for being responsive to concerns raised by the Zoo in August regarding the impact on Zoo attendance by the Sloat/West Portal transit project. Also, Peterson reported outside auditors are continuing their review of the SFZS's fiscal year 2009-2010. Results will be posted on the Zoo's website upon completion, but it appears that the SFZS will close the year with a slight surplus. Peterson also reported that the Flamingo chicks born at the Zoo recently are doing well. Director Peterson complimented the Zoo's General Curator, Mike Sulak, on the successful breeding as well as note that Mr. Sulak will be retiring next year after a long animal care career, 30 years of which has been at the San Francisco Zoo. Sadly, the medical report of the Bairds' Tapir reveals that the tumor found in his upper mouth is malignant. While SFZS staff has debunked the tumor temporarily, it is likely to return within the next 3-6 months, and his long-term prognosis is not good. The SFZS had planned to move the Tapir (Goober) to the newly renovated hippo pool, but due to his condition, this move will not take place to avoid causing him any further agitation. With respect to the renovated hippo pool, Peterson reported there is another zoological facility seeking to move a male hippo due to overcrowding. The male will not have access to indoor facilities during the winter months at the other institution. Peterson recognized the San Francisco Zoo's exhibit was built for hippos and now will sit empty due to the Tapir's medical condition. Director Peterson thus is inclined to recommend this acquisition and give the male hippo a home with indoor facilities. She welcomed the Committee's input. Advisor Stephens asked whether the hippo acquisition

would be brought again before this Committee. Director Peterson responded she would be open to additional input unless an emergency situation existed requiring immediate action.

**3. Animal Transactions. (Action Item)**

**ACTION: MSA**

**Bob Jenkins, VP – Institutional Advancement, SFZS**

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

<b>DONATION TO:</b>			<b>PRICE</b>	<b>TOTAL DUE</b>
Racine Zoo 200 Gold Street Racine, WI 53402 USDA-35-C-0031 262/636-9189	1.0	Emperor tamarin <i>Saguinus imperator subgriseus</i>	NIL	N/A
<b>DONATION FROM:</b>				
WildCare 76 Albert Park Ln. San Rafael, CA 94901 415-456-7283 USDA-N/A	0.1	Virginia opossum <i>Didephis virginiana</i>	NIL	N/A
Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission Melanie Sobel, Executive Director 3839 W. Burnham St. West Milwaukee, WI 53215 USDA-N/A 414/649-8640	0.0.1	Madagascar ground boa <i>Acrantophis madagascariensis</i>	NIL	N/A

**5. Animal Updates. (Discussion)**

**Bob Jenkins, VP – Institutional Advancement, SFZS**

<b>ANIMAL UPDATES – JULY 2010</b>					
<b>DATE</b>	<b>SEX</b>	<b>ANIMALS</b>	<b>TRANSACTION</b>		<b>COMMENTS</b>
		<b>ACQUISITIONS</b>			
28	0.1	Virginia opossum	Donation		WildCare
		<b>DISPOSITIONS</b>		<b>Age at Death</b>	
1	0.1	White-nosed coati	Death-Euth.	16y 1m 3d	Pending
4	0.1	Black-tailed prairie dog	Death-Euth.	6y 4m 2d	Pending
9	1.0	Leopard gecko	Death	15y 2m 23d	Pending
22	0.0.1	Yellow-banded poison dart frog	Disappeared	3y 4m 21d	Presumed Dead
24	1.0	Red kangaroo	Death-Euth.	7y 0m 20d	Pending
25	0.0.1	Superb starling	Disappeared	0y 1m 1d	Presumed Dead
25	0.0.1	Yellow-banded poison dart frog	Death-Euth.	3y 4m 24d	Pending
25	1.0	Mountain yellow-legged frog	Death	3y 4m 24d	Pending

ANIMAL UPDATES – AUGUST 2010					
DATE	SEX	ANIMALS	TRANSACTION		COMMENTS
<b>ACQUISITIONS</b>					
3	0.0.1	Madagascar ground boa	Donation		Minnesota confiscation
20	0.0.1	Chilean flamingo	Birth		SFZoo
20	0.0.1	Chilean flamingo	Birth		SFZoo
24	1.0	Marabou stork	Loan in		Miami Metrozoo
25	0.0.1	Chilean flamingo	Birth		SFZoo
<b>DISPOSITIONS</b>					
				<b>Age at Death</b>	
1	0.1	European rabbit	Death-Euth.	10y 1m 26d	Pending
7	1.0	Domestic guinea pig	Death-Euth.	0y 5m 12d	Pending
12	0.1	Polar bear	Death-Euth.	27y 7m 17d	Heart & Liver disease
13	1.0	Emperor tamarin	Donation to	3y 4m 21d	Racine Zoo
13	0.1	Spectacled bear	Death-Euth.	23y 7m 22d	Neurological disease
23	1.0	South African black duck	Death	16y 4m 15d	Pending
26	0.1	Greater kudu	Death	16y 0m 22d	Pending
25	1.0	Mountain yellow-legged frog	Death	3y 4m 24d	Pending

Advisor Spinelli asked in reference to the Polar bear if it was one of the pair and if so what plans are there for the care of the remaining animal. Mr. Jenkins responded that yes it was one of the two in the enclosure and staff is currently observing Pike to see that she is not experiencing any undue stress from the loss of Andy. Dr. Spinelli also wanted to state that in researching life span of bears he found that in captivity Polar bears could live up to 41 years but the average is 20-25 years and Spectacled bears could live to 38 years however the average is also 20-25 years. Commissioner Bonilla asked if for quality of life issues it would not be better to have another bear for company for Pike. Mr. Jenkins responded that this would be what one might think but that Polar bears are extreme isolationist and Andy & Pike were an anomaly but had been brought in as cubs and raised together. Advisor Stephens asked if Pike has demonstrated any change of mood or withdrawal since Andy's death. Mr. Jenkins responded that none has been observed. Mr. Sulak commented that over the years it had been observed that Pike and Andy lived parallel lives in the exhibit and had nothing to do with each other. It was very lucky that they did get along in the exhibit and Pike has shown no remorse, no change in behavior. Ms. Stephens asked if this was also true for the Spectacled bear. Mr. Sulak responded that the Spectacled bear currently in the exhibit is actually having a better existence due to the fact that the male dominated and now the female can get food easier. Bears are solitary animals and pairing them up is an unnatural situation.

#### 6. San Francisco Zoo Site Tour Report

Commissioner Lee commented on the tour of the Zoo which was held on September 9; he complimented staff on the organization and execution of the tour and stated that minutes would be available at the next Committee meeting. Commissioner Bonilla expressed the opinion that the use of the renovated hippo area should be high priority. Director Peterson commented that earlier in today's meeting before Commissioner Bonilla arrived this issue was discussed and assured her that it is top priority.

**7. Education Program Report**

Joe Fitting, VP-Education, SFZ

Mr. Fitting reported on the various programs which are offered by the Education Department. He did want to let the Committee know that this coming Sunday the South American Aviary Building will be reopening featuring the Anaconda. The education staff recently did an audit of its programs to examine if they are serving the audience and what additions or improvements could be made if desired. The audit came up with thirty distinct programs that serve the community, families and schools. The youngest ages of children served are the infant and toddler group. Four distinct play based classes learning about animals are offered. 289 classes were conducted in 2009-10 school year. Zoo Camp is another program for pre-Kindergarten to seventh graders with Winter, Spring and Summer sessions serving over 1,000 participants. Programs offered for youth include Talk on the Wild Side, Zoo Teacher Assistants, Zoo Crew, Nature Trail and Junior Zoologists with a total of 300 participants. These youth volunteers have the opportunity to become interns as well as gain training which prepares them to follow a career ladder to full-time employment in their future. Family programs are offered as well which include Overnights and Twilight Tours and BikeAbouts. For the older members of the community, quarterly behind-the-scenes tours for Seniors are offered which include special animal and keeper encounters. Outreach to schools is an important component of the education programs offered through the San Francisco Zoo. The ZooMobile visits schools and in the 2009-2010 school year taught 301 lessons which reached approximately 8000 students. Twenty classes at 5 SFUSD STAR schools received scholarship presentations. As well as visiting schools the ZooMobile, in collaboration with City Youth Now provided free lessons at SF Juvenile Hall for the third year in a row. It also visited George Mark House for Children which is a hospice for terminally ill children and their families. Biodiversity Basics is another learning program offered to schools and SFZ registered 1130 teachers for the Zoo's Complimentary 1-year Teacher Membership Offer. SFUSD K-5 grade level students representing 95 classes in 26 schools participated for the fourth year in the annual art contest which also included a teacher's workshop on the program to show how to incorporate the CA science and art standards into the provided lessons. Onsite at the zoo is Greenie's Conservation Corner which is a demonstration zone for sustainable practices and eco-friendly activities. SFZ continues to provide access programming to all facets of the local community. Commissioner Bonilla asked about the procedure for school group visit reservations and Mr. Fitting reviewed the process of making the reservations, chaperone ratio as well curriculum used. Advisor Stephens asked in regard to the curriculum who composes and reviews the materials. Mr. Fitting stated that on staff is a certified educator and the material complies with California established standards. These lessons are designed to meet the standards thus assisting teachers in relating the information to their students and lesson plans are provided. Ms. Stephens also commented on the availability of Docents throughout the zoo who interact with the visitors in relating information and complimented this program. Commissioner Bonilla asked about the frequency of the Twilight Tours and Mr. Fitting commented that they are scheduled during good weather and the goal is to schedule them monthly if possible. All of this information is available on the zoo website. Commissioner Lee asked if the zoo has explored offering mechanical devices which can be used throughout the zoo. Mr. Fitting stated that these alternatives have been explored but that the signal received through the phone system at the zoo currently does not support such a program as reception is not constant. Mr. Jenkins stated that AZA is investigating a program that would allow visitors to use their cell phones to get information while visiting zoos.

**8. Chair's Announcements. (Information only)**

Committee Advisor, Dr. Spinelli introduced a colleague of his from medical school who is visiting, Dr. Tucker.

**9. Old Business.** (Discussion)

**10. New Business/Future Agenda Items.** (Information only)

Advisor Stephens stated that after the Zoo Tour an informal meeting convened that included zoo staff and she wanted to thank them for taking the time to talk to the members. The group included persons from various organizations and the public which presented an exchange of ideas in a non-confrontational setting. She stated the desire that such meetings could be agendized in the future. Commissioner Bonilla asked for clarification if this was requesting a formal meeting and Ms. Stephens stated that the intent is to not make this a public meeting but rather an exchange of ideas.

**11. 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, G. L. Hastings, presented a document outlining his suggestions for updates, renovations and improvements to the Zoo.

Member of Public, Philip Gerrie, asked in regards to life ending situations for the animals, is there a policy and at what point is the decision made to end the life of an animal. Dr. Spinelli commented that in reference to the Bairds tapir, from all external appearances there seems to be nothing wrong but after consultation with Dr. Jencek they concur that you do not ask an animal to go beyond the point of comfort and in this instance extensive treatment would put undue stress on the animal and result in a deterioration of quality of life without presenting a cure to the condition. The intent is that the animal maintain a level of quality of life and at the point that this is not occurring the decision for termination of life would be explored and implemented if deemed humane for the animal. While there is a case-by-case process the philosophy remains constant. Mr. Jenkins explained that the process involves many members of the animal care staff in zoos and consultation with the Executive Director prior to the final decision being made.

**12. Adjournment.**

Meeting was adjourned at 3:08pm.