**MINUTES**

**BOARD OF ZOO COMMISSIONERS**

**OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES**

**VIRTUAL MEETING***

**TUESDAY, APRIL 20, 2021, – 10:00 AM**

* IN CONFORMITY WITH THE GOVERNOR'S EXECUTIVE ORDER N-29-20 (MARCH 17, 2020) AND DUE TO CONCERNS OVER COVID-19, THIS BOARD MEETING WAS HELD ENTIRELY TELEPHONICALLY VIA ZOOM.

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**“Creating dynamic experiences to connect people and animals”**

Los Angeles Zoo  
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Los Angeles  
California 90027  
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Fax 323/662-9786  
http://www.lazoo.org

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**MEMBERS PRESENT**  
Karen Winnick  
Daryl Smith  
Bernardo Silva  
Christopher Hopkins  
Margot Armbruster

**VISITORS**  
No response

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**EX OFFICIO MEMBER PRESENT**  
Richard Lichtenstein

**COMMISSION STAFF**  
Denise Verret  
Denise Tamura  
Lisa Gerencsner

**MEDIA**  
No response

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**AGENDA ITEM 1**  
**CALL TO ORDER**  
Commission President Winnick called the meeting to order at 10:02 AM.

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**AGENDA ITEM 2**  
**APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR MEETING OF MARCH 16, 2021**  
Commission President Winnick moved to approve March 16, 2021 minutes. Vice President Silva so moved, Commissioner Armbruster seconded, and the motion passed.

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**AGENDA ITEM 3**  
**GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**  
No Comments

**LOBBYING NOTICE**  
No Comments

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**NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL**  
No Comments

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AGENDA ITEM 4
MAKING CONNECTIONS TO NATURE PRESENTATION

Director of Conservation, Dr. Jake Owens, introduced the Zoo’s Community Conservation Coordinator Anna Becker who facilitated an internship in partnership with the Mayor’s office and Los Angeles Community Colleges. Ms. Becker thanked the Mayor’s office for the opportunity allowing the Zoo to participate in a paid internship program. Both interns are Los Angeles natives who are attending local community colleges. Goals of the 12-week internship program included: gain experience for a career in conservation, understand conservation and the LA Zoo’s role, and the Importance of accessibility for everyone to foster their own relationships with nature and conservation. Ms. Becker introduced the Zoo’s first interns, Hored Martinez and Rachel Ortega, to provide a presentation of their experience.

Hored did not grow up with a connection to nature while Rachel’s family took annual camping trips. The interns presented the Commission with “Making Connections to Nature” an overview of their time spent learning about Conservation. Hored and Rachel described the program and highlights included:

- First two weeks were “Conservation 101” – learning about Conservation
- Besides Dr. Owens and Ms. Becker, the interns worked with Julia Bogany, Jess Kohring, and Rose Legato.
  - Julia Bogany is a Tongva Elder who expressed the importance of native language
  - Jess Kohring is the Zoo’s Director of Equity programs and shared the importance of equity, justice and accessibility
  - Rose Legato is a Senior Animal Keeper who shared her animal knowledge and career paths
- Interns focused on increasing access and lowering barriers to connect communities with nature
- Started nature journals from “Sit Spots”. Sit Spots allow you to coexist with nature, disconnect from virtual world, and clear your mind and reset
- Their ultimate vision was to inspire others to build connections with nature and understand the importance of conservation
- Created a website showing how to create your own Sit Spot. The website utilizes the Zoo’s bird gardens and other resources as for animal identifiers. The website content is in English and Spanish as the interns felt representation and accessibility were fundamental.

Rachel noted she is much more confident in her choice to study biology and has better ideas of what her career path may be. Hored has completely changed her outlook on the importance of nature and our connections to nature and conservation.

Commissioner Smith mentioned he is on the Community College Board and would love to share this presentation with them if allowed; Zoo Director Denise Verret will follow up with Commissioner Smith. President Winnick asked about the continuation of the internship and possible involvement with LAUSD. Dr. Owens discussed his desire to continue the program and expand it to middle school and other targeted age groups, but resources are needed to facilitate these programs. Mrs. Verret commended the interns for exceeding our expectations and thanked Anna Becker for her leadership with this program.
AGENDA ITEM 5
GENERAL MANAGER REPORTS

A. Animal Updates
Beth Schaefer, Director of Animal Programs, provided the following transaction updates:

- Gray’s monitor will be transferred to Fresno Zoo
- Spectacled owl being transferred to Sedgwick County Zoo in Wichita, KS
- Giant centipede will be arriving for LAIR
- New male Komodo dragon will be on exhibit later this month
- CA condors have laid 19 eggs, a record number. Two chicks have hatched to date.

Vice President Silva asked about the death of the chimpanzee. Dr. Keller noted she was 41 years old and had multiple health issues including diabetes.

B. GLAZA Update
GLAZA President Tom Jacobson provided the following update:

- Reached 66% of restricted fundraising goal for the year
- Membership is up to 35,000 households
- Have already solicited $600,000 for Beastly Ball
- Feasibility study for Vision Plan was completed and presented to the Board last week
- Eight new Trustees have been recruited this fiscal year
- Walk for the Wild fundraiser continues

C. Zoo Director Update
Zoo Director Denise Verret noted the Los Angeles County is currently in the Orange Tier and the Zoo is operating at 50% capacity. Elephant introductions with the entire herd continue a few times a week and are going very well. There will be a modified ZooCamp this summer. Yesterday the Mayor gave his “State of the City” and the proposed budget will be released later today; there will be a budget presentation at a future Commission meeting. Attended virtual AZA Advocacy Day meetings; met with Congressman Schiff and other congressional staff to discuss the importance of funding for zoos and conservation.

AGENDA ITEM 6
OLD BUSINESS
None

AGENDA ITEM 7
ADJOURNMENT
There being no more business to come before, President Winnick motioned to adjourn the meeting; Vice President Silva so moved and Commissioner Smith seconded; the meeting was adjourned at 10:46 AM.

ATTEST:

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PRESIDENT                                                              SECRETARY