



Dane County

Minutes - Final Unless Amended by Committee

Henry Vilas Zoo Commission

Consider:

Who benefits? Who is burdened?

Who does not have a voice at the table?

How can policymakers mitigate unintended consequences?

Tuesday, November 5, 2019

7:00 AM

Zoo Administration Building
702 S Randall Ave.

Zoo Administration Building

A. Call To Order

*Others present: Ronda Schwetz, Joseph Darcangelo, Jess Thompson, Kristin Moala,
Eddie Sherman*

The meeting was called to order by Anne Ross at 7:03am.

Present 6 - JONATHAN BECKER, Supervisor CHUCK ERICKSON, TAG EVERS, JEFFREY
GUNDERSON, MICHAEL PETERSEN, and ANNE ROSS

Excused 1 - SARAH JUSTUS

B. Consideration of Minutes

A motion was made by ROSS, seconded by ERICKSON, that the Minutes be approved. The motion carried by a voice vote.

Minutes of the 10/16/19 Zoo Commission Meeting

Attachments: [10.16.19 Minutes](#)

C. Action Items

Discussion on 2020 extended hours

Ronda Schwetz offered to host a community meeting on next years extended hours that was brought up in the October Commission meeting. The zoo's AZA accreditation encouraged more animal access to outdoor space during the summer months but the zoo is still in the early stages of determining how that works. Animal welfare is our number one priority. Other zoos address summer hours in different ways, some are only open late to the public on weekends. The zoo is still working with staff to determine what capacity we have for longer hours. Henry Vilas Zoo is not planning on serving alcohol during regular evening hours. The community meeting would be a listening session to hear from the public about their concerns.

ERICKSON said he expects about 20 people to show up and thinks the main concerns from neighbors would be about parking and trash. He indicated extended zoo hours during the work week are a challenge for neighbors but not impossible and thinks the zoo needs to communicate with them so they know what is going on. Everyone agreed that the animals having more access to outdoor exhibit space is a priority.

EVERS suggested lit dropping community meeting invitations to the immediate surrounding areas on Randall Ave. and Drake to Wingra. EVERS and ERICKSON also said the invites have to be sent out on the neighborhood listservs and should be included in their newsletters as well.

ROSS pointed out that the zoo is a public asset and closing the zoo at 5pm limits the populations that can access it, making zoo hours an equity issue.

EVERS agreed and added that we need to have balance between community needs and being good neighbors.

D. Presentations

None

E. Reports to Committee

Zoo Report

Joseph Darcangelo gave an overview of the Centerplate agreement with the zoo and an update on the year-to-date money collected in donation tubes in the zoo.

ROSS asked how our revenue compared to what the former society was contributing and Ronda said that the zoo expects to exceed what they contributed in 2018. ROSS pointed out that this is the first time the Commission is seeing a holistic view of the zoo's operating expenses and it is good to see it this way.

BECKER asked for utility costs to be included in future budget updates. ERICKSON agreed and pointed out that utilities and water are the biggest costs for the zoo and it will be good so see how our conservation efforts like the new aviary roof are reducing energy consumption.

ERICKSON gave an explanation of where the County is in the budget process and wanted the Commission to be aware of an amendment he is proposing that would add money for a pilot program to give scholarships to lower income youth to participate in zoo education programs.

F. Future Meeting Items and Dates

None

G. Public Comment on Items not on the Agenda

None

H. Such Other Business as Allowed by Law

Ronda gave a brief report on year end events happening at the zoo. Boo at the Zoo was a big success, with over 14,000 zoo guests for that day. There was a art event the first Friday in November that was well received even with poor weather. The zoo is in the process of designing new interactive donation tubes with the help of GUNDERSON and we are very excited with the results. We are still on track to have a new membership plan launched by the end of the year. And there will be a Volunteer Appreciation Night on December 11 that the Commission is invited to attend.

I. Adjourn

A motion was made by ERICKSON, seconded by ROSS, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion passed with a voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:32am.

Respectfully submitted by Kristin Moala pending Commission approval.