



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, May 12, 2026

8:00 AM Hybrid Meeting: Attend in person at 702 S. Randall Ave;
attend virtually via Zoom.

See below for additional instructions on how to attend the meeting.

A. Call To Order

Others present: Janine Wachter, Eddie Sherman, Jess Thompson, Kristin Moala, Beth Petersen, and Mary Thurber

A motion was made by ROSS that the Zoo Commission meeting be called to order at 8:13am.

Present 5 - JEFFREY GUNDERSON, SARAH JUSTUS, ANNE ROSS, ERIN WELSH, and TAG EVERS

Excused 1 - JASMINE BANKS

B. Consideration of Minutes

[2026](#)
[MIN-031](#)

Attachments: [2026 MIN-031](#)

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

C. Action Items

None

D. Presentations

None

E. Reports to Committee

Zoo Report:

-Operational Updates

-Animal Updates

-Conservation/Education Updates

-Event/Marketing Updates

Zoo Report -

Operations - The Grille held a sold out Mother's Day brunch that got great feedback. It was the second year holding this event and we doubled capacity this year. The Grille has a new menu that started this week. Volunteer season has started and almost all the roles are filled. The County has a permit to start construction on the new solar shade structure near the flamingo exhibit. Hope to begin construction by the end of the month.

An animal update was given about recent acquisitions and animal departures.

Education - The education team had a successful Party for the Planet, the zoo's annual Earth Day event. Events were held both at the zoo, and at the Bayview Community Center. The Bookmobile is back at the zoo on Fridays for the summer. This is the 6th year the zoo is hosting the Bookmobile. Volunteers from the Bird Collision Corp are tracking bird strikes on grounds during the spring migration. The zoo uses this data to help treat windows and has reduced the number on bird strikes on grounds.

Events - The zoo just held its 3rd annual spring blood drive. The fall drive will take place on November 6th. This Saturday is Pride Night at the zoo. The next big event is the Youth Governance Program zoo takeover happening on Friday, May 29th.

The zoo was recently featured in the Wisconsin State Journal. Several stories were published highlighting the work the zoo team is doing to house three polar bears and hopefully breed them.

The director gave an update on the County's budget guidelines and timeline for next year.

F. Future Meeting Items and Dates

The next Commission dates will be June 2, July 7, and August 4.

G. Public Comment on Items not on the Agenda

None

H. Such Other Business as Allowed by Law

None

I. Adjourn

A motion was made by ROSS, seconded by JUSTUS, that the Zoo Commission meeting be adjourned at 9:08am. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Kristin Moala, pending approval from the Zoo Commission.