



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?

Wednesday, January 7, 2026

8:00 AM

702 S Randall Ave

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A. Call To Order

A motion was made by ROSS that the Zoo Commission meeting be called to order at 8:03am. The motion carried unanimously.

Present 4 - JEFFREY GUNDERSON, SARAH JUSTUS, MICHAEL PETERSEN, and ANNE ROSS

Excused 3 - TAG EVERNS, JASMINE BANKS, and ERIN WELSH

B. Consideration of Minutes

2025
MIN-477

Attachments: [2025 MIN-477](#)

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

C. Action Items

6. [2025](#)
[RES-275](#) ACCEPTANCE OF A GRANT FOR HENRY VILAS ZOO TO SUPPORT THE ENHANCEMENT OF NATIVE PLANT AND VEGETABLE GARDENS AT BAYVIEW FOUNDATION

Sponsors: WELSH and ENGELBERGER

Attachments: [2025 RES-275](#)

[2025 RES-275 Fiscal Note](#)

A motion was made by JUSTUS, seconded by GUNDERSON, that the Resolution Requiring 2/3rds Vote be recommended for approval. The motion carried by a voice vote.

D. Presentations

None

E. Reports to Committee

Ronda updated the commission. Construction has begun on the new seal shade structure. Work should be done by sometime in March. Solar shade structure construction should begin in the next few months and it shouldn't take long to complete once the work has started. The Zoo just put out a bid for work on the new arctic fox exhibit. Work should begin sometime this summer on that project. The Zoo combined all current HVAC projects into one large project, which is currently in Public Works.

The education department is currently working on updating all the signage in the Tundra Buggy, which should be done by mid-February and the Zoo will officially open it on International Polar Bear Day (Feb. 27th).

Zoo Lights had to be canceled three nights due to weather this year. The Zoo made slightly less money than it has in previous years because of that, but overall feedback on this year's light show was positive. The Zoo's operations team is already looking at ways to improve the guest experience for next year.

A female camel, Altain, passed away just before the holidays on the same day that three baby goats were born. The otter offspring from last year are going to separate AZA facilities this year. We are anticipating a female polar bear, Nora, coming to the Zoo in early January. We will also be getting a new bearded dragon.

F. Future Meeting Items and Dates

The next Zoo Commission meeting will take place on February 3rd at 8am.

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 JUSTUS, seconded by GUNDERSON, that the Zoo Commission meeting be adjourned at 8:57am. The motion carried unanimously.

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