



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, February 4, 2020

8:00 AM

702 S Randall Ave. Madison, WI 53715

**Zoo Administration building
702 S Randall Ave. Madison, WI 53715**

A. Call To Order

Others present: Chuck Hicklin, Ronda Schwetz, Joseph Darcangelo, Kristin Moala, Beth Petersen, Lauren Salzmann, Jess Thompson

The meeting was called to order by Jonathan Becker at 8am.

Present 6 - JONATHAN BECKER, TAG EVERS, JEFFREY GUNDERSON, SARAH JUSTUS,
MICHAEL PETERSEN, and ANNE ROSS

Excused 1 - Supervisor CHUCK ERICKSON

B. Consideration of Minutes

A motion was made by PETERSEN, seconded by EVERS, that the minutes of the 1/7/2020 Zoo Commission meeting be approved. The motion carried by voice vote.

[2019](#)
[MIN-424](#)

Minutes of the 01/07/20 Zoo Commission

Attachments: [Zoo Commission Minutes 07-Jan-2020](#)

C. Action Items

None

D. Presentations

None

E. Reports to Committee

Volunteer Update given by Henry Vilas Zoo Volunteer Coordinator Lauren Salzmann.

The zoo currently has a strong volunteer base. In 2019, 750 volunteers had shifts at the zoo. This included recurring individual volunteers, one-time event volunteers, and corporate group volunteers. Approximately 54,000 people were reached through our docent carts. A new Henry the Lion mascot was purchased and docent carts were updated. The zoo's priority in 2019 was communication. Lauren sent out monthly zoo e-newsletters and weekly emails with volunteer opportunities. All materials were made available in English and Spanish. A volunteer appreciation night was held in December. There were more group volunteers, but the recurring individual volunteers exceeded group volunteers in the number of hours worked. We have an amazing core group of returning volunteers.

For 2020, Lauren is working on building up incentives to increase volunteer participation. She has created an online training component to make the initial process more accessible for volunteers. The zoo is also developing a relationship with UW and Edgewood College to increase the number of college aged volunteers. The zoo will continue to improve communication. There was some confusion with the society departure in 2019 but the zoo retained over 95% of the recurring volunteers.

Chuck Hicklin gave an informational report about the agreement reached with the former society. They will not be able to use the zoo's name in the future for any fundraising efforts. The funds the society raised were deposited to the zoo's account on December 26th.

Evers asked about the status of the zoo creating a new 501(c)(3). Ronda said there are several models to choose from and the zoo needs to determine the best fit. The zoo is unique because it is a free zoo.

Hicklin said that there is a role for a 501(c)(3) eventually. The County doesn't want to rely on a group for ongoing operating costs and is leaning towards a fundraising model for capital funds. That could mean there would be a Board but no physical offices. The zoo needs to focus on a facilities master plan to ID upcoming capital campaigns. Whatever the new model looks like, there needs to be more transparency and a better defined role. Ronda said the zoo is working with a consultant to create bylaws for any future model, but said it would not be a fast process and the zoo would want AZA to provide input as well.

Hicklin credited the former society for creating a good model with the Madison Community Foundation that will be beneficial for the zoo.

Ronda also gave a report from the Zoo Director Policy Conference she recently attended.

Zoo Reports

None

F. Future Meeting Items and Dates

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 3.

G. Public Comment on Items not on the Agenda

None

H. Such Other Business as Allowed by Law

Tag Evers brought up the community meeting on extended zoo hours. He wants to make sure the community is given a chance to weigh in. The zoo is willing to host the event, dates need to be confirmed. Everyone is working on finding a date in late February or early March to hold the meeting.

Jess Thompson gave an update on the planning for Party for the Planet, the zoo's Earth Day event. The zoo is partnering with several groups including the UW Arboretum, Madison City Parks, Friends of Lake Wingra, and Wingra Boats to clean up waterways and remove invasives. The zoo will also be hosting a variety of activities from noon to 3pm in the zoo for the public.

I. Adjourn

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:35am.

Respectfully submitted by Kristin Moala, pending commission approval.