



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, July 15, 2025

8:00 AM

702 S. Randall Ave.

A. Call To Order

A motion was made that the Zoo Commission meeting be called to order at 8:01am. The motion carried unanimously.

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

Excused 2 - MICHAEL PETERSEN, and JASMINE BANKS

B. Consideration of Minutes

[2025](#)
[MIN-188](#)

Attachments: [2025 MIN-188](#)

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

C. Action Items

None

D. Presentations

None

E. Reports to Committee

Operations updates - the bids for the new seal shade structure came in. The new structure will provide permanent year round shade for the seal pool. The sail shades currently used cannot withstand the snow accumulation in the winter. The new structure will help protect seal eye health even in winter. It will be made out of steel and installation should begin in January or February of 2026. Work on the otter behind the scenes spaces will begin in September. This project was delayed because of the birth of our otter pups, but now that they are old enough the work can begin. It will improve their back holding area and allow for more training opportunities for keepers. The bids for the new arctic fox exhibit came in higher than expected. The zoo will be re-evaluating what work can be done internally (landscaping, etc.) and the bid will be sent out again with the modifications in scope. The zoo is working on a solar installation and hopes to have more details about that project by September. The Aviary is also going to have work done this fall to update some of the tanks and get more fish in that space.

The zoo started composting herbivore manure working with the County's Waste and Renewable's department and partnering with Purple Cow. This project started on June 1st and has cut the amount of manure going to the landfill almost in half. There is a potential for the zoo to sell compost from this partnership by sometime next summer.

The annual AZA conference is happening in September. The zoo's education coordinator and marketing coordinator are speaking at this year's conference and the volunteer coordinator is up for the Volunteer Award.

Events have been happening all summer and all of them have seen an up tick in attendance.

The zoo is currently in the middle of the County's budget process. They do not anticipate any staff cuts. The zoo commission will have a more in-depth look at the budget during the September meeting.

F. Future Meeting Items and Dates

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday, September 9th starting 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 EVERS, seconded by JUSTUS, that the Zoo Commission meeting be adjourned at 8:44am. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Kristin Moala, pending approval from the commission