

NIABI ZOO OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 17, 2016

PRESENT: Committee members . J. Taylor, J. Craver, T. Jarrett, L. Jackson, M. Byrne, W. Nelson.

ABSENT: T. Brahm.

ALSO PRESENT: D. Cremeens, District two Commissioner; John Ferrell, Zoological Society President; Lisa Sievert, Zoological Society Vice President; Lance Leslie, Zoological Society Treasurer; Lynsey Engels, Zoological Society; Jarrod Miller, Zoological Society; Chris Townsend, Zoological Society; Debbie Shannon, Zoological Society Secretary; Scott Lohman.

Mr. Ferrell called the Society meeting to order at 4:04pm.

Mr. Ferrell asked Mr. Jackson for an update from the zoo.

Mr. Jackson informed the Society of the Animal Handling positions that had been filled, and confirmed that a Meerkat and a bird called a Tragopan needed to be euthanized due to disease.

The Society members went through their attendance and treasurer's reports.

The Society asked if the zoo had received the final bill for the Playground.

Mr. Jackson stated that he would check on that, and forward that bill to the Society once it is received.

Mr. Ferrell stated that the financial statements that were requested by Mr. Craver were ready. Mr. Craver had requested those, I believe, for the legal opinion. Is there an invoice for the tortoises?

Mr. Jackson stated that the tortoises were coming from a private breeder, and that once there was an invoice it would be forwarded on to the Society. There will need to be a check on delivery of the tortoises.

Mr. Ferrell stated that that shouldn't be a problem as long as an invoice is received.

Mr. Jackson stated that some months before the Pints event there was talk of using the money from that event for the reptile building.

Mr. Ferrell asked Ms. Sievert how much was received at that event.

Ms. Sievert stated that it was between thirteen and fifteen.

Mr. Ferrell asked how much more Mr. Jackson thought the zoo would need for the reptile building.

Mr. Jackson stated that he would email that amount to Mr. Ferrell.

Mr. Ferrell stated that last month there were some new guidelines for recruiting new board members. Mr. Jackson met with a couple families last week. We're going to try and have him meet with a few other families in the next week or two. Going to try and get five or so good family names in front of him, and see what we can accomplish from there. These are not fund raiser asks. These are just meets. At some point I'm sure it will lead to that, but right now we're just trying to get Mr. Jackson to meet a few people that have supported the zoo in the past. This is so he can get his feet on the ground and understand their feelings and the things they want to see happen. Both the people that Mr. Jackson met with would be board member type people. The Society has been in a bit of a holding pattern in regards to Zoofari. There have been a few possibilities mentioned as far as introducing Mr. Jackson to the public. One was a plated dinner, one was a big fund raising event, and one was as the kickoff to a capital campaign. The Society has been waiting on the Oversight Committee to give some thoughts. Mr. Jackson is presenting his 90 day assessment tomorrow night. We do need to spend that money by March 31st, or we lose it. The Society is really looking to the Oversight Committee for some thoughts or ideas as to what direction things are going.

Chairman Taylor stated that there were three options that have been mentioned in previous meetings. Mr. Jackson has been around now for some time. He doesn't really need a meet and greet. The three options were a simple meet and greet with a cash bar and some hors d'oeuvres, which would be pretty easy to execute. Another option was a dinner, but we're getting very near the holiday season. That would be quite difficult to make successful. The last option was the big fund raiser of Zoofari; possibly in the spring. That would be cutting the deadline pretty close. In choosing which one would be best, I'd suggest figuring out what the goal of the event is.

Mr. Ferrell stated that originally the goal was to have it be a kickoff to the Public Private Partnership and to fund raise for something big, not just small projects like the reptile house. We feel that a big event, bigger than Pints or the golf outing, that could be done in conjunction with an announcement of the direction that the zoo intends on taking would be the best. We would like as much time as possible to prepare such a big event. Ms. Engels can speak more to the Zoofari event. It is usually our biggest event.

Ms. Engels stated that there is some restrictions because that is what the money is supposed to go toward. Not that we're opposed to doing a plated dinner or something else, but that \$20,000.00 needs to get spent on Zoofari, and sooner would be better. In regards to a private dinner fund raising event, those people aren't going to donate right now with the two organizations in flux.

Mr. Nelson asked to confirm that Mr. Jackson's 90 day assessment would be coming out tomorrow.

Mr. Jackson confirmed that he would be presenting that assessment to the Commission tomorrow night.

Mr. Nelson suggested that the assessment might be useful in shaping the event. To see what there is to get excited about.

Mr. Ferrell asked if there was a short term plan included in the assessment.

Mr. Jackson stated that the assessment is a combination of short term plan and a summation of the needs and where Niabi is right now.

Ms. Engels stated that the public will want to know what direction the organization is heading. It doesn't sound like Mr. Jackson's report will cover that information.

Mr. Ferrell stated that people are still waiting on the information of what direction the zoo is going. That's what everyone, Society included, wants to know. It seems like meetings are held and nothing gets decided.

Mr. Jackson stated that a few meetings ago defining the roles was put forth, and then it was never mentioned again. So that would be an easy place to start.

Mr. Ferrell felt the Society knew their role.

Mr. Jackson stated that the roles seemed to be overlapping and causing confusion. With who, what and how am I supposed to be interacting with the different organizations?

Mr. Townsend asked, isn't Schultz & Williams supposed to be helping with that? We keep sending them money, but nothing seems to be getting done.

Mr. Jackson stated that Schultz & Williams is supposed to be assisting with the bigger picture. How we interact with each other is something that we need to work out. Schultz & Williams recommended that we need to do that, and it's up to us to determine how we go about doing that.

Chairman Taylor stated that he saw this joint meeting today as a good stepping off point in initiating that discussion. Determining who has authorization to do what is important. The questions need to be asked so that everyone is clear on who does what. Questions like "Who speaks for Niabi Zoo?" "Who is authorized to go to the editorial boards and tell them what they think about Mr. Jackson's report that he gives tomorrow night, and who is not?"

Mr. Jackson stated that, yes, those were the questions that needed to be asked and answered.

Mr. Ferrell stated that if MindFire is setup to be our PR group, then I would think that Mr. Jackson and MindFire would be the people to deal with that. I've gotten calls from the press about the assessment. What I believe is not happening is fundamental communication through all three groups. There are certain groups getting information, but not everyone. I didn't even know that you guys had had a meeting about talking points.

Chairman Taylor stated that there was not a meeting to go over talking points. That was a discussion between Mr. Jackson and Ms. Behning of MindFire. I never saw the talking points either.

Mr. Ferrell felt that that was improper. The press is going to keep digging. I think we should share with all the groups, and everyone knows what the talking points are. As far as roles, the Society has turned over a lot of operational things. I think we're clear and focused on what we need to raise money for. We've taken a backseat, and the Oversight Committee's role was to figure out how to put this model together. Then make that recommendation to the Forest Preserve Executive Committee. I think a joint meeting of the Forest Preserve Executive Committee and the Oversight Committee would be a good idea. Members of the media have asked me, and wanted an update from me, about how the shift is going. I was asked, "John Ferrell, are you ready to take over the zoo?" John Ferrell is not taking over the zoo. The 501c3 may be taking over, but the Society members sitting here today are not saying that they want to take over the zoo.

Mr. Jackson stated that he understood where the Society was coming from, but in this regard we're automatically spinning our wheels. The Commission is not going to commit to handing over the reins to a yet to be created entity. That entity is going to have to be in place and funded in order to show that they are capable of taking on that responsibility. Am I wrong?

Mr. Cremeens confirmed that Mr. Jackson was correct.

Mr. Ferrell stated that, going back to roles, the Society doesn't feel that it's their responsibility to create that entity.

Mr. Byrne agreed that the Oversight Committee needs to make the decision of what to recommend to the District, and make that recommendation.

Chairman Taylor stated that he wanted to challenge the Oversight Committee to attend meetings. Not everyone is here tonight. We don't seem to have the capability to be in the same room at the same time to have the necessary discussions.

Mr. Ferrell stated that the Society was still looking for an operational budget for the zoo.

Chairman Taylor asked if the Society had gotten through its agenda items.

Mr. Ferrell stated that they had, and listed a few of the fundraisers that are setup and getting setup for 2017.

There was a brief discussion on dates and timing of fundraisers.

Chairman Taylor called the meeting of the Niabi Zoo Oversight Committee to order at 4:58 PM on Monday, October 17, 2016, in the Education Room of the Administration Building at Niabi Zoo in Coal Valley, Illinois.

Roll was called:

J. Craver, L. Jackson, T. Jarrett, J. Taylor, M. Byrne, W. Nelson.

Total Present 6

T. Brahm.

Total Absent 1

Chairman Taylor stated that the Committee would jump around a bit on the agenda. With as many people who are here it gives a prime opportunity to set a regular meeting schedule for the Oversight Committee. It seems that the consensus is that joint meetings are most helpful and productive.

Mr. Byrne stated that at one time it had been suggested to form sub-committees to look at certain key goals. The sub-committees would then report back to the whole Oversight Committee once a month. There could be one committee to look at a Pro Forma for a new entity, one committee to find new members to be on the PPP board, and one committee to put together a potential agreement for the PPP.

After a brief discussion the next joint meeting was set for November 14, 2016 at 4:00pm.

Mr. Ferrell asked for clarification on the committee that would be finding new board members. Is that finding board members for the new entity? The current Society members have been tasked with finding new board members for the Society. There are two people interested in becoming new members of the Society board.

Mr. Byrne stated that he meant working together to find new members for the new board. I venture to say that the sub-committee would invite one or more of the Society to that discussion. On a Pro Forma, in part, the Society should be involved because that's the fundraising arm. When I look at the monies coming from tax dollars, it's not enough. There definitely has to be fund raising.

Mr. Jarrett asked if those sub-committees would have to meet publicly.

Ms. Sullivan answered that if there were official sub-committees, then those sub-committee meetings would need to be public.

Mr. Craver stated that forming sub-committees would not be the best idea. The memo from Schultz & Williams listed out the steps that need to be taken for both the Oversight Committee and the Society. The topic of new board members is addressed in the memo. It states that, %Society/Oversight Committee must identify new Board members and with Lee, vet/interview and recruit five new members who meet the designated criteria by December 31, 2016.+If the agenda is structured to those items, then more can get accomplished. The next step for the zoo was for Mr. Jackson to

deliver a 90 day assessment, that's happening tomorrow. The update for the Case for Support is done. Don't think that sub-committees need to be formed. It would be better to assign tasks to members of the Oversight Committee and have them work on those tasks between meetings.

Mr. Jarrett suggested that having a facilitator, other than Mr. Biddle and Ms. Grace, come to these meetings would help to keep everyone on track. We come to the meetings and talk about what we should do at the next meeting. That's not productive.

Mr. Craver stated that he partially agreed with that statement. It would be nice to have someone here in person. However, the document is meant to help facilitate this Committee. If the Committee follows the memo, and tailors the agenda to the memo, then things can start getting done.

Chairman Taylor directed that the Next Steps Memo be resent to the Committee, and the steps be put on the agenda for discussion at future meetings.

Mr. Nelson stated that the agenda needs to reflect that we're taking action. There should be action items on the agenda. I appreciate the information that the reports provide, but we need to start taking action.

Mr. Ferrell stated that it seemed that no work on any of these steps is getting done between meetings. Mr. Jackson has been getting things done between meetings, but I think we all need to make the commitment to get things done in between meetings. That would go a long way towards getting these steps accomplished as well.

It was suggested that perhaps someone from Schultz & Williams might be able to be the facilitator in person.

Ms. Engels stated that someone from Deere might better serve as a facilitator since they will be more familiar with the local landscape and mindset.

Mr. Ferrell stated that he felt Schultz & Williams had been put out in the front on this, and really they should be filling in the gaps. We should be taking the lead, and Schultz & Williams should be helping us when we get stuck, and run into something that we can't figure out for ourselves.

Mr. Jackson agreed, stating that Schultz & Williams are consultants. They are not supposed to do this for us.

Chairman Taylor stated that everyone will review the Next Steps Memo, and before the next meeting we'll look at assigning some Oversight members to one of the three tasks that Mr. Byrne suggested. At next month's meeting we'll include some of the steps listed on the memo to discuss, and hopefully take some action on. If at the November meeting it is decided that a facilitator is in fact needed, then we will ask for a donation of one, since going through Schultz & Williams for that person is likely to be very expensive. Then Chairman Taylor called for a motion to approve the consent agenda items.

MOTION: Mr. Byrne moved to approve the consent agenda items. Mr. Nelson seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Chairman Taylor called for a motion approving the minutes from the September 13, 2016 meeting.

MOTION: Mr. Byrne moved to approve the minutes from the September 13, 2016 meeting. Mr. Nelson seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Chairman Taylor called on Mr. Jackson for his update.

Mr. Jackson stated that there had been some new doors put up around the zoo. Offers have been made to fill the four open Animal Handling positions. The Assistant Zoo Director position has been posted locally and nationally. There are already some very promising candidates.

Chairman Taylor asked the Society if there was anything that was not covered in their meeting that they would like share with the Committee.

There was not.

Chairman Taylor asked if there was anything additional from the Committee members.

Mr. Craver suggested setting more meetings dates due to the holidays coming up, and since there has been interest in setting regular meetings.

Mr. Ferrell stated that the Society meets the third Monday of the month at 4:00pm, but there is some flexibility there.

After a brief discussion it was decided to meet jointly on the second Monday of the month at 4:00pm. This would go through March. Then it would be decided if that would continue on. Dates were confirmed for November 14, 2016, December 12, 2016, January 9, 2017, February 13, 2017, and March 13, 2017.

Chairman Taylor called the meeting adjourned.

Adjourned at 6:01 PM.

Submitted by:
Cassie Sullivan
Forest Preserve Administrative Assistant