

NIABI ZOO OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 14, 2016

PRESENT: Committee members . J. Craver, L. Jackson, M. Byrne, T. Brahm, W. Nelson(via phone).

ABSENT: J. Taylor, T. Jarrett.

ALSO PRESENT: Scarlet Behrens, Guest Services Manager; Hannah Stockton, Field Office Manager; Rick Biddle, Schultz & Williams(via phone); John Ferrell, Zoological Society 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; various members of the press.

Vice Chairman Byrne called the meeting of the Niabi Zoo Oversight Committee to order at 4:02 PM on Monday, November 14, 2016, in the Education Room of the Administration Building at Niabi Zoo in Coal Valley, Illinois.

Roll was called:

J. Craver, L. Jackson, T. Brahm, M. Byrne, W. Nelson(via phone).

Total Present 5

T. Jarrett, J. Taylor.

Total Absent 2

Vice Chairman Byrne called for a motion to approve the consent agenda items.

MOTION: Mr. Brahm moved to approve the consent agenda items. Mr. Craver seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Vice Chairman Byrne called for a motion approving the minutes from the October 17, 2016 meeting.

MOTION: Mr. Craver moved to approve the minutes from the October 17, 2016 meeting. Mr. Brahm seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Vice Chairman Byrne stated that the Case for Support and the September sixth memo had been distributed, and perhaps Mr. Biddle can give an update.

Mr. Biddle stated that not much had happened since the final Case for Support had gone out with the redistribution of the Next Steps memo from September sixth. There has been some feedback from Mr. Jackson, Ms. Behning and Mr. Craver, but I believe these things are pending further discussion on how Niabi will move forward.

Vice Chairman Byrne called on Mr. Jackson for his update.

Mr. Jackson stated that October attendance was 23,886; 11,186 of that total was the two days of Boo at the Zoo. Four keeper positions have been filled, one remains. Interviews have begun for the Assistant Zoo Director position. The Curator of Conservation and Education position has been posted.

Mr. Brahm asked approximately when the Assistant Zoo Director position would be filled.

Mr. Jackson stated that it should be filled in about thirty days.

Mr. Ferrell stated that he had not received the final draft of the Case for Support.

Mr. Biddle stated that he would email that to Mr. Ferrell tomorrow morning.

Vice Chairman Byrne asked about the planning for 2017.

Mr. Jackson stated that so far there is the short term plan that was presented to the Commission last month.

Vice Chairman Byrne asked for thoughts or concerns regarding the legal opinion that had been discussed at the Forest Preserve Executive Committee meeting last week. That opinion was summarized for the Oversight Committee, though I don't believe anyone has seen the full opinion yet. Alternate options need to be discussed.

Mr. Brahm shared his frustration with the opinion. The opinion summary was shared only four hours ago. The committee will need some time to digest the information and have some candid discussions about other options. I feel it would be helpful to setup a joint meeting of the Oversight Committee and the Forest Preserve Executive Committee to ensure that they are still committed to moving forward and finding the best way to run Niabi, and that should take place before the Oversight Committee meet next month.

Mr. Jackson stated that the intention is not to destroy the chance at a public private partnership. What I was trying to get across was that now is not the time. We need to stop working on that, and concentrate on making the changes in leadership and membership of our boards.

MOTION: Mr. Brahm moved to table any further discussion on the PPP until review of the full legal opinion happened. Mr. Jackson seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Mr. Nelson stated that after reading all the memos and information that's been provided, what I came away with was that the operations of the zoo could not be turned over to another agency. That has been tested in the courts in Illinois with the Chicago Park District. There are other options, but the management can't be turned over to an

outside agency. With that knowledge we have a better understanding of what we can and cannot do.

Vice Chairman Byrne stated that the Pro Forma and PPP task force had just started to look into those possibilities when the opinion from the State's Attorney's Office was communicated. There is also a Board Nominations task force, if Mr. Craver could share the progress on that.

Mr. Craver stated that he had spoken with Mr. Biddle in regards to what has been provided to the Zoological Society, and the Society provided us with a Board Criteria document. Wanted to discuss with Mr. Jackson on what other successful non-profits worked on, and see about getting someone here to talk with the group. Some Oversight members have been on one tour, and there had been plans for more at one point. We're trying to assemble all the criteria that we've gotten from several sources into a cohesive document. In regards to the task force reports, do you think we can adjust those to separate the Pro Forma and the PPP, and have two people assigned to each? Mr. Jackson isn't listed on any of these task forces, but as the leader of the zoo he should be involved with each of those task forces.

There was general agreement with those statements.

There was one form filled out for public comment.

Mr. Lohman stated that he felt that people were thinking that a public private partnership could only mean that a third party was managing the zoo. Public private partnerships can take many forms. What is currently in place is a public private partnership, and there will always be need for a private partner. The function of the Oversight Committee is to determine the details of the public private partnership.

There was a brief discussion on the change-over process when transitioning after elections.

Mr. Biddle asked to clarify which board the Committee was talking about in regards to the Board Nominations task force.

Vice Chairman Byrne stated that it was for looking at new members for the new entity.

Mr. Biddle reminded the Oversight Committee that a structure needed to be decided on before a Pro Forma could be done. The Pro Forma is the easy part. The structure has to be decided on first.

Mr. Craver stated that in regards to the Oversight Committee meeting with the new Forest Preserve Executive Committee, the earliest that could start being coordinated was December 6th. The Organizational Meeting would not take place until the evening of December 5th. I'm not sure if a meeting could be scheduled before the regular monthly meeting of the Forest Preserve Executive Committee, or if it would be after. In regards to support from the Commission on a public private partnership, I believe it is there. It was stated that what we have now is a public private partnership. PPPs take

many forms. The Oversight Committee has had discussions on the obstacles and considerations, but hasn't settled on what structure the PPP will have. That is the recommendation that the Commission is looking for.

Vice Chairman Byrne stated that the Oversight Committee should at least meet with the new President of the Forest Preserve District.

Mr. Brahm stated that getting the options narrowed down would help in determining the structure of the PPP, and that meeting with the Forest Preserve to see what they were comfortable with would go a long way to narrowing down the options.

Vice Chairman Byrne called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION: Mr. Brahm moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Craver seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Adjourned at 4:36 PM.

Submitted by:
Cassie Sullivan
Forest Preserve Administrative Assistant