

## NIABI ZOO OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MINUTES FROM JUNE 8, 2016

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

**ABSENT:** T. Brahm.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Dan Meates, Assistant Zoo Director; Catherine Grace, Schultz & Williams(via phone); Hannah Frenell, Zoo Field Office Manager; Scott Lohman.

Chairman Taylor called the meeting of the Niabi Zoo Oversight Committee to order at 5:00 PM on Wednesday, June 8, 2016, in the Education Room of the Administration Building at Niabi Zoo in Coal Valley, Illinois.

Roll was called:

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

**Total Present        5**

T. Brahm.

**Total Absent        1**

Chairman Taylor called for a motion to approve the consent agenda.

Mr. Byrne asked that the budget items in the consent agenda be discussed because he had some questions.

It was agreed to discuss the budget questions after the other agenda items under new business.

**MOTION:** Mr. Byrne moved to approve the items on the consent agenda. Mr. Jarrett seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Approval of the February 16, 2016 closed session minutes got deferred to a future meeting.

Chairman Taylor called for a motion to approve the open session minutes from April 12, 2016, the closed session minutes from April 12, 2016 and open session minutes from May 10, 2016.

**MOTION:** Mr. Byrne moved to approve the open session minutes from April 12, 2016 the closed session minutes from April 12, 2016 and open session minutes from May 10, 2016. Mr. Jarrett seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Chairman Taylor called on Ms. Grace for the update from Schultz & Williams.

Ms. Grace stated that dates had been sent out for the July visit. Would like for everyone to be available during that visit, and none of the dates that were proposed worked for every person.

Chairman Taylor stated that he thought it was a good idea for the July meeting to be held while Mr. Biddle and Ms. Grace were in town.

Ms. Grace stated that she agreed and that once she talks with Mr. Biddle to get more dates, those dates would be sent out to the Committee members. Also, have been playing phone tag with Mr. Ferrell regarding the Case for Support and getting the draft finalized.

Chairman Taylor stated that no one was here from the Society again, and asked Mr. Jackson if there was anything he would like to remark on. We know it's your third day, so there wouldn't really be an update, but if there's anything you'd like to share.

Mr. Jackson stated that he was excited to be at Niabi, and looking forward to what Niabi Zoo can accomplish.

Chairman Taylor stated that the Society had mentioned in the past that they were wanting to center the zoofari event on introducing and welcoming Mr. Jackson to the community. In addition to that event an informal meet and greet would help Mr. Jackson get to know some of the business community in the area. My thoughts had been a location downtown some hors d'oeuvres and cocktails. Likely a cash bar. If Mr. Jackson could let us know when he gets settled in the coming weeks, and propose a timeframe for that, we can move forward on that.

Mr. Jackson stated that he would send an email out tomorrow with a possible timeframe.

Ms. Grace stated that two of the board members of the Society and Mr. Ferrell had brought up planning something to welcome Mr. Jackson and introduce him into the business community. However, since we're still playing phone tag with Mr. Ferrell, I don't have any information beyond that.

Chairman Taylor stated that he would communicate with Mr. Ferrell to ensure that everyone is on the same page, and that nothing would clash and cause friction. If the Society wanted to take the lead on a meet and greet event, then that would be good. As far as the governance discussion listed on the agenda, the thought was that the Committee would meet once a month, hopefully settling on a regular day and time, keeping in mind the timing of the Forest Preserve Committee's meetings. The next meeting date will be during the Schultz & Williams visit, so once those dates are set a meeting date and time will be established. Mr. Byrne had some questions on the budget, if everyone is prepared.

Mr. Byrne asked if the zoo was on track for meeting their budgeted numbers.

Mr. Craver stated that the zoo should come in under budget on spending.

Mr. Byrne asked if the property tax distribution would be coming in this month.

Mr. Craver stated that the first property tax distribution would be June 23<sup>rd</sup>, and there would also be a distribution in July that would be back dated into the 2016 fiscal year. The District has sixty days from the end of the fiscal year to close out both expenses and revenues.

Mr. Byrne stated that the Admissions revenue looked at about 80% of the expected revenue. Is it still possible that the zoo will meet that revenue goal by the end of June?

Mr. Craver stated that last year in June the zoo brought in close to \$300,000.00 in revenue, so the estimated revenue is still possible. There are several events in June. The only revenue line item that might not make the estimated revenue is the train. Those things being said, the weather is a huge factor in the District's revenue.

Mr. Byrne asked if the gift shop revenues were going as expected.

Mr. Craver stated that since the zoo only just took over the gift shop this season those numbers only represent a couple months of revenue.

Mr. Byrne asked how the concessions sales were going.

Mr. Meates stated that the concessions were doing well.

Mr. Byrne asked if the revenue from Hotel/Motel was way ahead of what was expected.

Mr. Craver answered, yes. Expecting the expenses to come in under budget and the revenues to meet or exceed estimates.

Mr. Byrne stated that those were all his questions.

Mr. Jarrett asked how the long term planning was going. Is the Oversight Committee moving towards the ultimate goal of the Private/Public Partnership restructuring for the opening of the 2017 season?

Chairman Taylor stated that that was the reason for the July visit from Schultz & Williams, and would be the main topic of discussion. Mr. Biddle & Ms. Grace are in the process of identifying members of the permanent PPP Committee.

Mr. Byrne asked Mr. Craver if he saw the Forest Preserve Committee and Commission waiting for the Oversight Committee to recommend the next step in that process.

Mr. Craver answered that he didn't know what the Forest Preserve Committee's thoughts were in regards to that. During Mr. Biddle's presentation he mentioned that there were multiple different avenues, and that finding the right fit and going through the process to find that right fit is what needs to be done. We've been relying on

Schultz & Williams to help lead us through the process of finding that end goal and making a plan for reaching that goal. The big step of finding a zoo director has been accomplished, and now we can really begin to have the discussion about the long term goal.

Ms. Grace stated that that was the main focus of the July visit. That's why having the whole group there is so important.

Mr. Byrne stated that there needed to be specific deadlines for each step of the process to keep things on track and moving in the right direction. With no deadlines it's easy to get derailed from forward movement.

Ms. Grace agreed.

Mr. Jarrett stated that getting this partnership in place was the key to private fundraising.

Chairman Taylor asked Ms. Grace to put together a preliminary action plan/time table before the meeting in July.

Ms. Grace stated that it was their intention to email that out before the July visit. The visit in July would then refine that preliminary list and set goals and deadlines firmly in place. Will touch base with Mr. Biddle tomorrow and get dates to the Committee Members.

Chairman Taylor called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**MOTION:** Mr. Byrne moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Jarrett seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Adjourned at 5:55 PM.

Submitted by:  
Cassie Sullivan  
Forest Preserve Administrative Assistant