

NIABI ZOO OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MINUTES FROM MARCH 8, 2016

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

ABSENT:

ALSO PRESENT: Dan Meates, Interim Zoo Director; Jill Roderick, Education and Conservation Curator; John Ferrell; Niabi Zoological Society; Mr. Biddle, Schultz & Williams; Catherine Grace, Schultz & Williams; Amy Behning, Mindfire; Dr. L. Hughes, Animal Family Care; members of zoo keeper staff; Scott Lohman.

Chairman Taylor called the meeting of the Niabi Zoo Committee to order at 5:01 PM on Tuesday, March 8, 2016, in the Education Room of the Administration Building at Niabi Zoo in Coal Valley, Illinois.

Chairman Taylor called the meeting to order, and called for a motion approving the consent agenda items.

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

Motion carried.

Roll was called:

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

Total Present 4

T. Brahm.

Total Absent 1

Chairman Taylor called for a motion to approve the February 23rd Oversight Committee meeting minutes.

MOTION: Mr. Jarrett moved to approve the open session February 23rd Oversight Committee meeting minutes. Mr. Craver seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Chairman Taylor asked if there was a motion to approve the closed session minutes.

There was consensus to table the discussion of the closed session minutes from February 16th.

Chairman Taylor called for a motion on the purchase of the Digital Radiography equipment.

MOTION: Mr. Craver moved to approve the purchase of the Digital Radiography equipment. Mr. Jarrett seconded the motion.

Mr. Byrne asked if the Civil Division would review the agreement, and who would sign the agreement.

Mr. Craver answered that the Civil Division could review it.

Mr. Byrne stated that there were two issues that he saw. One, is in regard to the FOB [Free OnBoard] shipping, and the fact that any disputes are settled under California law.

Mr. Ferrell stated that, presumably, since the Society was purchasing this equipment for the zoo it would be their legal counsel who would review it, and they would sign the order.

Mr. Byrne asked if Mr. Ferrell was comfortable with the terms and conditions.

Mr. Ferrell stated that he would have their legal counsel review first.

Mr. Byrne expressed concern over the Society's ability to fund the items on the Project Matrix.

Chairman Taylor asked if there was a specific way that the Society would like the request made.

Mr. Ferrell stated that there is a form that's filled out and given to the Society to vote on.

Mr. Biddle stated that in regard to this specific purchase, I believe the Society had intended to pay it out of existing funds. Tomorrow I'll be talking with Mr. Ferrell regarding future fundraising. There are donors out there who are willing to donate for these short-term goals. There are a variety of things that will be talked about for getting donor support for this transition period. We're building the board, strengthening the board, so that they can go and engage donors and raise those funds for the zoo. The Case for Support document, which the working title is "Bridging Our Future", is something that's being worked on. Then that document would come to the Oversight Committee.

Mr. Ferrell asked if there needed to be a formal document for requesting funds.

Mr. Biddle stated that there did not need to be a formal document.

Mr. Ferrell stated that the Society was committed to getting the items on the Project Matrix list for the zoo. There are a few families that we have in mind to ask about the playground project.

Mr. Byrne stated that that was his concern. That the Society is hearing donors say that they don't want empty exhibits, and the funds that this Committee is requesting are equipment and facility projects. Those two things have to somehow be balanced.

Mr. Biddle stated that they heard it, they know it. It is being worked on. That's what the Case for Support document is meant to address. Things are moving forward in the right direction.

Mr. Byrne asked for clarification because \$70,000.00 had been mentioned previously. However, there is only \$60,450.00 in the documents.

Dr. Hughes stated that the extra funds had been factored in just in case there was a modification to the table that was needed. It is not likely, but just in case, then there would be funds already set aside for it.

Mr. Ferrell stated that he would request \$70,450.00 from the Society. Is there any design drawing for the playground yet that the Society can take around to start looking for donors for that project?

Mr. Meates stated that he had one, but would be talking to another company. By the end of the week there will be two options. The project will be \$100,000.00. Once I have the visuals, I'll get them to Mr. Ferrell.

Chairman Taylor called for a vote on the purchase of the Digital Radiography equipment.

Motion carried.

MOTION: Mr. Craver moved to approve moving forward with getting bids for the playground equipment so the Society could get what they need to solicit donors. Mr. Byrne seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Chairman Taylor asked Ms. Amy Behning of Mindfire for her presentation on the progress made so far.

Ms. Behning stated that the focus has been on PR and marketing. Were able to get a valid media list from the QC Visitor's Bureau. Also, making sure that word gets out about the zoo past a twenty mile radius, and out into multiple counties. There have been some spots on KWQC, which reaches about 80% of the viewing area. WQAD has also continued to be utilized, even beyond the scope of the contract with the Society. Multiple other opportunities that had not been utilized in the past are now being utilized and there will be more added to that. Need to hit multiple markets. A very important piece, that I'll go through quickly, is that we wanted to make sure we left you all with was foundational messaging that speaks to what matters about a zoo, and why it counts. People remember how they feel about a place a lot longer than they remember what they saw or what they did. Talking about how cool the meerkats are is great

because meerkats are cool, but giving people educational tools to talk about habitat emersion is even better. To talk about your SSP programs, and to talk about conservation in a way that makes sense is really important. As we move into the newsletters and e-newsletters there has to be a consistency in the message. There are several spots and articles that will be going out before the opening, and some that have already gone out. There is a ribbon cutting for the opening of the zoo. Working on relationships and getting the zoo's story out is ongoing. Various things to grab people's attention and get them information on what's happening out at the zoo. Updating of subscription lists, updating of maps and making sure that what's out there is technology/mobile friendly. Employee training on how to answer questions, and the most guest friendly ways to handle certain conversations, which can also be a form of research, is a next step.

Chairman Taylor thanked Ms. Behning for her update, and asked for the update from Schultz & Williams.

Ms. Grace briefly gave a history of what they'd done so far, and stated that there had been five people invited to in-person interviews.

Mr. Biddle stated that the Committee is aware of the plan for the next two weeks. Will be sending out an evaluation form for each of the candidates. Will be continuing conversations with Mr. Ferrell to assist in the Case for Support to get funding for the short term projects that are needed. Also tied to that is the board development component.

Chairman Taylor called on Mr. Meates for his updates.

Mr. Meates reported that the Amur Leopard is here and in quarantine. Again this is one of the rarest cat in the world. He is a beautiful almost one year old cat, and will be at Niabi until he reaches sexual maturity. Then he will be paired with a female at another facility. So that the Committee understands how long and hard this procedure is for a zoo without AZA accreditation, the process of getting this animal to Niabi began in 2012. The staff has been doing an amazing job getting ready for opening day. They are a phenomenal team. The playground project is being worked on. Still waiting on a few more engineers for the train tunnel renovation. Now that the snow is completely cleared, staff is going through the zoo and cleaning up. Seasonal staffing and orientation has begun. I'd also like to recognize the management staff. They've been putting in seven day work weeks, and they've been very long days. They're a great management team to work with.

Chairman Taylor called on Mr. Ferrell for an update from the Society.

Mr. Ferrell stated that the Golf Outing date was June 17, 2016. It would be held at Oakwood. We'd put together a sign-up sheet.

Chairman Taylor thanked the Society for funding the trip to Columbus Zoo. Three members attended. Then called on Mr. Byrne to give a summary of the visit.

Mr. Byrne stated that they met with several of the staff. There was much learned and talked about. Feel that there were good contacts made.

Chairman Taylor stated that the next meeting of the Oversight Committee is rescheduled to March 17th from March 22nd. It will still be at 5:00pm here at the zoo. Then called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

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

Motion carried.

Adjourned the meeting at 5:52 PM.

Submitted by:

Cassie Sullivan, Forest Preserve Administrative Assistant