

NIABI ZOO OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MINUTES FROM APRIL 12, 2016

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

ABSENT: T. Jarrett.

ALSO PRESENT: Dewayne Cremeens, Forest Preserve Committee Member; Dan Meates, Interim Zoo Director; Jill Roderick, Curator of Conservation & Education; John Ferrell; Niabi Zoological Society; Mr. Biddle, Schultz & Williams(via phone); Catherine Grace, Schultz & Williams(via phone); Scott Lohman.

Chairman Taylor called the meeting of the Niabi Zoo Oversight Committee to order at 5:00 PM on Tuesday, April 12, 2016, in the Education Room of the Administration Building at Niabi Zoo in Coal Valley, Illinois.

Chairman Taylor called the meeting to order.

Roll was called:

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

Total Present 4

T. Jarrett.

Total Absent 1

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

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

Motion carried.

Chairman Taylor called for a motion to approve the March 17th open session Oversight Committee meeting minutes.

MOTION: Mr. Byrne moved to approve the March 17th open session Oversight Committee meeting minutes with the correction to the number of members present from 4 to 5. Mr. Brahm seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Chairman Taylor called for a motion to approve the closed session minutes for the March 17th Oversight Committee meeting.

MOTION: Mr. Byrne moved to approve the closed session minutes for the March 17th Oversight Committee meeting. Mr. Brahm seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

The discussion of the closed session minutes from February 16th was tabled to next meeting.

Chairman Taylor called on Mr. Meates for an update on the Playground project.

Mr. Meates stated that there were two companies that provided designs and estimates. Play & Park Structure has given options that are ADA compliant and ADA interactive. NuToys, while being ADA compliant, does not have any ADA interactive features. The estimate for the equipment is three to four weeks, and the estimate for installation is three to four weeks after the equipment is made and delivered.

Mr. Brahm asked where this equipment would go.

Mr. Meates stated that it would be in the same location as the current playground, which is next to the Concessions stand near the zoo entrance.

Mr. Byrne asked if that location would work with future plans for that area. It had been mentioned in the past the desire to update/redo that front area.

Mr. Meates stated that the location worked very well. The remodel of that area would not be effected by the playground.

Mr. Brahm asked if the prices included demolition of the current playground.

Mr. Meates answered that it did.

Mr. Ferrell asked if the flooring for the playground would be maintenance free.

Mr. Meates stated that it would, and that the pricing included the flooring.

Mr. Ferrell stated that he was not sure that a sponsor could be found right away to finance this project. The Society has only briefly spoken with one family. The highest price looks to be \$113,000.00, is that correct?

Mr. Meates confirmed that price was correct. The reasoning is that it has the interactive parts for ADA compliance.

Mr. Ferrell asked if the playground had to be ADA compliant.

Mr. Craver stated that it would be a good idea for the playground area to be ADA compliant and interactive for that group. One of the Forest Preserve District's goals and priorities to become ADA compliant across all the parks.

Ms. Roderick stated that it would great to be all inclusive. The zoo has so many kids who come out in wheelchairs.

Mr. Ferrell brought up his concern about being able to fundraise for this project in a timely fashion. It might be helpful to put a time limit on the fundraising attempt. If a donor/sponsor can't be found by a certain amount of time, then the Society could use cash on hand. The issue there is that the cash on hand will dwindle fast, and the Society doesn't know what will be the next request.

Mr. Meates stated that the Project Matrix states the items that the zoo will be requesting funds for. That was the point of the list.

Mr. Ferrell asked for guidance on whether or not the Oversight Committee wanted the Society to fundraise for the playground, or use the cash on hand.

Mr. Biddle stated that the playground was core to the zoo experience. Due to the time constraints, and in knowing the things that we've consulted with the Society about, it would probably be best to use the cash on hand. I'm confident that the Society will be able to get donors to make investments in the zoo. You're going to have a great story to tell. The play structure right now is a blemish on the visitor experience and yet it's core to the visitor experience. It's not even accessible to the visitors right now. I think the Society is going to have a lot of opportunities to raise money in this community. There is a great story, the Society and zoo will have a good case, and the donors haven't been asked for some time. There will be opportunities to raise funds for the zoo.

Mr. Ferrell stated that on the Project Matrix there are so many projects listed as high priority, and the Society is wondering which high priority project will be asked for next. Some of them will cost more than what the Society has in the bank.

Mr. Biddle reiterated that with the Case For Support that the Society will be able to get donor support. As far as what the next project will be, that would be a good question to ask the new candidate. They might come with a different view. Let's continue to firm up the Case For Support and identify the prospects. That would be a great first step with the relationship between the new director and the zoo and Society. If the new director was six months away then I'd say differently, but I think we're really close. Understand that I'm not saying that the staff is wrong. It's that this is a great way to get that relationship with the new director off to a great start.

Mr. Byrne asked why Play & Park Structures has the interactive ADA compliance and NuToy does not.

Ms. Roderick stated that both companies were asked to provide something that could be interacted with by people in wheelchairs. Play & Park Structures came up with the design you see that the kids can use their arms and actually move it across, so they are still getting an experience. NuToy could only come up with little boards to play with. That's why it's different, and that's why we're hoping for the Play & Park design to be chosen.

Mr. Byrne asked Mr. Craver if he had worked with these companies in other areas.

Mr. Craver stated that he had. Dorrance Park's playground was purchased from Play & Park Structures, and installed by the staff at Illiniwek. Play & Park Structures have equipment throughout the Quad Cities.

Chairman Taylor stated that he had heard mention of Play & Park Structure, and hasn't heard anything bad.

Mr. Meates stated that both companies were very professional, and nice to work with, but Play & Park Structures has the equipment the zoo is looking for to give the visitors a good experience.

Chairman Taylor called for a motion approving the Play & Park Structures design.

MOTION: Mr. Byrne moved to recommend the Play & Park Structures design to the Forest Preserve. Mr. Brahm seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Chairman Taylor called for the update from Schultz & Williams.

Ms. Grace stated that they'd been working with the Society on the Case For Support. Will be building a narrative for going out to donors for support. Also been working on outlining expectations for board members and in terms of thinking about recruiting new board members for the future. Really outlining those expectations of participation and fundraising. Also talking about doing a little bit of research for the Society top prospects and donors so they have current information when they go out with a fundraising initiative. Will be sending the latest version of the expectations to share, and we're not too far from having that narrative ready for the board to look at.

Chairman Taylor called on Mr. Meates for his updates.

Mr. Meates reported that recently the zoo lost Jackson the jaguar, who was 21 years old, and Mufasa the lion, who was 22 years old, to age related issues.

Mr. Brahm asked if there had been a press release on Mufasa.

Mr. Meates stated that yes, there had been a release stating that he was starting to deteriorate. There are memorial banners by the lion exhibit. There has been great response from the public, especially regarding the banners. The bobcats will be moved into the big cat house. Their current exhibit failed the AZA inspection for bobcats, but it would be a better home for the North American Porcupines. The current porcupine exhibit is the cylindrical exhibit, and that also failed the AZA inspection.

Mr. Byrne asked if it was planned to replace Mufasa.

Mr. Meates explained that it would be very dangerous to attempt that. The current pride has two females that are 14 and 15 years of age. They are at the top end of age for cats. In captivity lions typically age to 16 or 17 years.

Mr. Brahm asked if after the two females pass, the zoo would bring in a new pride.

Mr. Meates stated that the zoo would have to be AZA accredited to get that new pride. There are also three new French Lop Rabbits in the petting zoo. The Amur Leopard and Meerkats have been big hits. Opening day was a great success, and there was a lot of positive feedback from the public. It looks to be a very busy weekend.

Mr. Byrne asked Mr. Meates to provide monthly reports comparing the food vendor sales to last year's food vendor sales.

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

Mr. Ferrell stated that he had been working with Schultz & Williams on the Case For Support. Things are moving forward with the Golf Outing and Pints events.

A brief discussion was held determining that the next meeting of the Oversight Committee would be May 10th at 5:00PM.

Chairman Taylor called for a motion to go into closed session for personnel in accordance with ILCS 120/2 (c)(1) which states: (c) Exceptions. A public body may hold closed meetings to consider the following subjects: (1) The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body or legal counsel for the public body, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee of the public body or against legal counsel for the public body to determine its validity.

MOTION: Mr. Byrne moved to go into closed session. Mr. Brahm seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken.

M. Byrne, J. Craver, T. Brahm.

TOTAL YES 3

TOTAL NO 0

Motion carried.

Closed session began 5:44 pm

Return to open session 7:26 pm

Chairman Taylor called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

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

Motion carried.

Adjourned the meeting at 7:27 PM.

Submitted by:

Cassie Sullivan, Forest Preserve Administrative Assistant