

NIABI ZOO COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD – DECEMBER 4, 2017 MEETING

IN ATTENDANCE

Bill Nelson – Chair	Kamille Brashear	Rev. Dr. Melvin Grimes	Ashley Morgia
Liz Dierolf – Vice Chair	Ky Boyle	Mik Holgersson	Luke VanLandegen
Gerald Correthers - Secretary	Kat Broughton	Kathy Matherly	
Lee Jackson – Niabi Director	Dr. Laura Crowe	Barb Melbourne	

MEETING MINUTES

1. Bill put forth draft options of mission and vision statements for the CAB:
 - a. Vision: "It is the vision of the Niabi Zoo Community Advisory Board to assist in developing an outstanding Zoological Park Attraction."
 - b. Mission: "The mission of the Niabi Zoo Community Advisory Board is to support and advise the Rock Island Forest Preserve in an effort to provide a first class experience for visitors and quality care for the collections."
 - c. Discussion: Background of formation of CAB (Lee) - to create a non-government group that could offer expertise, support, and advocacy for Zoo efforts in a strategic and objective way; Gerald and Kathy suggested using the mission statement as-is with small edits possible in the future. Liz suggests we use mission statement with language about "strategic focus" or similar added, to remind the group that the operational/tactical pieces are on the Zoo staff to determine. Mission statement will be revisited in January when more CAB members are present.
2. Lee discussed current/upcoming Zoo projects:
 - a. Exhibit changes as discussed in November meeting – including additions to reptile house, changeover of Oceans exhibit, etc.
 - b. Perimeter fencing and other infrastructure projects underway (some require Forest Preserve approval of additional release of funding to support)
 - c. Collection planning and operational costs/plans being determined in order to comply with accreditation process
 - d. John Deere meeting – Lee had meeting with several John Deere leaders, in hopes of starting conversation about funding support. Deere declined to support, citing past issues with zoo oversight/government... Lee explained CAB structure and strategic plans in place and Deere did not know about the recent changes. Lee is hopeful that there will be opportunity to revisit funding conversation in the future.
3. Discussion of funding issues:

- a. Liz asked about fundraising/major donors and offered to make some connections; Mik asked about current endowments and whether the Zoo had any or was allowed to (later conversation with Barb Melbourne, previously with Community Foundation of the Great River Bend, indicates the zoo cannot necessarily have any endowments due to its being part of a government entity)
 - b. Discussion of Niabi Zoological Society – in the past, the Society was closely connected to the Rock Island government leadership and Niabi Zoo, and had more control than appropriate when it came to operational activities of the Zoo. Society is a separate 501(c)3 and has raised over \$1M in funds for Niabi, but Niabi has not received any of it due to rifts in relationships and communication between Forest Preserve and Society. Lee has been in communication with Society about setting up a funding application process, but has yet to receive information from Society about how that will work and what level of funding can be expected. Liz raised serious concerns from a fundraising ethics standpoint, as many individual donors are under the impression the Zoo has received their donations...
4. Admission fees and revenue generation:
- a. CAB approved support of Lee's proposal to increase admission fees for the 2018 season, after discussion of the potential revenue generated and agreement that communication will be pushed out frequently across multiple channels to show projects and improvements coming due to increased revenue (Bill moved, Luke 2nd, no opposition)
 - b. Discussion on other ways to increase revenue, including coupons and how to market exhibit changes and zoo amenities in order to maximize attendance; CAB suggests Lee work with Mindfire on developing some communication and marketing strategies geared at increasing repeat customers to the zoo and increasing membership sales
 - c. Liz asked about restricted and unrestricted funds, and if unrestricted funds existed that could be used for the "not so flashy" project needs, so fundraising efforts or communication on how ticket sales and parking fees are used can be focused on the new animals being brought in and new additions to current exhibits
 - d. Discussion on how recent survey pushed out by Mindfire for RI Forest Preserve showed audience perception and favorability of Niabi – Lee pushed out that information mid-December to the group to review (if you have not read through it, take a brief look – many good comments but many concerns as well that will need to be addressed)
5. Director's Report – Lee:
- a. In the 2017 season, 127 volunteers gave 8,768 hours of time (up significantly from previous year)
 - b. #GivingTuesday campaign brought in \$3,000 which will support exhibit enhancements and the two new 'big' animals coming in (Pallas Cats and Dwarf Caiman)
 - c. One female lion in early stages of renal failure – may be several years before she passes but zookeepers are working on management plan
 - d. Pride Run held in November was great success, group organizers favor making it an annual event
6. Next Meeting Agenda Items:

- a. Review Forest Preserve Survey to help give Lee and his team some advice/action steps to take in realm of communication of fees to public and promotion of new exhibits for 2018 season
 - b. Review CAB by-laws to be sure of CAB role and structure needed going into 2018
 - c. **Status of non-attending members – according to CAB by-laws, any member who misses two consecutive meetings will be removed from Board. CAB members in attendance at this meeting determined we will contact those non-attending members to confirm interest in remaining part of group, and assess who may need to be replaced at Jan. 8 meeting.**
7. Meeting adjourned at 7:45pm