

NIABI ZOO OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 23, 2015

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

ABSENT:

ALSO PRESENT: Dan Meates, Interim Zoo Director; Jill Roderick, Education and Conservation Curator; Hannah Frenell, Field Office Manager; Scarlet Behrens, Society Business Manager; Scott Lohman.

Mr. Craver called the meeting of the Niabi Zoo Committee to order at 1:00 PM on Monday, November 23, 2015, in the Education Room of the Administration Building at Niabi Zoo in Coal Valley, Illinois.

Roll was called:

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

Total Present 4

Mr. Craver asked everyone to go around and introduce themselves to the group.

Mr. Terry Brahm introduced himself and stated that he was the recently retired CEO of what used to be DHCU Credit Union and is now Vibrant Credit Union. Was there for forty-three years, thirty-seven years as CEO. I look forward to being involved in this Committee and setting the future for the zoo.

Mr. Dan Meates introduced himself as the Assistant Director, currently interim zoo director, and stated that he had been with Niabi for nearly three years and has twenty-two years of experience in the zoo field working at zoos all over the world.

Ms. Scarlet Behrens introduced herself as the Niabi Zoological Society's Business Manager. In 2010 I was the Gift Shop Manager, and in 2012 I was made Business Manager.

Ms. Jill Roderick introduced herself as the Curator of Education and Conservation for Niabi Zoo and had been at the zoo for almost two years. I've worked in the zoo field for about twenty years throughout the country. My last job was in Peoria.

Ms. Hannah Frenell introduced herself as the Field Office Manager for Niabi Zoo and stated that she had been at the zoo for about a year. I process the claims and do the payroll in addition to be in charge of the seasonal staff for admissions.

Mr. Jeff Craver introduced himself as the Forest Preserve District Director and stated that he has been with the District for ten years. The Forest Preserve encompasses Niabi Zoo, Indian Bluff Golf Course, Loud Thunder Forest Preserve, Martin Conservation Area, Illiniwek Forest Preserve and Dorrance. I'm very excited to be here, and looking forward to enhancing the zoo.

Mr. Michael Byrne introduced himself and stated that he was a partner at Lane & Waterman Law Firm in Davenport. I've been there for twenty-nine years. I'm familiar with the zoo. My wife was on the board for probably ten years, and when our kids were little we were quite active in the zoo.

Mr. Joe Taylor introduced himself and stated that he was President and CEO of the Quad Cities Convention Visitors Bureau. Been at the Bureau for twenty-five years since it was formed in 1990. I've worked with Jeff and various other properties.

Mr. Craver stated that the next item on the agenda was to elect a Committee Chairman.

Mr. Brahm felt that it would be best to table that action until there was a full Committee. Since there is one more community member that's supposed to be appointed in December, and the sixth member of this group will be the zoo director. Is that correct?

Mr. Craver stated that yes the zoo director would complete the Committee. The community member will be appointed on December 15th.

Mr. Brahm stated that before we get too far down the line, I'd like to see at least that other community member present at the meetings before we make that decision as to who's going to lead this group.

Mr. Byrne felt that made sense.

Mr. Brahm asked what's another thirty days? We're just trying to get up to speed on everything that's going on with the decisions that we're facing.

Mr. Byrne asked if that final community person had been chosen.

Mr. Craver answered that there was someone chosen.

Mr. Lohman interjected that the final member had been selected and that he was just out of town for Thanksgiving, and he's accepted.

Mr. Craver stated that due to the timing, some of the steps that are outlined in the plan and the staff needing some direction the agenda is full. It's not necessary to get action on all of the items if we need more information, but at least the discussion can start. I wasn't sure on where people stood and what information you'd want in order to make these decisions. Do we want to name a temporary chairperson just to run this meeting?

Mr. Brahm and Mr. Taylor felt that Mr. Craver could continue to run the meeting and a Committee Chair could be chosen next meeting.

Mr. Carver moved on to the item of roles and responsibilities of the Oversight Committee. I've passed out the update from Schultz & Williams, along with the Next Steps memo from Schultz & Williams. Does anyone have any questions or concerns regarding that?

Mr. Byrne stated that he did have a question, and asked Mr. Lohman if the Niabi Zoological Society would stay in place for a period of time. Are some of these items things that the Society had control of in the past?

Mr. Craver answered that, referencing Mr. Biddle of Schultz & Williams, the Niabi Zoological Society could remain as an organization. However, there needed to be a lot change in the Society Board Members. Mr. Biddle said that new blood was needed in the fund raising organization to move forward and make it what a fund raising entity was supposed to be. That's why Mr. Biddle advised against getting a new management agreement between the zoo and the Society. The plan for this Committee is to be the go between for a time in order to guide and lead that transition. To let the public know that decisions are being made by trusted community people, and not necessarily being politically driven. What shape the Society Board ends up being and the members they recruit is not something I can speak to. Over the next couple months you will have institutional knowledge of how the zoo is run and what's needed going forward to tell the new story and recruit new members. Depending on the management agreement, this Committee may be dissolved or may continue on but in a different capacity. One of the difficult tasks that will be assigned to this group is the management agreement. This Committee is being looked to as mediators because of the issues that have been going on between the Society and the Commission.

Mr. Taylor stated that that was the understanding that he had from his earlier discussions with Mr. Craver.

Mr. Brahm stated that he remembered reading that this board was to be handing the reins to the seven to ten member board, or possibly being merged into the seven to ten member board, by July. Is that right?

Mr. Carver stated that the exact timing would depend how quickly the management agreement was completed, but that had been the goal.

Mr. Brahm asked to confirm that the Society is the fund raising arm of the zoo.

Mr. Craver confirmed that was correct.

Mr. Brahm stated that projects that come forward as what needs to be done, we look at it and we say this is project one, it's X dollars. Where does that money come from?

Mr. Craver stated that it would be up to the Society to go out and talk to the community and raise the money that was needed for that project.

Mr. Brahm stated that the Society has historically raised the money, so presumably the Society has some money sitting there now. So if we're sitting here as a group and saying this is project one through five that need to be priority and it's a million dollars, that amount is just an example, shouldn't a representative of the Society be a part of that discussion? Cause then who's going to go to them and say Well, here's what we prioritized and how we're going to spend the money that you've raised. Am I missing something?

Mr. Byrne stated that he thought the big picture was that in the end we were going to have a private society, or a private organization, that's going to contract with the District and run the zoo and raise the money. It's going to be the same organization doing both. Is that correct or incorrect?

Mr. Lohman interjected that that was part of the purpose of this committee to determine what the management agreement would look like. Nothing has been set in concrete.

Mr. Craver stated that for the time being our focus should be 2016. Hiring a consultant and getting the zoo director.

Mr. Brahm agreed that getting a new zoo director was key, and definitely a priority.

Mr. Craver continued, so that way the zoo director is at the table and able to have a voice in the direction of the zoo. At the moment there are some key operational issues that need to be addressed. The zoo is opening in four months, and staff needs to know what to tell the public. What's going to be at the zoo in 2016? What's the new story for the zoo? How are we going to start shaping our image? The zoo's image took a very bad beating over the past twelve months. According to the timeline we can hopefully have a zoo director in position in March or April, and those long term goals and projects can have educated input from the zoo director. Again, the Zoological Society's function and sole purpose is to support the zoo. In regards to asking the Society to raise funds for projects, that's nothing beyond what has happened in the past.

Mr. Brahm asked Mr. Craver to clarify something he saw in the paper. The levy for the zoo had been decreased. How are those funds allocated, and spent? What does the levy do?

Mr. Craver answered that the levy is to subsidize the zoo's operational costs. There is an Appropriations Ordinance and budgeting process just like the other funds of the Forest Preserve District. The current budget is a bare bones budget. There are no capital purchases budgeted for. Budgeted salaries have gone down due to some recent turnover, and the zoo has been doing very good at operating more efficiently over the past few years. Schultz & Williams recommended that the Gift Shop and part of the memberships revenue be handled by the zoo. We were banking on that revenue to alleviate some of the burden on the taxpayer.

Mr. Brahm asked if that was where the proposal from Lancer hospitality Group came into play?

Mr. Craver stated that was partially correct. Lancer is currently our concessions company. The proposal that is in the packet is for taking over the gift shop operations.

Mr. Byrne stated that he had another question on the roles. Is this Committee a subsection of the Commission, and are we subject to the rules of the Open Meetings Act? Or are we an independent body that is advising the Commission?

Mr. Craver stated that this Committee is under the Commission. The question of if this Committee is subject to the rules of the Open Meetings Act was asked of the Civil Division since you were appointed by the Forest Preserve President. The opinion of the Civil Division is yes. This Committee is subject to the rules of the Open Meetings Act because we are conducting public business, even though it is an advisory group. I can provide a link to information regarding OMA and FOIA. Let me know the information that you want, and I'll get that information to you.

Mr. Byrne asked to confirm that when Mr. Craver said "Civil Division" that that was the State's Attorney's Office.

Mr. Craver confirmed that it is the Civil Division of the State's Attorney's Office that he was referring to.

Mr. Byrne stated that at one point in time the Society controlled the revenue of the carousel, the gift shop and the Forest Preserve had the gate commission. What's the role of the Society today; the significant things versus the commission?

Mr. Craver stated that last year the Society had the carousel, the gift shop and the membership sales. Ms. Behrens, what others?

Ms. Behrens stated that those were the three big ones. Some of the other minor ones are the stroller rentals and the whale chair rental. The Dr. Pepper contract was under us.

Mr. Craver referred back to the first report from Schultz & Williams where Mr. Biddle wrote that the District should take over the gift shop and a percentage of the memberships. We had some issues with the Memorandum of Understanding with the Society in these regards and that's lead us down the path we're on now. At the last Zoological Society meeting Mr. Ferrell, the President of the Society, said the Society was ready to hand over the operations and get everything under one roof and that the Society would concentrate on fund raising. There have been no more specific conversations along that venue. Though he has said that they're going to turn it over to this new group, and go with what we think is best. Mr. Biddle's update still felt that the zoo should take over the gift shop, so that's how we've been proceeding.

Mr. Byrne asked when these things were supposed to be turned over.

Mr. Craver answered that they were supposed to turn over everything by the beginning of next season, which is scheduled for April.

Mr. Brahm asked what was meant by "everything".

Mr. Craver stated that they were handing over the gift shop, the membership sales, carousel and any other small, miscellaneous items that Ms. Behrens would have been taking care of. The Society would still function as the fund raiser for the zoo. They would be fund raising and telling the story that will originate out of here, but all the

basic operations that are within the zoo would be handed over to be taken care of by the zoo staff.

Mr. Brahm stated that, as a follow up to that line of thought, in the packet is a proposal from Lancer asking to take over gift shop operations. Lancer lost money on the food service. Doing the simple math with the numbers that the Society provided to the group, for example, fiscal year 2014 the gift shop netted \$68,000.00; \$300,000.00 plus in revenue. If memory serves, the food service had roughly \$300,000.00 plus in revenue, and show a \$35,000.00 net loss. Now they want the gift shop at \$300,000.00 with a much smaller return for the zoo. That doesn't make business sense to me. Is the consultant recommending that or not?

Mr. Craver stated that the consult was not asked on this specific question.

Mr. Brahm asked to clarify that this proposal is coming from Lancer and not being recommended by the consultant.

Mr. Meates stated that the proposal is from Lancer only, and no one is saying that we should accept it. Mr. Biddle recommended that the zoo take care of the gift shop. Staff would prefer to keep the gift shop under zoo management and not contract it out.

Mr. Craver elaborated that last December we approved the plan. It was recommended all the operations be under the zoo. At that time the carousel, gift shop and membership sales were under the Society. Mr. Biddle recommended that we split half the membership, that the retail operations like the food and gift shop be put underneath the zoo staff, and that the carousel remain under the Zoological Society. It would give them a little bit of cash flow as would splitting the memberships. At that point in time the Society did not want to give up the revenue from those operations, but they said that for the time being the District could take the concessions. The District put out an RFP [Request for Proposal] and we were able to get Lancer in here for the 2015 season. They approached Mr. Heinzman at the end of September at an AZA conference and said that they needed to talk. As you can see in your packet, Lancer wanted to give us a proposal in which they take over the gift shop as well. They're losing money in the concessions alone, and they think that the gift shop will make up for that. In all likelihood Lancer will probably pull out of the contract if we don't accept the proposal to take over the gift shop. They sent us the proposal, and now it's in your hands to decide if we think it's a good business proposal or not.

Mr. Brahm asked if Lancer walks, who ran the concessions before?

Ms. Behrens stated that it was Jennifer Lees. It's just a local that the Society chose.

Mr. Byrne stated that at some point there have been other businesses that have come in to do the concessions.

Ms. Behrens stated that it had been Subway at one point, and then another.

Mr. Brahm asked if Lancer walked, could we get someone in here in time to take it over. I'm not in favor of giving Lancer the gift shop. It makes no business sense for us to do given the numbers in front of us.

Ms. Behrens stated that if staff started to move right away, then we should be able to get someone else in here in time for the open.

Mr. Craver stated that District staff would rather take over the gift shop on our own, and generate more revenue for the zoo.

Mr. Meates added that staff does have some ideas on who to approach to do the concessions, but couldn't move on it before we know for sure that Lancer is going to come back.

Mr. Byrne asked if the Committee tells Lancer no, how long does Lancer have to decide whether or not they will continue with the concessions alone?

Mr. Craver stated that he would need to look up that information.

Mr. Meates stated that the people that staff had in mind to take over the concessions are locals.

Mr. Craver stated that the District would probably need to put out a Request for Proposal for a couple weeks. If no proposals come, then staff could start making calls.

Mr. Byrne asked if the Society has to go out for RFPs when they look for things like this.

Mr. Craver stated that that was correct. Since the District is a governmental entity there are procedures we have to follow.

Mr. Taylor stated that it sounded like the Committee was in consensus that we did not want to accept Lancer's proposal to take over the gift shop, and that we need to inform Lancer of that fact as quickly as possible. Then Lancer can get back to us if they are still wanting to run the concessions for the next year.

There was a general agreement.

MOTION: Mr. Brahm moved to notify Lancer immediately that the District is rejecting their proposal to take over gift shop operations. Mr. Taylor seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Mr. Meates asked if this would mean we move over the managerial position. Since that's been decided too, and it's a two piece entity to make the one, correct?

Mr. Craver confirmed that Mr. Meates was correct. Based on a brief conversation, Mr. Ferrell has indicated that the Society is ready to move the operations over to the zoo.

Therefore staff would like to move forward with the hiring of the Guest Services Manager, and we can have further discussion with the Society and a definitive answer from the Society before we can get a picture of what the operational structure of the zoo is going to look like in 2016. Mr. Ferrell indicated last month that the Society was ready to hand over operations of the gift shop and concentrate on fund raising.

Mr. Lohman interjected that with that is going to have go the beverage contract since the Dr. Pepper contract is running out.

Ms. Behrens stated that the contract ends February of 2016.

Mr. Byrne asked who held the beverage contract.

Mr. Meates answered that the Society held the beverage contract.

Mr. Byrne asked to clarify that that beverage contract was also being handed over.

Mr. Lohman answered that the Society has a meeting later today.

Mr. Carver stated that it would likely be best to see how things play out. If the contract with Dr. Pepper is renewed, then there is a kick back to the zoo, but that usually comes in the form of a kick back to the concessioner. I think in the past that has been around \$10,000.00, but it puts the food and beverage folks at a disadvantage. But to get us back on track with the agenda, let's move on to reports.

Mr. Craver then gave an overview of how to read the accounting reports, and what each fund and sub-department within the funds referred to. Then asked Ms. Frenell to explain how the admission price is split up.

Ms. Frenell explained that one dollar of each admission and fifty cents from each train ticket sold goes into the Zoo Capital Improvement Fund.

Mr. Craver continued that any donations that the zoo receives are also put into that fund. Mr. Meates can explain our Quarters for Conservation program.

Mr. Meates explained that twenty-five cents of each admission goes to the Quarters for Conservation program that funds conservation projects all over the world. Zoo Conservation Outreach Group is the one that we are on the board of, so that's where we chose our projects from. This year it was their Jaguar Conservation program. The public gets a token for each admission, and they choose which project to put their twenty-five cents in. Then the zoo sends the money collected to each of those projects. There are always four projects to choose from. There are some other conservation projects in addition to those. For AZA accreditation the zoo must be highly involved in conservation. The public really loves the conservation projects. In addition to the tokens, the public also put their own donations into the slots for the projects as well. It's been a very big success. Two projects will stay from the previous year, and two will be switched to new projects. Being a part of the conservation efforts also gets the zoo some advertising. They have put us in their publication.

Mr. Craver stated that the AZA asks, I believe, three percent of a facility's operating budget to go to conservation.

Mr. Meates added that this was one of the smallest zoos that he works at, and the amount raised for conservation in the last year was very impressive.

Mr. Craver moved on to state that the balance of the funds was included. Please note that part of the balance for the capital improvement fund, approximately \$313,000.00 of it, is set aside for a bear habitat/exhibit. Also, \$26,000.00 of the balance still needs to go for conservation. When you take the bequeathment and conservation money out of the balance, there's not much money there for improvement. The bear money was bequeathed to the District specifically for the bears. Whenever money is donated directly to the District we try to make sure the money goes towards the intended purpose. The District is not obligated by law to do so, but the District has always had the practice of using donated money for its stated intent whenever possible.

Mr. Brahm asked to clarify that we still have the option to get revenue from the Society for projects.

Mr. Craver stated that yes that was correct, then moved on to other monthly reports.

Mr. Byrne asked about the animal inventory report. Where it says Red Wolf 3.2. What does that mean?

Mr. Meates answered that that meant three males and two females. If there would have been an additional number after the two, then that would have meant that there was a quantity of unsexed juveniles. An unsexed juvenile is a young animal that we have not determined the gender of yet.

Mr. Brahm asked what was meant by loan transfer. They went to another zoo?

Mr. Meates explained that it was a very complicated process. To try and put it as simply as possible, it has to do with breeding. When animals come into zoos they are a part of Species Survival Plans (SSP). At zoos species are bred for superior genetics. If a wild population crashes, there are species that we can put back out into the wild. There are Stud Bookkeepers, for example, for the Snow Leopard species in North America. That bookkeeper makes the recommendations as to which cat goes where, and breeds with who. It depends on the capabilities of the facilities. Not all facilities can breed, so they might have just one animal of that species who does not breed. However, you must follow those SSP recommendations for those genetics. The Red Wolf gets even more complicated. There is a stud bookkeeper for the Red Wolves at an AZA Facility, but the Federal Government owns all the Red Wolves because the Red Wolves are already at a breed and release level. That stud bookkeeper must confer and speak with the Fish and Wildlife, then he comes back and fills out the stud book and makes the recommendations. A great example is the Red Wolves we had. We had a great breeding rate last year, and they want to do a multi-generational pack. The Endangered Wolf Center in St. Louis that is better equipped to handle the forming of that pack, so

the Red Wolves were transferred to St. Louis and Niabi got a new breeding pair. That pair is now in quarantine as is procedure for new animals coming into the zoo. Another good example of this is our Colobus Monkeys. We have the most genetically superior Colobus in the country. When we breed, we own the Colobus that are bred here, but we have loaned out our stud to the LA zoo to breed with females there. We have rights to certain off spring, and they have rights to certain off spring. Those loan contracts are very complicated. These Species Survival Plans are not just within North America, there are also Global Stud Bookkeepers.

Mr. Craver summed up that some of the animals the District owns, and some are on loan to the District. So those are some basic reports. At this point the inclusion of the reports is to give you an idea of what information is available since I wasn't sure what information the Committee would want to see on a regular basis, and also to get the Committee up to date on the goes on at the zoo and the situation. Mr. Meates, Ms. Roderick and Mr. Hesselberg's reports are all reports that go to the Forest Preserve Committee every month. The reports in your packet are from October, so if staff would like to give any updates on what's been in the works for November.

Mr. Meates reported that staff has been working on getting in new species for the 2016 season. Meerkats are in. For those who don't know, that has been an incredibly lengthy process. Meerkats are deemed an indigenous species. If they escaped, they could live in this climate. It took us over a year to get these three animals in. We are looking at the possibility of doing an encounter with them like we do with the giraffes. The giraffe encounters have been very successful.

Mr. Craver elaborated that the encounters are additional programs where people can pay a fee to have a closer interaction with the animals.

Mr. Meates stated that they get to go behind the scenes and see what the animal handlers do. Also, we just found out the other day that the zoo could possibly bring in an Amur Leopard. It is the rarest cat in the world. To emphasize on this subject, since we are not an AZA accredited zoo, getting in new animals is extremely difficult. The further you get from the accreditation the harder it is to source animals. The amount of paperwork you have to do to get new animals into a zoo that is not AZA accredited is about as thick as the packet in front of you, and all that paperwork is extremely time consuming. You need to provide résumés, dimensions and photos of the exhibits, and the list goes on and on from there. To get some of the animals that we've gotten have been calling in personal favors from colleagues that we've worked with over the years, but those connections can only bring us so far, they can't work miracles.

Mr. Byrne asked for a brief explanation on how we lost the accreditation and if it's possible to get the AZA accreditation back.

Mr. Meates answered that staff has already taken great strides towards getting the accreditation back. The animal records, vet procedures and revenue has been corrected. Animal Handler staff has gotten a lot of required training. The things that remain are to bring in more fundraising capabilities, and fix the ugly at the zoo. The exhibits are out of date. They are out of current AZA regulations.

Mr. Craver quoted the report as saying, "many of our exhibits do not meet the spirit of AZA, and modern zoological design."

Mr. Meates stated that the exhibits need some considerable improvement and refreshment. I would love to give you gentlemen a tour of the facility. I think it would help a lot if you were able to see what we're talking about first hand, and get some explanation of what goes on at the zoo on a day to day basis.

Mr. Brahm asked if the old elephant exhibit was in a position where another animal could be brought in there.

Mr. Meates answered that it was not anywhere near adequate to put any other animal into it. That exhibit is designed specifically for large pachyderms.

Mr. Brahm stated that when people come into the zoo one of the first things they see is an empty exhibit. What can go in that area?

Mr. Meates answered that it is planned, and a design has been drawn up, to put in Greater One Horned Rhinos in that area. One male and two females in hopes of breeding them. That project has been projected at about \$2.5 to \$3 million. And please note that that is a very inexpensive price for a large exhibit.

Mr. Brahm asked but when we had elephants there it was capable of housing them?

Mr. Meates answered no it wasn't. That's why we had to let the elephants go to a different facility. The issues with the elephants being here at Niabi were not just the climate. The barn that they would spend the winter in was not big enough; the elephants couldn't lay down and had to lean against the wall. The floor was starting to give out. There is no arena in the barn, so they were confined to stalls for six months out of the year. The best way for me to describe it is if we put you in a broom closet in your house, turned off the light and then come back to see you in six months.

Mr. Byrne stated that when it was built it met the standards.

Ms. Roderick pointed out that AZA standards are constantly changing and increasing. When you design an exhibit you have to design it with the future in mind. What meets standards one year won't necessarily meet the standards set for the next year. That is something that we are looking towards when we are planning the Rhino exhibit. Instead of just putting something in that's going to meet AZA standards right now, we look at designing an exhibit that's going to meet AZA standards ten years from now. I understand that it seems like extra money now, but we don't want to reach this same point in a couple years and lose accreditation again once we get it back.

Mr. Meates stated that the design for the new Rhino exhibit is already down to 60%. When it was originally designed it was at 70%. To touch on the elephants again, our facility was a free contact facility. That means that the keepers would actually go in with the elephant. Elephants are the number one killers of zoo keepers in the world.

AZA's new recommendations are that you go for protected contact; that would have meant huge modifications to the building and exhibit.

Mr. Brahm stated that he had a hard time getting his head around the fact that we can't put anything at all in that exhibit. It looks like a perfectly adequate exhibit. Nothing can go in there? A camel? A buffalo?

Mr. Meates answered, no. Due to the fencing, if you look at the fencing, it is designed for large pachyderms. It has very large gaps in the fencing. You would have to redo the fencing because otherwise the animal could breach containment. The back wall is already starting to deteriorate, so that would need replaced; among other issues that would require attention and money. Whatever way you look at it, you would have to spend considerable money to redo the exhibit. Staff would rather break from previous practice and do it right the first time.

Mr. Craver asked Mr. Meates to touch on the press release for the giraffes.

Mr. Meates stated that the giraffes have been battling an intestinal parasite. They have had it since they came in. The *Haemonchus contortus* parasite is very nasty; it burrows into the intestinal walls and takes all the nutrients. This parasite builds a resistance to the wormers you use to combat it. After a while it evolves, and that wormer no longer works. Mimi's succumb to it, Kenya is being treated pretty heavily for it. Staff is taking treatment to the next level. We have found a university who can actually take the eggs and test out several different wormers to see which one will get the most effect, so we can use that wormer. We'll have to repeatedly do that test to see how the parasite is evolving. Right now the press release is being reviewed by staff and Mr. Craver. This is something we've been combating since 2007, and we're trying to get out ahead of this with the public by doing the press release. I'll forward the case summary along with the press release to all the Committee and Commission members before we send out the press release. There is one female who is fighting the parasite better than the others. She is hybrid, so she is a little more resilient.

Mr. Brahm asked, Mufasa's got some issues?

Mr. Meates answered that Mufasa is very old for a lion. He's doing well for his age, and staff is monitoring him very closely. Jackson, our jaguar, is also very old. He's only one year behind Mufasa. They are starting to show very early signs of kidney failure, and other signs of aging like arthritis and eye sight starting to go.

Mr. Craver called on Ms. Roderick for her report.

Ms. Roderick stated that since she's been at Niabi she's started adding in educational programs during the off season. They've been doing well. It's a great way to remind people that the zoo is still here in the off season. The animals are still getting cared for and many stay in this area during the winter months. We've also been utilizing social media, and making people aware of the animals. I mean Mufasa is twenty-one years old, and that's really old even at a zoo.

Mr. Craver called on Mr. Meates to touch on Mr. Hesselberg's report.

Mr. Meates stated that the maintenance staff has been busy with various projects. Including putting cameras in the Red Wolf area so staff can better monitor them, and projects around the small animal house and the back of the zoo.

Mr. Craver called for a motion to accept the reports.

MOTION: Mr. Byrne moved to accept the reports. Mr. Brahm seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Mr. Craver encouraged the Committee to let him know what kind of reports they would like to see for each meeting. If there's any additional information, or if they feel that some of the reports they've been given for this first meeting aren't necessary or are redundant. The 2016 season operations schedule is included in the packet. Not much changed from last years, April 11th is the opening date and closing date is after Boo at the Zoo. Once this is approved staff can start to get the schedule on the website. Can we get a motion to approve this schedule?

MOTION: Mr. Byrne moved to approve the 2016 schedule. Mr. Taylor seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Mr. Craver proceeded to the Executive Search proposal by Schultz & Williams. The Forest Preserve has never used a recruiter before. It is my recommendation to the Committee that we use Schultz & Williams for the search for the new zoo director.

Mr. Byrne stated that the proposal was \$25,000.00. Where would that money come from since it wasn't budgeted?

Mr. Craver stated that currently the District is not paying a zoo director, so there is some money that's being saved there. The District has also done an early retirement incentive and employee turnover that has resulted in some savings in salaries that could be used for this.

Mr. Brahm asked if the Society might be willing to assist in the funding of this endeavor.

Mr. Craver stated that he wasn't sure, but we can ask. The Society does seem comfortable with Schultz & Williams, so they might.

Mr. Byrne asked how well this would work. Is the zoo just going to be a stepping stone for the next zoo director to get experience and leave in a few years for a bigger zoo?

Mr. Meates stated that it usually does take a person a while to work their way through the ranks and into a bigger zoo.

Ms. Roderick stated that that would depend entirely on the individual applying for the position. At the last zoo I was at the director had been there for thirty, because that was what she wanted to do and that's where she wanted to be at. There are zoo professionals out there who would rather have a position at a smaller zoo, and some that want to run big zoos, and some that would rather have some in the middle range. It depends on what the person is looking for in their career.

Mr. Taylor pointed out that that would be a question to ask the people applying for the position. That's what the process is about.

Mr. Byrne stated that he would be more comfortable paying the \$25,000.00 to find someone who is planning on being in the position for ten years or more, but not for someone who's only going to be here for two or three years. Mr. Meates, will you be applying for the director position?

Mr. Meates stated that he would not.

Mr. Byrne asked why.

Mr. Meates stated that the position would take him away from the animals. Working with animals is where I want to be.

Mr. Brahm pointed out that the director will need to be good at public relations and has to be a good front man for the zoo.

Ms. Roderick stated that each facility is different, and each zoo professional is looking for something different. Some directors need to know more of the business end, and some are keepers that have worked their way up to director.

Mr. Taylor added that the Putnam went through this also. They had to make the decision of what they needed; whether they needed someone who really knew museums, or if they needed someone who knew and could be the fund raising, community and business person.

Mr. Byrne asked Mr. Craver if he was in favor of this proposal and felt it was in the best interest of the zoo.

Mr. Craver answered that he thought this proposal was the best way for the zoo to find the best person for the director position.

MOTION: Mr. Brahm moved to approve the Schultz & Williams Executive Search proposal. Mr. Taylor seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Mr. Craver went on to the Strategic Guidance Plan from Schultz & Williams. This is something that the Zoological Society and the District wanted, and each entity would benefit from the advice and guidance of Schultz & Williams. Since this is a joint

proposal, I think this is something that the Society would be willing to pay for half of. Schultz & Williams would provide advice and counseling to this Committee, the Society and zoo management staff. Obviously, hiring consultants is not cheap.

Mr. Brahm stated that the price is \$5,000.00 per month, plus travel out of pocket.

Mr. Byrne asked if it was termable on a monthly basis.

Mr. Taylor stated that, while it wouldn't be a huge savings, that he could potentially find hotels in the area that would be willing to give a free room to Mr. Biddle when he is in town for his consultation visits.

Mr. Craver suggested an agreement for six months.

Mr. Byrne asked if this was something that needed action today.

Mr. Craver answered that he didn't think so. Is the Committee wanting me to talk to Mr. Biddle about adjusting the proposal?

Mr. Byrne answered that he didn't think that was necessary at this point.

Mr. Lohman interjected that the Committee could talk to one of the zoos that Mr. Biddle has assisted.

There was a consensus to table this item until the next meeting, and asked Mr. Craver to get more information.

Mr. Craver moved on to the hiring of the gift shop manager. Ms. Behrens, are you all done with your buying trips?

Ms. Behrens stated that she was all done with the trips, but there is still work to do on some apparel and keychains and things. Also working on the computer system. Will be working on seasonals with Ms. Frenell, and helping with events.

Mr. Taylor offered some hospitality training for seasonal staff. Things that would help complete the visitor experience.

Ms. Behrens thanked Mr. Taylor and stated that training is always helpful.

Mr. Craver stated that, since the Society seemed to be onboard with taking Mr. Biddle's recommendation and handing over the operations of the gift shop, that getting this person hired needs to happen soon. It is budgeted in this year's budget and budgets moving forward. Mr. Ferrell has stated that the Society is willing and ready to move over operations of the gift shop to the zoo, however, I have not had a formal letter stating that. We need a motion to move forward with the hiring. If the Committee wants to hold off until the Society meeting tonight, that should be okay.

MOTION: Mr. Brahm moved to start looking for a gift shop manager if the Society approves the transfer of the gift shop at their meeting tonight. Mr. Taylor seconded the motion.

Mr. Craver stated that the District could work with the Society to move the gift shop employees over to the District.

Mr. Brahm asked if this position had been posted, and if so, have people applied?

Mr. Craver stated that it had. Mr. Meates can explain how this position can be utilized and how it would benefit staff and visitors.

Mr. Meates stated that Ms. Behrens does everything for the gift shop, the computer system setup, memberships, guest services, and the events that happen here at the zoo.

Mr. Craver stated that on the weekends the zoo really needs two managers in order to properly run the front area. Ms. Frenell is actually a union member, but we have utilized her as management. Ms. Behrens is also usually pressed into service as a manager at the zoo; she is typically here five days a week. Ms. Roderick is usually here on weekends as well, but she's busy doing the programs. Mr. Meates is pretty much scheduled Monday through Monday, but he's busy with staff and the animals and it's difficult to get away from those duties in a timely manner. Ms. Behrens has been a huge asset at the zoo.

Mr. Meates pointed out that if Lancer is no longer doing the concessions that this position will likely have duties looking over the concessions as well.

Motion carried.

Mr. Craver asked the Committee if they would like to table the discussion of the 2016 Visitor/Animal Experience until the tour.

The Committee stated that they would.

Mr. Craver went on to the marketing proposals. Mr. Biddle suggested partnering with a marketing firm to help the zoo come up with its new story and to spread that new story to public. There are two proposals, one from Mindfire and one from Riffle.

Mr. Brahm asked what company the zoo has worked with in the past for advertising.

Ms. Behrens stated that it was Pear Marketing.

Mr. Taylor asked if Pear was not interested, and that's why there was no proposal from Pear.

Ms. Behrens answered that Pear is a small firm, and in the past we've been able to tell them what we needed and then they could print it up. For this project we need a bigger

firm; someone to market us. We need a true marketing company to help us find the new story for the zoo and help sell the zoo to the public.

Mr. Brahm agreed that we need to refresh the brand for the zoo, but felt this should be tabled.

Mr. Craver asked the Committee when everyone was able to meet next.

The Committee scheduled the next meeting of the Niabi Zoo Oversight Committee for December 8, 2015 at 5:00pm.

Mr. Meates asked when the Committee would like to do the tour of the zoo.

Mr. Taylor suggested that scheduling the tour individually for each member would probably be best.

Mr. Craver asked if the Committee had any other questions or things that they would like to discuss.

The Committee did not.

Mr. Craver 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 3:11 PM.

Submitted by:

Cassie Sullivan, Forest Preserve Administrative Assistant