

SALISBURY ZOO COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

January 17, 2024

Members Present: Clifton Griffin, James Maybury, Hemalantha Bhaskaran, Don Pulver, Lorraine Bozman, Amy Stewart, Allen Swiger, Karen Lutz, Chelsea Phillips-Hutton

Staff Present: Chuck Eicholz, Jamie Nichols, Vanessa Junkin, Kelly Colbert, Emily Goebel

Absent: Dave Harris, Linda Weiner

Visitor: Laura Mears

Clifton Griffin called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm at the Zoo Education Center and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Minutes: The minutes from the November 15, 2023, meeting were presented. Donald Pulver made a motion to accept the minutes and was seconded by Chelsea Phillips-Hutton. The motion passed.

Financial Report

James Maybury presented the "Profit and Loss" summary for July – December 2023. Some highlights: the new eagle exhibit; the new x-ray machine and the installation in the health building; Zoo pathway paving; and transferring funds from DZS to the Zoo Commission. The biggest items were these capital expenditures. Chelsea Phillips-Hutton made a motion to accept financial report, with a second from Clifton Griffin. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Staff Reports

Zoo Director Report

Directors Report November 2023 ZC meeting

Staffing:

Lead Keeper Position: Adrienne Liszkiewicz has been making a big difference and building a good rapport with staff.

New Animal Care person: Riley Parish didn't work out as hoped and was dismissed. We interviewed 7 candidates for a replacement and offered the person the position and she has accepted. Unfortunately, the new Mayor has instituted a hiring freeze and have delayed the new person starting.

Hired new Maintenance person, her name is Jennifer Carmine and is working out fantastic. She fits in with the staff and she has the variety of skills that it takes to be a maintenance person here at the zoo.

Animals:

Pinocchio is on exhibit in Tennessee and is doing well.

We now have color coded Prairie Dogs. Each of the 4 have a different color. We are also working with Smithsonian on a study of what goes on underground in the burrows. The Smithsonian is financing this study. We have had 2 companies in to do ground soundings and will eventually have a camera and sensors set up around the exhibit. We will be able to monitor all of their actions down to body temperature. They will be wearing collars with sensors and tracking id's.

We have a new red wolf. Unfortunately, last week she came up lame in her left rear leg. Upon examination, she tore her Achilles tendon and will have to have it surgically repaired by a specialist. We have reached out to specialists, waiting for their schedule-to-schedule surgery. She is not as skittish since being off-site.

We have a new Screech Owl for education. He will be clearing quarantine soon and moved down to Ed Aviary.

Projects:

The new eagle exhibit is coming along. We will be putting a deposit on the netting this week and hopefully will have in 45 – 60 days. Steele Welding and fabrication will be installing the netting on the exhibit.

We had a meeting with the Epson Group (design firm for the new bear exhibit) last Thursday and they released the design Charette. Next steps in the process, fine tune the charette and go forward with construction plans. This phase will give us the cost of the exhibit. The public viewing area will be named “Pinocchio’s Place”. We do not have a cost yet.

All of the conduit is in the ground for the new wiring. We are waiting on some misc. parts including new transformers for the zoo. Once we have an arrival date, we will begin pulling the wire through the conduit and attaching it to the various places in the zoo. Once completed, the zoo will have 1 feed into the facility, making things more streamlined. The transformers in the middle of the bear exhibit will then be removed and the Bear project moves forward.

We have different design groups for the new exhibits coming up. Coati is at the design process of the animal holding and exhibit space. This has been put on hold due to eagles living in the exhibit.

North American duck exhibit will have 2 new glass panels installed this week. These windows will be 1/3 larger than the old ones. They will also have UV decals attached to them. These decals will help with Bird Strikes into glass. We are part of the Songbird SAFE program with AZA. We will have an exhibit sign detailing the importance of the decals. As we move forward with any new construction or exhibit upgrades, the UV decals will be installed. We received a grant for this project from AZA Songbird SAFE organization. It will cover the cost of the decals as well as a portion of the new glass.

We have begun the process of upgrading Ocelot and Monkey buildings. Currently, the monkey is way undersized according to AZA standards and need to expand it. The Ocelot holding area has been temporary for 10+ years. The new design will expand the current monkey build and expand it all the way to the public pathway for public viewing inside the building. Both Ocelot and Monkey’s, 2 buildings under one roof. It will be the most cost effective as well as making the best use of the footprint of the location and minimal area to expand. The Ocelot holding building will also have a public viewing area inside the building. In the case of inclement weather guests will the option of seeing the animals inside.

We are in the initial stages of creating a new 5-year master plan. We reached out to many people including staff members for their items they would love to see at the zoo. A lot of great ideas have come through this process. I will be creating a survey with all of these ideas. Everyone will have the option of voting for their favorite items and we will be able to narrow the list down to a functional list that will be incorporated in the 5- Year master plan.

The animal hospital currently has no heat! The geothermal system that was designed for the hospital was undersized for the ground portion and over-sized for the components inside the building. When it was “working” we barely maintained the lower 60’s which was supplemented with space heaters to maintain 70’s. We are currently using many space heaters to create enough heat to maintain temperature. Some of the initial replacement costs are well over \$100,000.00. We are looking at replacing the geothermal and using more conventional systems and that will be costly as well. DID has offered some financial help for the replacement.

The education building will be getting a new roof. It has been leaking and needs to be replaced. We received 3 quotes ranging from \$5995.00 – 12, 500.00. The quote for \$5995 is low because GAF will be donating the shingles for the project.

Pavilion: January 22nd the project goes in front of city council for final approval. Hopefully the 23rd we will have a contract in hand and ready for a March construction date. Hopefully this will be done by Earth Day.

Zoo Happenings:

In 2024, the zoo turns 70 years old. We will be having a gala here at the zoo to celebrate as well as be able to launch the new campaign for fundraising. We are looking at Saturday June 8th in the evening. Soon we will be looking for individuals to help with planning and coordination of the event.

Marketing & Outreach Report – Jan. 17, 2024

Vanessa Junkin, Marketing and Outreach Manager

1. \$5,575 raised for the Zoo Commission during Giving Tuesday
2. Donations up in December – online donations last month totaled \$3,087 of \$7,494.59 total
3. Annual Appeal to go out early this year so people can donate all year
4. Social media: 2023 review
 - a. Engagement and following are both up on Facebook and Instagram
 - b. Over 1,000 followers
5. Most popular pages on the website
 - Home Page
 - Be Our Guest
 - Event Calendar
 - Bear Cam
6. News on new red wolf, Skyrae, shared on WBOC, WMDT and WRDE.

Education Department Report 1.17.24

Kelly Colbert

We are in the process of hiring a new Education Technician. They will hopefully be starting soon.

Docent Updates

We had an incredible year with our Docents. They put in 2762.68 hours this year. Our Docents have been an incredible help and we have made it a priority this year to focus on Docent appreciation. We have started with yearly awards for their hours of service! We are also still working on our new Docent training which will hopefully be able to run in February this winter! We have also started to gain sponsors for Docent of the Month! We will be recognizing Docents every month for their exemplary service, culminating with a Docent of the Year next January! We are currently in the middle of redoing the Docent program as a whole. We will soon be implementing a new software for them to use that track all of their hours and time spent volunteering at the zoo. Our goal is to have consistent records for all Docents starting January 2024 for our future AZA accreditation. This program has gone through testing with our staff and will now be going through testing with our Docents before launching.

Education Updates

We had a wonderful Rockin Around the Zoo this year. We redid the program, offered more dates and a higher capacity per night. After costs and expenses, we made a net profit of \$658.06. We had great reviews from everyone involved! Classes are now 3 nights. We also introduced our zoo elf Ollie. She was a huge hit and we had questions daily about where Ollie was located throughout the zoo. This has been very popular. We are currently working on getting all of our animal care (Enrichment, training, diet prep, feeding and cleaning) redone and reorganized. Retraining will be occurring going forward to get everyone on the same page. This includes staff and docents. We have scheduled our KWEE dates for this spring. We will be hosting another 15 days (morning and afternoon) for those remaining class to come out to the zoo! The Education Department is working closely with the bear design and campaign. There is a huge focus on education in the new exhibit and we are looking at new programs we can bring to accompany this amazing new space.

Animal Updates: Our new screech owl Wormwood is here and is officially out of quarantine! She will be coming down to education soon! He has some balance problems and may need a special platform.

Organization Reports

Docents – Karen Lutz

New Officers: President – Theresa Souder; Vice-president -Terri Esposito; Secretary – Eloise

Remski

Story Time will start in April.

A docent is needed to do the historical scrapbook.

A docent is need to document docent hours. (See attachment for breakdown of docent hour.)

Herb Society -Lorraine Bozman

The herb garden is peacefully sleeping until spring.

Committee Reports

Education Committee – Hema Bhaskaran

Hema is working on submitting a proposal to NOAA B-WET MWEE capacity building grant. This is a 3-year grant that will support the systemic KWEE and LEAF programs. The funds could be used for teacher professional development and for designing training materials. Hema will be sending an email requesting a letter of support for the proposal from the Zoo Commission.

Advancement Committee – Chelsye Phillips-Hutton

They are looking at the Zoo-It program to make it a more regional and replacing the cans with something cheaper and more sustainable. They also need to know what their budget will be. The 70th Anniversary Gala is tentatively scheduled for June 8, 024. The committee needs sponsors, marketing ideas, and a budget.

Old Business:

On-going Honey Zoo Project – Chuck Eicholz.

Capital campaign for the Bear Campaign is on-going. We need to make sure Mayor Randy Taylor is informed about the needs of this project.

Funds have been transferred from the Delmarva Zoological Society to the Zoo Commission.

For the Zoo Employee update see Director's Report.

New Business:

1. There is a 5-year Master Plan on file with the city for Zoobilation. For campaign money funding, the zoo commission can start with the federal government, the state government, the city government, and the zoo in that order.
2. The Commission made a corporate resolution to change the responsible party and owner of the account with Flagship Merchant Services from Mary Seemann, who no longer is an employee of the Zoo, to James Maybury, treasurer of the Commission. The motion to change was made by Don Pulver and seconded by Chelsea Phillips-Hutton. The motioned passed. An official corporate resolution was read and signed by the Officers of the Commission.
3. Don Pulver asked if the zoo needs two turkeys. The turkeys may be available from Natural Resources Department. Chuck Eicholz will ask staff if they want them.

James Maybury made a motion to adjourn, Chelsea Phillips-Hutton seconded. All were in favor.

The next scheduled meeting is March 20, 2024. at noon in the Zoo Education building.