**SALISBURY ZOO COMMISSION**

**Meeting Minutes**

**March 20, 2024**

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

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

**Absent:** Dave Harris, Don Pulver

**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 January 17, 2024, meeting were presented. Amy Stewart made a motion to accept the minutes and was seconded by Chelsea Phillips-Hutton. The motion passed.

**Financial Report**

James Maybury presented the Zoo Commission’s Balance Sheet and Profit and Losses through February 2024. The Commission is financially doing well. A motion was made by Amy Stewart to accept the report and seconded by Lorraine Bozman. The motion passed.

**Staff Reports**

**Directors Report March 20, 2024 ZC meeting**

Staffing:

New Animal Care person: Lindsey Molloy is working out great! She has picked up learning new tasks and shortly will be able to work all 3 sections of the facility competently.

Jennifer Carmine Maintenance person) 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. She has been able to update many of projects that have been on the books for a while.

One of our first Part time Relief Animal Care staff is leaving us. Katie Burr has been working Sundays and Mondays for over 2 years has put in her resignation and official last day will be the 28th of March. Katie gave us a Month resignation time, so we have been able to advertise and obtain a good selection of candidates. We start interviews next week.

Animals:

We are working with Smithsonian on a study of what goes on underground in the burrows. The official study will begin at the end of March. We will have 2 companies to do ground soundings and will install cameras 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 ids.

The new red wolf Skyrae tore her Achilles tendon and was surgically repaired by a specialist. Surgery went well 2 weeks agon and she is mending well. We have to do bandage changes at least once a week, which has added a new challenge to her life.

In January when we lost heat in the hospital, we lost 2 of our Macaws. Mac (Green wing) and Popcorn (Blue Throated) both were found in respiratory distress and were taken to the treatment room for treatment. Everything was done for them including CPR on both of them. Necropsy’s found lungs that were extremely irritated. Final results have not come back from the lab. We believe that a aerosol irritant possibly came from a heat bulb that was install in their holding area that morning to keep them warm. All types of these bulbs have been removed from service and replaced with Radian heating panels.

We will be getting a Delmarva Fox Squirrel from a new Rescue Facility. She has been deemed unreleasable by DNR. Once cleared Quarantine, she will live in the Beaver exhibit.

We received a yearling white tail deer in the beginning of March. DNR called us and told us that somebody was hand raising a deer in Berlin.

Projects:

The new eagle exhibit is coming along. The netting will finally ship by the end of this week.

The Bear design is getting near to finalized construction plans. We received the cost of building the new exhibit. $5,878,000.00, I am pleasantly surprised, but most likely will have to do some cost cutting.

We are waiting for transformers to arrive at the zoo from Delmarva Power. Once onsite, we can begin pulling wire for the new feed and new electricity for the zoo. Hopefully by the end of April. The zoo will be closed for 1-2 days during this time period.

The Coati and Otter exhibit are to be demolished starting today. The otter area will be just leveled off and be ready for bear construction.

Once Coati is demolished, we will begin construction phase with a fall completion date, so we can get a mating group of Coati’s transported to the zoo in late fall.

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.

The animal hospital has heat! The geothermal system that was designed for the hospital was undersized for the ground portion and oversized for the components inside the building. E.A.S.I. heating and cooling have been working desperately to get system to work properly. The quote came back to replace system is $247,000.00.

Pavilion: Looks like it will be fall time before the pavilion project is started.

We will be building a second stage for the zoo. We will be building on Holly Circle with stage at first then later in Fall be adding a roofing system. So, hopefully by Halloween Happenings, we will actually have 2 different stages.

Spectacled Owl exhibit will be finally finished and ready for owls by the end of March.

The old yard and pathway by the west gate is getting a facelift and will become “Natures Nook”. We are working with several partners including Dr. Freeman from SU, DNR, Tri County Bird club, Boy Scouts and the Herb Society to set up a new Exhibit displaying and encouraging native species to thrive here at the zoo. New Bird and squirrel houses will be set up in appropriate location to encourage nature to set up shop here at the zoo.

Hopefully by the end of the week a RFP for the concession stand will be released. We are asking for a vendor to operate the concession stand for the zoo for a monthly rent and a percentage of the sales. Similar to the Kona Ice contract.

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.

We are in the initial stages of creating a new 5-year masterplan. 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 masterplan.

We are working on a 5-year strategic financial plan as well as a 5-year Institutional Collection Plan (Animals in collection)

**Marketing & Outreach Report – March 20, 2024**

Vanessa Junkin, Marketing and Outreach Manager

1. Annual Appeal has gone out and is on the website
2. Sponsor form/levels for 70th Anniversary Gala on June 8
3. Zoo Stampede – April 6 – 142 signed up so far – Sponsor: VP Shoes
4. One sponsor for Earth Day so far – Tidemark Federal Credit Union
5. Playa Bowls fundraiser on April 8
6. Partnership with SU journalism class
7. Facebook – 19,641 followers; Instagram – 5,788 followers
   1. FB: Docent post reached 8,690 people
   2. IG: Theodora’s birthday reached 1,286 people
   3. IG Reel: Chaska with enrichment had 2,928 views
8. Media: Good Morning Delmarva interview to air day of meeting; Chuck was interviewed about Zoo expansion/plan (WBOC, Daily Times) and was recently interviewed by the new Independent editor; Allen was quoted about Zoo needing more funding (Independent); 47 ABC featured several social media posts as good news – bears’ birthday, tortoise’s birthday, The Salisbury School donation; animals were on front page of Salisbury Independent two weeks in a row.

**Education Department Report 3.20.24**

**Kelly Colbert**

* We have hired a new Education Technician Katelyn Lee. She has been awesome and we are excited to have her here!

**Docent Updates**

* We are had our first new Docent training March 2nd. It was well received by new Docents and old alike. We had a class of 14 most of which have already started signing up. We have our next Docent Training April 6th and already have 12 signed up!
* 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 have implemented our new database for our Docents to sign up for shifts. So far it has gone well and is a step in the right direction to overall record keeping for AZA.
* **Education Updates**
* I am currently working on making sure all of our programs are covered legally and we have insurance for the things we need. I’m also looking into the legal coverage of having CPS clearances done and background checks for Staff/Volunteers.
* We are currently working on getting all of our animal care (Enrichment, training, diet prep, feeding and cleaning) redone and reorganized. We are updating all of our standard operating procedures as well. Retraining will begin at the end of this month for our staff.
* We have started running LEAF at the zoo! We have updated the program and will be continuing to make changes to bring the program up to Next Generation Science Standards. We have had help from Mrs. Jeni Davis over at SU.
* We are getting prepared for Earth Day 2024 which is April 20th. We are looking at all new ideas for our celebration this year and we are excited to have more things for the whole family to enjoy!
* We are in the process of taking stock of our spaces in Ed and looking at future ambassador animals we could possibly get. We are looking to fill spaces we currently have and those animals would need to meet are future zoo theme of Americas and Australia.
* Animal Updates: Our new screech owl Wormwood made it to education but unfortunately did not last long. He began dropping weight and escaped his mew. He is currently living down in the hospital to get his weight up and he mew has been made escape proof.
* **Animal Updates: We have been approved and are on the list to get a bearded dragon sometime around June this year. It will be a juvenile and we are excited to get to add one to our ambassador animal collection.**

**Organization Reports**

**Docents** – Karen Lutz

New docents have been very active and trainings are continuing.

**March 2024 Report Lower Shore Herb Society**

Eight members gathered together for our first meeting this year on March 5th. All were eager to offer ideas and suggestions as to what to add to the Herb Garden this year.

Sue Hughes mentioned that Jerry Kelly had thanked the Herb Society for the $500.00 donation for a scholarship for a student in the Horticulture program at Parkside High School.

Sue presented a new diagram of the Herb Garden and hopes to be able to incorporate the names of the herbs on it then have it laminated for display. We plan to have additional sturdy labels made to better identify the herbs in the garden.

We are checking with Kelly Colbert our Education Curator about recruiting Docents to help with the flower beds in the herb garden. Five hours a year per Docent would be a big help.

A suggestion was made to develop a budget for funds in the treasury by a percentage per category.

We hope to have possible guest speakers at our some of our meetings.

Earth Day this year is on Saturday April 20th and we will need volunteers to man our table.

Our next meeting will be April 2nd  in the garden for clean up and planting.

**Committee Reports**

**Education Committee – Hema Bhaskaran**

1. Update – still in process of working on NOAA Grant, 100K for 3 years.

2. There is a need for Environmental Education, access for outside experience: Beyond the Limits for middle school and a partner is needed for high school.

3. Extra funding is needed for docent training, staff, LEAF, and KWEE. Letters of support are needed.

4. Americorp volunteer applications were due March 3, 2024. The zoo could be the supervisor.

**Advancement Committee – Chelsye Phillips-Hutton**

1. Looking to make Zoo It program to be more regional. Instead of using can, which are expensive and time consuming to open, the committee is looking for a cheaper option.

2. The 70th Anniversary Gala in June 8, 2024. The committee is looking for sponsors and other marketing strategies. An operating budget is needed

**Old Business:**

1.On-going Honey Zoo Project – Chuck Eicholz.

2. Capital campaign for the Bear Campaign is on-going.

3. 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.

**New Business:**

Everyone’s help is needed to makes Zoovolution a success.h

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

The next scheduled meeting is May 15, 2024. at noon in the Zoo Education building.