

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL
OF THE METROPOLITAN SERVICE DISTRICT**

May 7, 1981

Councilors in Attendance

**Presiding Officer Jack Deines
Vice Presiding Officer Betty Schedeen
Coun. Craig Berkman
Coun. Corky Kirkpatrick
Coun. Jane Rhodes
Coun. Betty Schedeen
Coun. Cindy Banzer
Coun. Bruce Etlinger
Coun. Marge Kafoury**

Staff in Attendance

**Paula Godwin
Caryl Waters
Gus Rivera
Warren Iliff
McKay Rich
Judy Bieberle
Denton Kent
Andy Jordan**

Others in Attendance

**Jack Pement
Sharon Mitchell
Beth Blunt
Bob Blunt
Gay Stryker
Gerard Landon**

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CALL TO ORDER

After declaration of a quorum, the meeting was called to order by Presiding Officer Jack Deines at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber, 527 S.W. Hall Street, Portland, Oregon.

1. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS TO COUNCIL ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

There were no written communications to Council at this meeting.

2. CONSENT AGENDA

Coun. Kirkpatrick moved, seconded by Coun. Kafoury, to approve the Consent Agenda. A vote was taken on the motion and it passed unanimously.

3. ORDINANCE

- 3.1 PUBLIC HEARING on Ordinance No. 81-108, For the purpose of Adopting New Admissions Fees and Policies at the Washington Park Zoo and Repealing Code Section 4.01.060 (First Reading)

Coun. Banzer moved, seconded by Coun. Schedeen, to adopt Ordinance No. 81-108.

Coun. Banzer said that the Regional Services Committee at their meeting of April 7, had discussed increasing the Zoo's admission fees. This Committee will also be taking public testimony at their May 13 meeting. The Committee will then make recommendation as to whether or not it will support this Ordinance at the Council's May 28 meeting.

Warren Iliff, Director of the Washington Park Zoo, reviewed the four questions that this Ordinance change is meant to address:

- split fee vs single fee
- pricing of Zoo admissions
- cost of operating Zoo
- ratio of income to costs

Mr. Iliff said that the Ordinance change process was done in consultation with both his staff and the Friends of the Zoo. He pointed out the pros and cons of the split fee vs the single fee and from the Zoo's administrative experience, it has become clear that the single fee is far better. He then explained how the single fee will promote quicker Zoo admission at the gate, will be more equitable to both area and non-area residents, will simplify cash

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intake for accounting purposes and encourage tourism by charging one fee.

He stated the special services to tax payers of the region will be: free Tuesday afternoons after 3:00 p.m., the Zoomobile, traveling exhibits, etc.

Mr. Iliff, in referring to the pricing of the Zoo admission, said that although there may be concern about raising the fees 100%, i.e., Adult increase to \$2 from \$1 and children (6-12) increase to \$1 from 50¢, the increase is necessary. In 1971 the Zoo was charging 75¢ per adult and 25¢ per child. In 1978 to the present time, on a split fee basis, an adult pays \$1 and a child 50¢, so over a 10-year period there has only been a 25¢ increase. Had there been moderate fee adjustments to keep up with operating costs, the proposed fees would not seem so dramatic. The recommendation to charge children ages 3-5 years is that although this age group has free admittance, they are charged for the Zoo Train because of seat occupancy. The Zoo would like to encourage family joint-ticket buying for both the Zoo and Zoo Train. These joint-tickets can be discounted and will encourage families to stay longer on their visits. Most facilities do not charge for children under 6 because of low attendance whereas at Washington Park Zoo, children under 6 constitute a major audience. He then displayed a chart of Zoo admissions across the country which showed that the cost is now \$2-\$3 per adult.

Mr. Iliff also displayed a chart showing that the operating cost has kept pace with inflation. This cost has almost doubled since 1977. Although attendance has increased by 20,000 over last year the Zoo received \$25,000 less in revenues because a much higher percentage are paying the lower fee. Per capita income from attendance has been going down. The Zoo has a long established policy under Metro to try to obtain 50% of its operating costs from generated revenue. At the end of this fiscal year the Zoo will be at 46% of earned revenue. If the new fees go into effect - the 50% requirement will be reached. If the fees are not increased then the Zoo will fall short and go down to 41% of earned revenue and the following year to 39%. The result will be a cut in services and not replacing necessary equipment.

Coun. Kafoury said that by looking at the chart, it doesn't seem that the fee increase will be enough. Mr. Iliff replied that according to a 1976 study based on continued inflation, it will be necessary to raise fees every two years.

Coun. Etlinger suggested lowering the Zoo admission during the winter season to encourage visitors. Perhaps OMSI could be induced to lower their winter rates and offer the public a special reduced entertainment package. Mr. Iliff said that preliminary studies by PSU have shown that the weather rather than the cost acts as a deterrent, however it is worth investigating that possibility.

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In response to Coun. Banzer's question - if raising the fees would result in a drop in attendance - Mr. Iliff said no, an 8-10% increase is projected. Having the Primate house and Otter-Beaver exhibit should increase attendance even more.

Coun. Schedeen asked how the free 3:00 p.m. time at the Zoo was arrived at, instead of having it free from noon on? Mr. Iliff replied that 3:00 p.m. was good for children after school and during the summer, it gives the public 5-6 hours visit time. If the Zoo was free from 2:00 p.m. instead of 3:00 p.m. it would result in approximately \$20,000 of lost revenue and up to \$45,000 if the time was moved up to 1:00 p.m.

Mr. Iliff felt that one of the most effective ways of keeping pace with inflation and continuing to make improvements at the Zoo, is to have the Zoo become a major tourist attraction. The Beaver-Otter exhibit represents the first opportunity to show the people something that is special to the Northwest. If the Zoo can level out its rates and find some equitable way to compensate for that, it will be able to go after group marketing and tourism. With these activities, the Zoo will not have to ask the tax payer for as much subsidy in relationship to its overall cost.

Coun. Banzer stated that it's important to look very seriously at the trade-off, (i.e., what is planned that couldn't be accomplished if the fee isn't increased) when considering increasing admission by 100%.

Presiding Officer Deines informed visitors that the public hearing on Ordinance No. 81-108 was now open for testimony.

Gerard Landon said that in 1962 he was elected to the Zoo Commission and to the Board of the Zoological Society. He now serves as a board member to the Friends of the Zoo in Washington Park. During that period he has noted that many senior citizens are often short of funds and therefore could only visit the Zoo on Senior Citizen Day. As a senior citizen and lover of animals, himself, he knows the great joy the Zoo has brought to these attendees. The proposed free Tuesday afternoons at the Zoo is an excellent idea. It will create a lot of goodwill and give much satisfaction to those who wish to avail themselves to living for a few hours in a beautiful world!

Gay Stryker, President of the Friends of the Zoo, said that her group is in agreement with Mr. Iliff's presentation this evening. The Friends believe that the request for a fee increase is fiscally responsible and is to the benefit of both the visitor and the tax payer. The Zoo should be run as a business.

Presiding Officer Deines read a letter from Mr. Richard Drew from Wilsonville, Oregon regarding Ordinance No. 81-108. Mr. Drew objects to increasing the Zoo's admission fee to Metro residents and in particular, to charge children 3-6 years - 50¢ whereas it has been free.

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Presiding Officer Deines reminded those present that additional testimony will be taken at the Regional Services Committee meeting on Wednesday, May 13. As there was no further testimony to be given, the hearing was closed.

4. GENERAL DISCUSSION

Presiding Officer Deines noted that the Senate Bill 852 which concerns Metro's Dues went through a senate vote of 25-1. It still has to go through the Legislature.

There being no further business, Presiding Officer Deines adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Toby Janus
Acting Clerk of the Council