

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL REGIONAL FACILITIES
COMMITTEE OF THE METROPOLITAN SERVICE DISTRICT

Regular Meeting
January 22, 1991

Committee members present: David Knowles (Chair), Jim Gardner (Vice Chair), Larry Bauer, Roger Buchanan, and Ruth McFarland

Committee members absent: None

Chair Knowles called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m.

1. Consideration of Ordinance No. 91-376A, Amending Metro Code Section 4.01.060 Revising Admission Fees and Policies at Metro Washington Park Zoo and Public Hearing

Sherry Sheng, Zoo Director, gave a report on the Ordinance. With regard to the proposed closure of the Children's Zoo, she indicated steps had not yet been taken to close it. Alternatives to its closure had been studied by Zoo staff. However, because the Children's Zoo was determined to be substandard in several ways, and costs for correcting problems prohibitive in light of Measure #5, it was decided closure was the only viable option. Ms. Sheng suggested the newly constructed Rain Forest Exhibit would include a strong educational and interactive component that will offer an excellent substitute experience for the children.

Councilor Ruth McFarland asked Ms. Sheng to report on usage of the Children's Zoo and Night Country. Ms. Sheng responded thirty-seven percent of all Zoo visitors visit the Children's Zoo and a lower percentage visit Night Country.

Councilor Larry Bauer reported his constituents were concerned that local governments not react to Measure #5 in the most visible, sensitive areas in order to highlight the negative impact of the Measure. Ms. Sheng responded Zoo staff did not subscribe to the policy of cutting the most visible area, and that administrative cuts had been made to the extent possible in order to minimize staff growth, while still enabling them to open the new Rain Forest Exhibit.

Councilor McFarland expressed concern about not having the free Tuesday afternoon. Ms. Sheng reported that although records had been kept regarding how many people had taken advantage of the free Tuesdays in the past, it was difficult to quantify free Tuesdays in terms of demographics. It was felt a large proportion of the people who used the free day stumbled onto it. Distribution of free tickets would be an acceptable substitute, however, a suggestion to limit free Tuesday to one day per month would be also be a reasonable approach.

Ms. Sheng indicated a plan would be developed to distribute tickets on the basis of the visitor's ability to pay; and the plan would most likely involve a number of social service agencies. Councilor Jim Gardner expressed concern about the "working poor," the people too wealthy for social service programs, but not wealthy enough to afford a zoo visit.

Councilor Knowles opened a public hearing, instructing members of the public to address issues pertaining to both Ordinance 91-376A and Resolution 91-1383. Mr. Stanley Held, an animal keeper at the Zoo spoke in opposition to closure of the Children's Zoo, stating that although it was in physical disrepair, it provided a valuable learning experience to the children who visited it. He also stated steps were already in progress to facilitate closure of the Children's Zoo. Councilor McFarland asked Mr. Held for his opinion of having one free Tuesday per month. Mr. Held felt visitors would react more positively to that idea than to eliminating it all together. In response to a question posed by Councilor Bauer, Mr. Held stated he did not have alternative methods of meeting Measure #5 budget constraints. The public hearing was then closed.

Vice Chair Gardner recommended an amendment to the Ordinance that would restore modified language to Metro Code Section 4.01.060 "Admission Fees and Policies," subsection (d), entitled "Special Free Hours" to read, "Admission to the Zoo shall be free for all persons from 3:00 p.m. until closing on the first Tuesday of each month." The amendment would delete the paragraph that has been added, entitled "Special Free Tickets." Councilor McFarland recommended that the free day be the second Tuesday of the month. Ms. Sheng reported the reason for the second Tuesday was to avoid holidays which fell on the first of the month.

In addition to closure of the Children's Zoo, the Ordinance also would increase fees. Ms. Sheng reported an erroneous assumption had been made in calculating how the user fee increase would offset the impact of Measure #5. She explained calculations did not include the excise tax as a portion of the user fee. The projected additional revenue is predicated upon the Zoo's ability to use all \$4.50; if the excise tax is taken from this amount, the Zoo only keeps \$4.25. Mr. Kay Rich, Assistant Zoo Director, addressed the financial impact. In the next year, the difference would be \$135,000 in lost revenue. The problem will compound over the next several years. It was suggested the excise tax be an add-on rather than included in the fee. Councilors gave their opinion in support and opposition of both positions. Councilor Gardner stated the policy should be addressed in the upcoming budget process. Councilor Bauer requested this Committee be

involved in any future decision regarding how to collect the excise tax.

- Motion: Councilor McFarland moved to recommend Council adoption of Ordinance No. 91-376-A.
- Motion to amend: Councilor Gardner moved to amend Ordinance No. 91-376-A, page 3, paragraph (d) "Special Free Hours" to read "Admission to the Zoo shall be free for all person from 3:00 p.m. until closing on the first Tuesday of each month," and to delete the section entitled "Special Free Admission Tickets."
- Motion to amend the amendment: Councilor McFarland moved to amend the amendment to read "the second Tuesday of each month...."
- Vote on motion to amend amendment: Councilors Bauer, Buchanan, Gardner and McFarland voted aye. The motion was carried unanimously.
- Vote on motion to amend: Councilors Bauer, Buchanan, Gardner McFarland voted aye. The motion was carried unanimously.
- Vote on amended motion: Councilors Bauer, Buchanan, Gardner and McFarland voted aye. The motion was carried unanimously.

The Ordinance, as amended will be carried as No. 91-376-B.

2. Consideration of Resolution No. 91-1383, Acknowledging Adjustments to the FY 1990-91 Budget of the Metro Washington Park Zoo

Ms. Sheng pointed out a memo had been distributed to Zoo staff announcing several staff meetings would be held for the purpose of eliciting staff input on the impact of Measure #5. She reported the anticipated \$135,000 shortfall in the budget, should Council decide to keep the excise tax as a deduction from the entrance fees, would equal half of the cuts the Zoo has made to date.

Councilor McFarland said waiting to make the decision regarding treatment of the excise tax until Metro's upcoming budget process

should not cause significant problems. She also pointed out the purpose of Resolution No. 91-1383 was to assure the public the Committee had examined all options before raising the fees; and had taken several other actions including internal cuts, to meet the budget constraints of Measure #5. Councilor Gardner added specific changes and cuts are up to Zoo management to make.

Motion: Councilor McFarland moved to recommend Council Adoption of Resolution No. 91-1383.

Vote: Councilors Bauer, Buchanan, Gardner and McFarland voted aye. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Review of MERC Resolutions 102 and 104-111

Mr. Short pointed out that MERC Resolution No. 107 was not included in the agenda packet. Mr. Lee Fehrenkamp, General Manager of MERC, reviewed the Resolutions with the committee.

Councilor George Van Bergen stated his displeasure with MERC Resolution No. 109. The Resolution requested a one-time OLCC variance in order to allow the sale and consumption of alcohol in the seating area of Memorial Coliseum for a Super Bowl party sponsored by the Oregon Dome Team. He stated it was not appropriate for a public agency to host such an event, and was concerned that children and adults would be together. Mr. Richard Ares, MERC Commissioner, and Mr. Fehrenkamp explained MERC policies related to this issue. Following discussion, Councilor Van Bergen requested that he be placed on the Council Agenda for Thursday, and that he would take the proper steps to do so.

4. Consideration of Resolution No. 91-1374, Confirming the Reappointment of Richard Areas and Sam Brooks to the Metropolitan Exposition-Recreation Commission

Don Rocks, Executive Assistant, referred to the Committee for reappointment to the Metropolitan Exposition-Recreation Commission the names of Mr. Rich Ares and Mr. Sam Brooks. Mr. Brooks stated his willingness to serve another term on the Commission and made brief comments. Mr. Ares also indicated his desire to serve again and made related comments. Both candidates gave their views regarding the role of MERC's relationship to Metro.

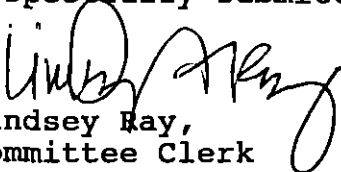
Motion: Councilor McFarland moved to recommend Council adoption of Resolution No. 91-1374.

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Vote: Councilors Bauer, Buchanan, Gardner, Knowles and
McFarland voted aye. The motion carried
unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at
6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Lindsey Ray,
Committee Clerk

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