

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL ZOO COMMITTEE
OF THE METROPOLITAN SERVICE DISTRICT

Regular Meeting
March 1, 1990

Committee members present: Jim Gardner (Chair), Ruth McFarland (Vice Chair), Tom DeJardin, David Knowles and Mike Ragsdale

Committee members absent: None

Chair Gardner called the meeting to order at 4:13 p.m.

1. Consideration of Minutes of January 18 and February 1, 1990 Meetings

Motion: Councilor DeJardin moved for approval of the minutes.

Vote: Councilors DeJardin, Gardner, and McFarland voted aye; Councilors Knowles and Ragsdale were absent.

The motion carried unanimously.

2. Update on Zoo Ballot Measures Campaign

Sherry Sheng, Zoo Director, updated the Committee on the progress of the campaign strategy. She said there had been no decisions made as to how much to spend on each aspect of the campaign. There are a number of experts working very hard to see the campaign is professionally run and well funded.

3. Briefing and Discussion of FY90-91 Zoo Program and Project Priorities

Chair Gardner said the purpose of this item was a work session for the Committee to discuss priorities for the Metro Washington Park Zoo. Ms. Sheng gave the Committee a brief introduction to the Zoo's proposed program activities for next year. She said the Zoo would not only be maintaining the operations, but expected to bring on line the tropical rain forest exhibit next year, Africa! III.

Kay Rich, Assistant Zoo Director, presented the financial management aspect of the Zoo to the Committee. Mr. Rich noted the Zoo was expected to obtain 50 percent of their revenue for operations and maintenance from non-tax sources. In order to achieve that goal the Zoo was engaging in an aggressive marketing strategy, including a variety of special events promoting the catering opportunities available. He said it was hoped these new programs would help achieve a minimum attendance of 985,000 next year. It was expected this would bring in approximately \$50

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million in enterprise revenue for the Zoo. Mr. Rich noted two FTE's were being requested; a vault clerk to help with the cash flow (.25 FTE), and the transfer of safety/security from Visitor Services to Administration with an increase in security staff of .08 FTE. He noted the proposed budget was consistent with the five-year plan.

Ellen Phelps, Development Director, gave an overview of the Zoo's Development Office. She said their role was to marshall all gifts and donations to the Zoo through the processes set up in the budget. Typical tasks of the Development Office are grant writing, research and coordination of Zoo sponsored functions, Zoo parents and animal adoption programs and liaison to the Friends of the Zoo. In response to Committee questions, Ms. Phelps said her office was in the process of instituting a program to educate the public about the positive aspects of planning their estates to include a donation to the Zoo.

Bob Porter, Construction Coordinator, discussed the Zoo's capital fund, noting the basic objective was to build new exhibits and upgrade existing exhibits. That in turn leads to increased attendance. He said the increased attendance presented a need to develop better visitor facilities. Mr. Porter said his responsibility as Construction Coordinator was to assure projects were completed on schedule, within budget and at a very high quality. In response to Committee questions, Mr. Porter said the preconstruction meeting for the Africa Rain Forest Project was scheduled for Monday, March 5 and he estimated 460 days construction time.

Ms. Sheng briefly told the Committee about a major program activity proposed for the next fiscal year - updating the master plan. She said it was important to keep the master plan a dynamic, living document. Because of all the changes in the physical collection at the Zoo and the relationship concerning Zoo visitors, she felt it was important to be aware of any new opportunities into the 90's.

Dennis Pate, General Curator, briefed the Committee on major animal management activities for the upcoming fiscal year and said most of the program changes would revolve around the Rain Forest exhibit. He talked about the species list for the exhibit and explained some of the ways of obtaining the animals. It was anticipated there would be a need to add 1.5 FTE in the next fiscal year in the form of additional keeper help. Mr. Pate noted the reason for the additional employees was because the Zoo would be adding a new exhibit rather than closing an existing one. He said it was anticipated the Zoo would be adding as many as 165 new animals.

Judy Munro, Facilities Supervisor, presented an overview of the Facilities Department and explained what its role was in the functioning of the Zoo. She said they were responsible for providing maintenance of the buildings, grounds, the railroad, rolling stock, power tools and equipment. The Facilities Department also runs the railroad and supports special and annual events. Ms. Munro listed the four sections of the Department (custodial, landscape, maintenance, railroad) and explained their purposes. One addition being proposed was the position of a Work Center/Project Coordinator. She noted an aggressive, preventative maintenance program needed to be implemented to help extend the life of the Zoo buildings and grounds. Ms. Munro closed her presentation by summarizing the new and very aggressive composting program which was to include a shared capital investment with Solid Waste and a permanent composting site.

Councilor Ragsdale asked Ms. Munro what priority projects or additional work the Division would pursue if additional resources were added to their budget for FY 90-91. She cited some work examples, but noted she was not convinced the Division had achieved its best efficiency. Ms. Sheng agreed and said to gain the most visible benefit for Zoo visitors, additional resources might be applied elsewhere. Ms. Sheng said staff would review options for using additional funds to give the best, visible impact to Zoo visitors.

Ms. Sheng asked the Committee for a summary of items they would like covered in greater detail at the next Zoo Committee meeting and noted her staff would complete their presentation at that time.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Ann Brunson
Committee Clerk

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