

Audubon Commission Minutes

March 23, 2022
Audubon Tea Room

Attending: Kelly Duncan, Ashley Francis, Field Ogden, Sally Shushan, Bruce Hoefler, Xavier Angel, Frances Fayard, Jermaine Smith, Dolfinette Martin, Minh Thanh Nguyen, Peter Wenstrup, Emily Vuxton, Catherine Morrell, Victor Jones, Storey Charbonnet

Excused: Coleman Ridley, Gayle Benson, Lex Kelso, Danny Conwill, Leila Eames

President Kelly Duncan called the meeting order at 4:00 pm. The minutes of the January meeting were unanimously accepted as distributed (Shushan/Martin).

Mr. Duncan then introduced Dr. Kyle Burks, EVP and COO, to give an update on tennis. Dr. Burks gave a thorough presentation outlining some background and updates on the efforts to improve the Audubon Tennis facility. The presentation was a portion of what was shared during the March 21 public meeting. That meeting and public comments were recorded and provided to Commissioners on March 22. Recording and comments are also available on the Audubon Nature Institute website. Following the presentation, Dr. Burks asked Ms. Chimene Grant Saloy, VP of Community Affairs, to give a brief overview of public comments received to date. Dr. Burks also addressed design suggestions received by members of the public.

Next, Mr. Duncan opened the floor for comments from the public. Mr. Louis Shepard spoke first, stating that Audubon Nature Institute Board meetings should be open to the public. He believes that both the Institute Board and Commission should have a spot for someone who regularly uses the tennis facility.

Mr. Wayne Ducote spoke next. He said that he thinks that the proposed tennis concept is great. It allows for more play time since there are more courts and lights. This will expand utilization across the whole community, and this is long overdue.

Mr. Keith Liederman then stated he is also in full support of the proposed tennis upgrades. He likes having both types of courts at the same location and believes this project will make a much better facility for the public. He especially likes the addition of a viewing area.

Ms. Tiki McIntyre said that she is favor of the addition of lighting. She also would like the hours to be extended to 7 days a week. She then mentioned looking to play set smart courts, netting to separate lessons from players, and covering the entire viewing area. Finally, she mentioned the need for better restrooms.

Dr. Burks then asked for comments or questions from Commissioners. Ms. Sally Shushan commented that the expanded programming with NORD and A's and Aces would make tennis more inclusive and diverse. Ms. Catherine Morrell asked how those programs would be paid for. Dr. Burks said that the hope is that there would be enough revenue to expand programming. NORD and A's and Aces would

not be charged for using the facility. Ms. Morrell asked about the possibility of scholarships for fees that youth pay to participate in those programs. Dr. Burks said that those details have not been ironed out yet, but that would be something Audubon would push for. Otherwise, he doesn't see fees for A's and Aces to come to Audubon. those programs Mr. Minh Nguyen then shared that he has spoken to families in the uptown area who are very excited to have a tennis facility much closer to home. Young players and youth programming will benefit greatly from these proposed upgrades. Finally, Ms. Morrell asked about neighborhood associations and their thoughts. Dr. Burks said that Audubon has met primarily with the Audubon Riverside Neighborhood Association. Their main concerns are traffic and lighting. Audubon shared with them their commitment to minimizing traffic concerns by reorienting the facility to face East Drive and improve parking in that area. Also, only directional light that eliminates spill out would be used. As a member of the neighborhood, Ms. McIntyre spoke further about those concerns and added that she believes sound would be a greater concern than the lighting. She suggested a wall or backboard to direct sound away from residents. She then mentioned that A's and Aces is looking for a new home.

There being no further comments, Dr. Burks asked for a motion to approve the conceptual design and operational plans of a new tennis facility consistent with the aesthetic of other Audubon Park structures that will promote tennis programs for all ages and enhance multiple community partnerships. Tulane University would fund design and construction of the new facility, would have non-exclusive, advance-scheduled use of hard courts, and would assist with community programs. Audubon Nature Institute would manage and operate the facility. Improvements would include six clay and six hard courts within the footprint of the existing tennis facility, a new pro shop with an electronic reservation system, new public restroom and shower facilities, directional lighting complemented by new fencing and landscaping to limit light spill-out, improvements to existing parking, separate shower and service facilities for Tulane Tennis team, and an entrance to facilitate entry for Children's Hospital patients. Commission approval is contingent upon the subsequent execution of a cooperative endeavor agreement in a form satisfactory to the Commission. The motion carried (Nguyen/Shushan/Unanimous).

Dr. Burks then asked for a motion authorizing its Executive Committee to finalize terms of a cooperative endeavor agreement between the Commission and Tulane University to provide funding for the tennis facility as described in previous motion and to provide parameters for daily operations. The Executive Committee is further authorized to approve the cooperative endeavor agreement for signature by the President of the Audubon Commission. The motion was passed unanimously (Nguyen/Shushan).

Dr. Burks presented four more motions that were subsequently approved by the Commission:

- 1) The Commission authorizes the President of the Audubon Commission or the CEO of the Audubon Nature Institute to execute a contract with the lowest responsive and responsible bidder, as determined consistent with Louisiana Public Bid Law for repair and/or replacement of miscellaneous roofs damaged by Hurricane Ida. Specifications are being developed by Braquet Design Group. The estimated cost is \$785,000. This project is being funded by insurance proceeds and/or FEMA Public Assistance Funds (Nguyen/Shushan/Unanimous).
- 2) The Commission authorizes the President of the Audubon Commission or the CEO of the Audubon Nature Institute to execute a contract with the lowest responsive and responsible bidder, as determined consistent with Louisiana Public Bid Law for replacement of lighting control systems in phase I of the Aquarium. Cost estimate is \$300,000 and is being funded with bond sale proceeds (Vuxton/Shushan/Unanimous).

- 3) The Commission authorizes the President of the Audubon Commission or the CEO of the Audubon Nature Institute to execute a contract with the lowest responsive and responsible bidder, as determined consistent with Louisiana, Public Bid Law, for replacement of three air handling units in the Aquarium. Estimated cost is \$458,340 and is being funded with bond sale proceeds (Vuxton/Charbonnet/Unanimous).
- 4) The Commission authorizes the President of the Audubon Commission or the CEO of the Audubon Nature Institute to execute a contract with the lowest responsive and responsible bidder, as determined consistent with Louisiana, Public Bid Law, for replacement of chiller #3 in phase I of the Aquarium. Estimated cost is \$246,500 and is being funded with bond sale proceeds (Angel/Vuxton/Unanimous).

Ms. Laurie Conkerton, EVP and CAO, was asked to present two more motions for Commission approval. The first motion authorizes the Secretary and President to sign resolutions removing Rebecca Dietz’s signature authority on three bank accounts. The motion passed unanimously (Charbonnet/Fayard).

The second motion authorizes the President of the Audubon Commission or the President/CEO of Audubon Nature Institute to enter into a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with the City of New Orleans, to receive bond funds for design and construction of improvements to Audubon facilities. The CEA provides \$10,620,000 allocated as follows: \$3,520,000 for Infrastructure Improvements to Audubon Riverview; \$4,900,000 for Audubon Stormwater Resilience Project; and \$2,200,000 for Woldenberg Park Infrastructure Improvements. The motion carried (Shushan/Fayard/Unanimous).

Mr. Ron Forman, President and CEO, began his report by thanking everyone for their attendance. He further gave some more background on the Audubon Park master planning process and the importance of improving the tennis facility. He then gave an overview of everything that Audubon has gone through in the past couple of years. Audubon is now looking to the future and working on improvements across all facilities, including the Aquarium and Butterfly Garden, Canal Street and Woldenberg Park, the Zoo, Nature Center, Species Survival Center, and Research Center. Audubon will soon be back better than ever. He then announced that Steve Marshall, Sr. VP and Managing Director of Uptown Facilities, is leaving Audubon to be the Director of the Caldwell Zoo in Texas. Mr. Daine Appleberry, Sr. VP of Guest Services, has been promoted to that role and was introduced to say a few words.

Ms. Conkerton gave a brief finance report. The Commission and Institute January dashboards below were shared with the group. Changes to the management agreement have been fully implemented.

	YTD ACTUAL 2022	YTD BUDGET 2022	Budget Variance	TOTAL FORECAST 2022	TOTAL BUDGET 2022
OPERATING & NON OPERATING REVENUES					
Lease Revenue	54	53	1	635	634
Tax Millage	49	49	-	4,634	4,634
Total Revenues	\$ 103	\$ 102	\$ 1	\$ 5,269	\$ 5,268
EXPENSES					
Transfer of Tax Millage to ANI Operations	49	49	0	4,634	4,634
Total Expenses	\$ 49	\$ 49	\$ -	\$ 4,634	\$ 4,634
Net Results	\$ 54	\$ 53	\$ 1	\$ 635	\$ 634

JANUARY YTD 2022 FINANCIAL DASHBOARD (AMOUNTS IN THOUSANDS)							
NET OPERATING RESULTS BY FACILITY	YTD ACTUAL 2022	YTD BUDGET 2022	BUDGET VARIANCE	YTD ACTUAL 2021	PRIOR YEAR VARIANCE	TOTAL FORECAST 2022	TOTAL BUDGET 2022
Aquarium	(\$437)	(\$893)	456	(\$129)	(308)	2,672	2,215
Zoo & Park	(\$1,054)	(\$982)	(72)	(\$547)	(507)	(3,720)	(3,648)
Butterfly Garden & Insectarium	\$0	\$0	0	(\$5)	5	0	-
FMASSC	\$12	\$7	5	\$8	4	(646)	(631)
Louisiana Nature Center	(\$19)	(\$23)	4	(\$23)	4	(108)	(112)
NET OPERATING RESULTS	(\$1,496)	(\$1,891)	\$393	(\$696)	(\$802)	(\$1,802)	(\$2,196)

Excludes capital revenues and expenses.

She went over the highlights of each dashboard. She also noted that the 2021 audit is underway and lines of credit have been paid down.

Lastly, Mr. Forman brought Dr. Burks back up to give an update on Roux, the infant orangutan born on Christmas eve. He let the group know that Roux is getting stronger every day and will hopefully be back with the orangutan family soon. He has been under constant care by staff since his birth. Mr. Forman thanked Children's Hospital for all their hard work taking care of Roux.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:15 pm.