



Audubon Nature Institute
Celebrating the Wonders of Nature

January 21, 2020

A meeting of the Audubon Nature Institute Board was held on Tuesday, January 21, at 8:00 a.m. at the Audubon Zoo, Chairman Poco Sloss presiding.

In attendance: Poco Sloss, Chris Bardell, Bart Farris, Vincent Palumbo, Caroline Calhoun, Leslie Gottsegen, Steve Kupperman, Peter Moss, Tommy Westfeldt, Wil Jacobs, Ludovico Feoli, Deirdre Hooper, Dennis Lauscha, Hunter Cazes

Excused: Joe Jaeger, Henry Coaxum, Angus Cooper, Quentin Messer, Steve Perry, Julie Quinn, Nathalie Simon, Cleveland Spears, Susu Stall, Qi Wiggins, Ransdell Prieur, Leah Brown, Anne Long, Willard Dumas, Bernard Vanderlinden, John Nickens, Mark Romig, Nolan Marshall

The minutes of November 12, 2019 meeting were unanimously accepted as distributed.

Dr. Kyle Burks, Chief Operating Officer, introduced Mr. Robert Mendyk, Curator of Herpetology. Mr. Mendyk then gave a presentation on Audubon's Louisiana Pine Snake conservation efforts. This snake is one of the rarest in North America. Due to loss of primary food source and habitat, the Louisiana pine snake population has dramatically decreased. Audubon, along with other zoos and facilities, has been actively breeding the snakes for reintroduction to help boost population numbers. So far, ANI alone has bred over 100 snakes and released 14 into the wild.

Mr. Forman went on to mention that ANI would be much more mission focused going forward. And that they could expect to hear more about the great things Audubon is doing for conservation.

Nominating Committee Report

Mr. Tommy Westfeldt, Chair of the Nominating Committee, reported that the committee met on January 16, 2020 at 3:30 pm and it is the unanimous recommendation of the Nominating Committee to the Audubon Nature Institute Board that the following slate of officers be elected to serve in 2020: Chairman - Poco Sloss; 1st VC - Willard Dumas; 2nd VC – Dennis Lauscha; Rec. Secretary - Vincent Palumbo; Corres. Secretary – Quentin Messer; Treasurer - Leslie Gottsegen; Parliamentarian – Ludovico Feoli; Immediate Past Chair - Chris Bardell. The recommendation for the slate of officers was considered and approved. (Moss/Jacobs/unanimous)

Finance Report

Ms. Conkerton, EVP, and CAO reviewed the November 2019 Operating Budget:

NOVEMBER 2019 FINANCIAL DASHBOARD (AMOUNTS IN THOUSANDS)						
NET OPERATING RESULTS BY FACILITY:						
FACILITY	YTD ACTUAL 2019	YTD BUDGET 2019	BUDGET VARIANCE	YTD ACTUAL 2018	PRIOR YEAR VARIANCE	TOTAL BUDGET 2019
Aquarium/EGST	\$6,791	\$6,661	130	\$7,875	(1,084)	6,839
Zoo & Park	(\$6,075)	(\$5,174)	(901)	(\$4,577)	(1,498)	(5,702)
Butterfly Garden & Insectarium	\$483	\$368	115	\$600	(117)	387
FMASSC	(\$730)	(\$787)	57	(\$123)	(607)	(828)
Louisiana Nature Center	(\$297)	(\$327)	30	(\$257)	(40)	(349)
NET OPERATING RESULTS	\$172	\$741	(\$569)	\$3,518	(\$3,346)	\$347

Excludes capital revenues and expenses.

Ms. Conkerton reported that total revenue through November 2019 was running 5% lower than budgeted and 2% greater than 2018 actual. She further reported that attendance through November 30, 2019 is 1.9 M with a year-end target of 2.2 million. She then reported that total expenses are 4% lower than budgeted and 5% greater than 2018 actual. Closures from Barry made quite an impact on revenue, but staff has done a good job of keeping expenses down.

Ms. Conkerton reported that a resolution was needed authorizing the Chairman of the Audubon Nature Institute to sign an engagement letter with LaPorte CPA's to perform Audubon's annual audit. (Kupperman/Westfeldt/Unanimous)

Ms. Conkerton further reported that a resolution was needed stating that the Audubon Nature Institute attests that the Louisiana Compliance Questionnaire for Audit Engagements of Quasi-Government Agencies was presented to and adopted by the governing body, by request of Louisiana Legislative Auditor, Daryl G. Pupera, CPA, CFE. (Kupperman/Bardell/Unanimous)

Staff Reports

Dr. Kyle Burks reported that the Audubon Louisiana Nature Center has been reopened for about 2 years now. And that attendance in 2019 was up 5K over 2018, showing positive growth for the facility. He then went on to report that the FMASSC facility has a female giraffe that is expecting very soon and mentioned some of the other conservation efforts such as the crane reintroduction program. He also mentioned that Audubon is currently partnered with San Diego but is actively looking for other zoos and facilities to partner with.

Mr. Rich Toth, VP and Managing Director of Downtown Facilities, reported that the College Football Championship festival in Woldenberg Park went well. He further reported that the shark touch pool is currently wrapping up completion. Some of the animals to be included in the exhibit are cownose stingrays, which the Aquarium has been reproducing in record number. The Butterfly Garden and Insectarium has also been working to boost the monarch butterfly population, which is dwindling. They hope to encourage guests to plant native milkweed, the only plant that monarchs use to lay their eggs. Finally, he reported on the success of the coastal wildlife network.

Mr. Steve Marshall, VP and Managing Director of Uptown Facilities, announced that we have 2 new male lion cubs at the Zoo. Three cubs were born, but unfortunately one did not make it. The other two are healthy and active. The lions are part of the Species Survival Program and will be out on exhibit in about 12 weeks. He then reported on continued efforts to maintain and upgrade the Park.

Mr. Forman then briefly discussed some of the challenges of 2019, including the OIG report. But highlighted that 2020 would see the start of more capital projects and improvements to Audubon facilities.

Finally, Animal Ambassadors brought in 2 parrots, Sarge and Maui, that are part of a new program at the Zoo called Audubon Takes Flight. Sarge has been a resident of Audubon Zoo for over 40 years. Maui is younger, only about 10 years old. Parrots have a life span of roughly 80 years, and many people do not know this when they get parrots as pets. That can lead to many parrots being orphaned. The Ambassadors have been training these and other birds to fly and perform other crowd-pleasing tasks such as taking conservation donations by beak. Sarge demonstrated this perfectly when he took Mr. Peter Moss' \$100 donation.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 AM.