



Audubon Nature Institute
Celebrating the Wonders of Nature

September 26, 2017

A meeting of the Audubon Nature Institute Board was held on Tuesday, September 26, 2017, at 8:00 a.m. at the Audubon Zoo, Chairman Chris Bardell presiding.

The minutes of May 16, 2017, meeting were unanimously accepted as distributed.

Chairman Bardell introduced newly elected board member Quiana Wiggins and welcomed her to her first meeting.

Mr. Forman reported that there were three Executive Committee meetings since the last full board meeting. He stated that the minutes of each meeting were distributed to the full board for review. Mr. Bardell asked for a motion to approve the Executive Committee minutes from the June 7, June 21, and August 8 meetings. (Sloss/Gottsegen/unanimous)

Finance Report

Ms. Conkerton, EVP, and CAO reviewed August 2017's Operating Budget:

AUGUST YTD 2017 FINANCIAL DASHBOARD (AMOUNTS IN THOUSANDS)						
NET OPERATING RESULTS BY FACILITY:						
FACILITY	YTD ACTUAL 2017	YTD BUDGET 2017	BUDGET VARIANCE	YTD ACTUAL 2016	PRIOR YEAR VARIANCE	TOTAL BUDGET 2017
Aquarium/EGST	7,585	7,051	534	7,307	278	6,292
Zoo & Park	(2,074)	(1,833)	(241)	(3,067)	993	(4,955)
Butterfly Garden & Insectarium	618	402	216	597	21	39
FMASSC	(347)	(449)	102	(468)	121	(748)
Louisiana Nature Center	(47)	(162)	115	0	(47)	(257)
	\$5,735	\$5,009	\$726	\$4,369	\$1,366	\$371
Excludes capital revenues and expenses.						

She reported that executive staff decided to scale back the dollar amount for a millage in the operations budget to prepare for the possibility of loss or reduction of millage in the future. Mark Romig asked if the weather had an influence on attendance number and Ms. Conkerton reported that yes it had been a very wet summer and the numbers reflect that. Ms. Wiggins asked if Audubon steers attendance towards the Aquarium on rainy days and Mr. Forman responded that yes there are digital ad campaigns set up for just that purpose.

Ms. Conkerton reported that a motion was needed as required by the state to certify matching funds. Ms. Conkerton asked for a motion as follows: The Audubon Nature Institute Board certifies that \$48,309,415.00 in private, federal or city funds has been spent on Audubon 2020 projects as of June 30, 2017. The State of Louisiana provided \$20,258,419.00 as of June 30, 2017. Non-state funds represent 70.45% of the Audubon 2020 project, which totals \$68,567,834 through June 30, 2017. The Audubon Nature Institute Board further certifies that the state matching funds requirement of 25% has been exceeded. (Messer/Rowan/unanimous)

Ms. Conkerton further reported that the Executive Committee has reviewed and approved the 2016 Audited Financial Statements. She stated that the financials were sent to the entire board for review. There were no questions and Ms. Conkerton asked to approve the audited financials as presented. (Werner/Dumas/unanimous)

Staff Reports

Ms. Ashley McClaran, VP of Construction, reported on current construction projects. She stated that Cooper Plaza's fountains are now turned on and the project has been completed. She then reported that the St. Charles Playground refurbishment is complete and open to the public. The playground on the Walnut Street side will be under construction soon and will be the first playground in New Orleans that will be handicap accessible.

Mr. Rich Toth, VP and Managing Director of Downtown Facilities, reported that the first Fried Chicken Festival to take place in Woldenberg Park drew in over 160,000 people. He further reported that the Geaux Fish exhibit is getting redesigned and will include a new Virtual Reality experience that focuses on ocean conservation. He then reported that negotiations will be finalized soon for an Escape Room experience that will be located in the theater lobby.

Mr. Forman introduced Mr. Kyle Burks, the new VP and Managing Director of the Zoo and Park. He stated that Mr. Burks was chosen after a nationwide search for a candidate and has previously worked at the Denver Zoo, Sacramento Zoo and Disneyworld. Mr. Burks reported that the Zoo will be inspected by the AZA soon for its standard re-accreditation. He further reported that some new animals will be coming to the Zoo over the next few months including gorillas and orangutans. He then reported that the Alliance for Sustainable Wildlife grand opening will take place on Thursday at the FMASSC and invited the board members to attend.

Mr. David Niebuhr, VP and Managing Director of the Nature Center, reported that the Nature Center is now open 7 days a week and there will be a grand opening celebration on Friday, October 6. He reported that the Nature Center was host a "White Linen Night," an after-hours event that gave close to 300 community members a look at the new facility including planetarium previews.

Mr. Forman reported that the city is proposing the installation of a pedestrian bridge on Audubon property near the Aquarium that will offer residents a way to walk over railroad tracks if a train is preventing them to cross. The city and RTA have asked that Audubon be a part of the design process and presented the board

members present with a draft Cooperative Endeavor Agreement among the City of New Orleans, Regional Transportation Authority and the Audubon Commission that the city prepared. Mr. Forman said he will update the board if a final draft is made available.

Ms. Lindsey Ezell and Ms. Taylor Sadrack from Animal Ambassadors presented a 20-year-old Hyacinth Macaw. The hyacinth is extremely endangered due to illegal trapping. Some can mimic human speech, including this one.

Willard Dumas
Recording Secretary

In attendance: Bardell, Cazes, Dumas, Farris, Gottsegen, Jacobs, Jaeger, LeClercq, Long, Moss, Romig, Rowan, Sloss, Smith, Vanderlinden, Werner, Westfeldt, Wiggins

Excused: Brown, Charpentier, Coaxum, Colhoun, D. Hooper, Kupperman, Lauscha, Messer, Palumbo, Perry, Quinn, Rice, Spears, Stall