

Audubon Commission Minutes

January 24, 2019

A meeting of the Audubon Commission was called to order on Thursday, January 24, 2019, at 4:00 p.m. in the Presidents’ Room at the Audubon Zoo by President Duncan.

Attending were: Linda Baum, Boysie Bollinger, Danny Conwill, Kelly Duncan, Frances Fayard, Bruce Hoefler, Beth Lambert, Catherine Morrell, Minh Nguyen, Field Ogden, Pamela Ryan, Ravi Sangisetty, Sally Shushan, Charles Teamer, Brent Wood

Excused were: Gayle Benson, Storey Charbonnet, Leila Eames, Ashley Francis, Lex Kelso, Olivia Manning, Coleman Ridley, Norma Jane Sabiston.

President Duncan opened the meeting and welcomed Minh Nguyen to his first meeting of the Audubon Commission. The minutes of November 15, 2018, meeting were unanimously accepted as distributed. Mr. Duncan welcomed the public in attendance and asked if anyone wanted to speak and they declined.

Nominating Committee Report

Beth Lambert, Nominating Committee Chair, reported that the Nominating Committee recommends the following slate for officers in 2019: President – Kelly Duncan, 1st Vice President – Danny Conwill, 2nd Vice President – Boysie Bollinger, Secretary – Linda Baum, Treasurer – Brent Wood, Immediate Past President – vacant. The motion was considered and approved unanimously by the Commission.
(Teamer/Sangisetty/unanimous)

Finance Report

Ms. Conkerton, EVP, and CAO reviewed the November 2018 Operating Budget:
November Operating Budget (in thousands)

NOVEMBER 2018 FINANCIAL DASHBOARD <i>(AMOUNTS IN THOUSANDS)</i>						
NET OPERATING RESULTS BY FACILITY:						
FACILITY	YTD ACTUAL 2018	YTD BUDGET 2018	BUDGET VARIANCE	YTD ACTUAL 2017	PRIOR YEAR VARIANCE	TOTAL BUDGET 2018
Aquarium/EGST	7,874	6,864	1,010	7,282	592	6,556
Zoo & Park	(4,577)	(4,179)	(398)	(3,984)	(593)	(5,349)
Butterfly Garden & Insectarium	600	93	507	409	191	77
FMASSC	(123)	(467)	344	(376)	253	(548)
Louisiana Nature Center	(257)	(331)	74	(103)	(154)	(355)
	\$3,517	\$1,980	\$1,537	\$3,228	\$289	\$381
Excludes capital revenues and expenses.						

Ms. Conkerton reported that overall revenue through November 2018 was running 1% lower than budgeted and 4% greater than actual. She further reported that attendance through November 30, 2018, is 1,958,000 with a year-end target of 2.1 million. She then reported that total expenses are 4% lower than budgeted and 4% greater than 2017 actual.

Ms. Conkerton reported that a resolution was needed stating that the Audubon Commission attests that the Louisiana Compliance Questionnaire for Audit Engagements of Government Agencies was presented to and adopted by the governing body, by request of Louisiana Legislative Auditor, Daryl G. Pupera, CPA, CFE. The motion was considered and approved by the Commission. (Bollinger/Lambert/unanimous)

Ms. Conkerton further reported that a resolution was needed authorizing the President of the Audubon Commission to sign an audit engagement letter with LaPorte CPAs & Business Advisors to complete the yearly external audit. The motion was considered and approved by the Commission. (Conwill/Bollinger/unanimous)

Ms. Conkerton then discussed the Pedestrian Bridge CEA. She reported that due to construction bids coming into Regional Transit Authority (RTA) far greater than expected, RTA and the City of New Orleans decided to explore alternatives regarding the current pedestrian bridge structure. She further reported that Audubon would not be actively involved in the process going forward and all monies received for the project will be transferred back to the City of New Orleans and RTA. She asked for a motion authorizing the President of the Audubon Commission to execute a Termination Agreement relating to the Audubon Commission's participation in design, construction, and funding of the RTA Ferry Terminal Pedestrian Bridge. After a brief discussion, the motion was considered and approved by the Commission. (Conwill/Bollinger/unanimous)

Executive Committee Report

Mr. Duncan gave the Executive Committee Report. He stated that an Executive Committee meeting was held on Monday, January 15, 2019, at 9:00 am to discuss a draft Cooperative Endeavor Agreement (CEA) between the Audubon Commission, City Park, New Orleans Recreation Department and Parks and Parkways for the shared parks and recreation millage. Mr. Duncan reported that a discussion was held and recommendations made to Audubon's General Counsel Ms. Rebecca Dietz.

Ms. Dietz then reported that she incorporated the suggested recommendations into the CEA and has sent the new draft to all parties. She further reported that a motion was needed authorizing the President of the Audubon Commission to execute the CEA Agreement between Audubon Commission, City Park, New Orleans Recreation Department and Parks and Parkways for the shared parks and recreation millage as approved by Executive Committee and General Counsel. After a brief discussion, the motion was considered and approved by the Commission. (Baum/Wood/unanimous)

Staff Reports

Ms. Dietz further reported that Audubon has started the "Community Connect" program to provide more access to Audubon facilities for Orleans Parish residents. This will include Orleans Parish Appreciation Days that offer complimentary admission every Wednesday to Audubon attractions. Appreciation days rotate each week from the Zoo, Aquarium, Butterfly Garden and Insectarium, and Planetarium (Louisiana Nature Center). It will also include an Audubon SNAP Program where Orleans Parish SNAP benefit recipients will receive complimentary admission to Audubon attractions year-round. Also included is an Audubon Museum Partner Pass in which Audubon is partnering with New Orleans Public Library to offer Library Passes available for checkout by library cardholders.

Ms. Dietz further reported that a list of Audubon Committees has been prepared and if anyone would like to be on a different committee to please let us know.

Mr. Rich Toth, VP and Managing Director of Downtown Facilities reported that a motion was needed authorizing the President of the Commission or President and CEO of Audubon Nature Institute to execute a contract with KMT Painting & Decorating, LLC to remove rust and paint on all overhead steel structure and framing over the 9,150 square foot main tank area of the Audubon Aquatic Center. The proposed cost is approximately \$180,000. The motion was considered and approved by the Commission.
(Shushan/Morrell/unanimous)

Mr. Toth further reported that the Escape room, a new interactive exhibit at the Aquarium should be ready for opening in the next month. He then reported the Association of Zoos and Aquariums have recently completed their accreditation of the Aquarium which happens every 5 years. He further reported that the Aquarium has been nominated for the 2019 Love Your City Resource Management Award for the Aquarium's work in reducing single-use plastics.

Dr. Kyle Burks, Chief Operating Officer, reported that Zoo Lights proved to be a resounding success with good attendance and great work from the Audubon team. He then reported that construction continues on the Lion exhibit with the hopes of a late spring/early summer opening. He then reported that Audubon has hired a new Managing Director for the Uptown Facilities named Steve Marshall. Steve comes from El Paso Zoo and brings years of experience to Audubon.

Audubon staff presented a turkey vulture named Vlad. Vlad is a rehabbed vulture and is part of Audubon's Animal Ambassador free-flight program.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Linda G. Baum
Secretary