

Audubon Commission Meeting Minutes

October 25, 2018

A meeting of the Audubon Commission was called to order on Thursday, October 25, 2018, at 12:00 pm. in the Pisces Room of the Audubon Aquarium by President Duncan.

Attending were: Linda Baum, Boysie Bollinger, Danny Conwill, Kelly Duncan, Leila Eames, Deborah Harkins, Bruce Hofer, Lex Kelso, Beth Lambert, Field Ogden, Coleman Ridley, Pamela Ryan, Norma Jane Sabiston, Ravi Sangisetty, Sally Shushan, Brent Wood

Excused were: Gayle Benson, Storey Charbonnet, Frances Fayard, Ashley Francis, Olivia Manning, Catherine Morrell, Charles Teamer

Also attending: Henry Kinney, legal counsel.

Mr. Duncan opened the meeting by welcoming new commission members Sally Shushan and Alexander “Lex” Kelso. He further welcomed the other commission members and asking if there were any members of the public at the meeting. One member of the public spoke regarding procurement procedures.

The minutes of the June 27, 2018, meeting were unanimously accepted as distributed.

Finance Report

Ms. Conkerton, EVP, and CAO reported on Septembers year to date 2018 operating budget.

SEPTEMBER 2018 FINANCIAL DASHBOARD <i>(AMOUNTS IN THOUSANDS)</i>						
NET OPERATING RESULTS BY FACILITY:						
FACILITY	YTD ACTUAL 2018	YTD BUDGET 2018	<i>BUDGET VARIANCE</i>	YTD ACTUAL 2017	<i>PRIOR YEAR VARIANCE</i>	TOTAL BUDGET 2018
Aquarium/EGST	7,941	7,004	<i>937</i>	7,389	<i>552</i>	6,556
Zoo & Park	(3,454)	(3,245)	<i>(209)</i>	(2,553)	<i>(901)</i>	(5,349)
Butterfly Garden & Insectarium	594	211	<i>383</i>	541	<i>53</i>	77
FMASSC	(94)	(429)	<i>335</i>	(397)	<i>303</i>	(548)
Louisiana Nature Center	(211)	(241)	<i>30</i>	(65)	<i>(146)</i>	(355)
	\$4,776	\$3,300	<i>\$1,476</i>	\$4,915	<i>(\$139)</i>	\$381
<i>Excludes capital revenues and expenses.</i>						

Ms. Conkerton further reported that in every year that the millage does not roll up or down an authorization is needed by the Commission to maintain the current rate. She further reported that there was an incorrect date on

the agenda. One instance of “2018” should be changed to “2019”. Mr. Duncan asked for a motion to amend the agenda and motion to approve the proposed millage collection. (Baum/Sabiston/unanimous)

The Commission considered and approved the following (Sangisetty, Ogden, unanimous):

WHEREAS, in 2018 the millage levied by the Audubon Commission was 0.32 mills for the Audubon Zoo and 2.99 mills for the Audubon Aquarium of the Americas;

WHEREAS, in 2019, there is no millage roll-back or roll forward, and the Audubon Commission intends to maintain the millages at their current rates;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the following millages are hereby levied on the 2019 tax roll on all property subject to taxation by the Audubon Commission:

Audubon Zoo	0.32 mills
Audubon Aquarium of the Americas	2.99 mills

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the proper administrative officials of the Parish of Orleans, State of Louisiana, be and they are hereby empowered, authorized, and directed to spread said taxes, as hereinabove set forth, upon the assessment roll of said Parish for the year 2019, and to make the collection of the taxes imposed for and on behalf of the taxing authority, according to law, and that the taxes herein levied shall become a permanent lien and privilege on all property subject to taxation as herein set forth, and collection thereof shall be enforceable in the manner provided by law.

Ms. Conkerton further reported that a motion was needed authorizing the transfer of the millage funds from the Board of Liquidation to the Audubon Commission. President Duncan reported that a member of the Commission proposes that the words “all matters pertaining to these transfers” be stricken from the language and replaced with “to effect these transfers.” Mr. Duncan asked for a motion to amend the agenda and motion to approve the proposed tax transfer. (Conwill/Eames/unanimous)

The Commission considered and approved the following (Ogden/Lambert/unanimous):

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Audubon Commission in a public meeting held on October 25, 2018, that collections of the aquarium tax millage in excess of that needed to service the bonds shall be transferred in 2019 from the Board of Liquidation, City Debt, to the Audubon Commission;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that collections of the zoo tax millage in excess of that needed to service the bonds shall be transferred in 2019 from the Board of Liquidation, City Debt, to the Audubon Commission; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that J. Kelly Duncan and L. Ronald Forman be authorized to act on behalf of the Commission to effect these transfers.

Ms. Conkerton further reported that the 2017 Audited Financial Statements were reviewed by the Executive Committee at the June 5, 2018, Executive/Finance/Audit Committee meeting and were emailed to the full Commission on June 21, 2018. The Executive Committee approved the financials as presented. A motion to accept the Commission’s 2017 Audited Financial Statements was considered and approved by the Commission. (Hoefler/Lambert/unanimous)

Mr. Ron Forman, President, and CEO reported that discussions continue to take place on a shared parks millage with NORDC, City Park, Parks and Parkways and Audubon. The purpose of the shared mileage would be to provide each entity with a suitable amount for operation and maintenance of parks. He stated that he will keep the Commission updated as discussions continue.

Mr. Rich Toth, VP and Managing Director of Downtown Facilities, reported that an Escape Room experience located in the theater lobby of the Aquarium will be opening in November. The Escape Room will feature an interactive experience for all ages while teaching about shark conservation. He further reported that the Weeki Wachee Mermaids will be back at the Aquarium in November with some added features including a mermaid salon, breakfast and mermaid and pirate party. He then reported that the Shark Touch Pool is under construction with an expected opening in the summer of 2019.

Mr. Kyle Burks, VP and Managing Director of the Zoo and Park reported on uptown facilities. He stated that Watoto Farm is now open next to Watoto Walk at the Zoo. The 10,000 square foot paddock will serve as an outdoor classroom, teaching visitors about farm animals. He then reported that construction continues on the new lion exhibit and is still on track for a summer 2019 opening. Mr. Burks further reported that highly requested swings have now been added to the new playground at the front of Audubon Park. He then reported on several new births throughout the Zoo and the Alliance for Sustainable Wildlife including colobus, mandrill, howler monkeys, giraffe, and barasingha deer.

Mr. Burks further reported that a motion was needed authorizing the President of the Audubon Commission or the President & CEO of Audubon Nature Institute to execute a contract and any related documents with the lowest qualified bidder for the Tropical Birdhouse renovation which is currently out to bid. The project includes interior demolition of mechanical and electrical systems and major renovation of 12,211 square feet of space. Renovations include but are not limited to a new roof, open flight area exhibit with tropical landscaping, keeper areas, rearing room, office, new mechanical systems, and new lighting and electrical systems. The estimated cost is \$3,680,084. The motion was considered and approved. (Ridley/Bollinger/unanimous).

Mr. Burks then reported that a motion was needed authorizing the President of the Audubon Commission or the President & CEO of Audubon Nature Institute to execute a contract and any related documents with the lowest qualified bidder for an office build-out of 5,140 square feet of space on the second floor of the Nims Learning Center. The build-out includes but is not limited to staff offices, two cubicle areas, a break room, conference room, a copy/print room, and restrooms. The estimated cost is \$275,000. The motion was considered and approved. (Ogden/Baum/unanimous).

Mr. Burks then reported that a motion was needed authorizing the President of the Audubon Commission or the President & CEO of Audubon Nature Institute to sign a lease-purchase agreement with Wells Fargo Equipment Finance for golf maintenance equipment. The equipment includes but is not limited to precision cut mowers, riding mowers and ProGators. The lease term is 49 months at \$8011.74 plus applicable taxes a month. The motion was considered and approved. (Hoefler/Shushan/unanimous)

Ms. Rebecca Dietz, General Counsel and VP of Public Affairs, reported that she is leading the effort for outreach in regards to Riverfront redevelopment. She stated that a robust community engagement plan is in place to gather important community input and feedback in relation to the redevelopment of the Governor Nichols/Esplanade Wharves into public space.

Ms. Dietz further reported that a motion was needed authorizing the President of the Audubon Commission or the President & CEO of Audubon Nature Institute to sign an authorization for professional services agreement with Eskew, Dumez, Ripple for design services for riverfront revitalization. The project scope will include site development to support a public park as a community gathering space within an urban environment for a fixed fee amount of \$210,000. The motion was considered and approved. (Sabiston/Hoefler/unanimous)

Mr. Darwin Long introduced Sassy the penguin and talked about conservation initiatives regarding penguins.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Linda G. Baum
Secretary