

Audubon Commission Minutes

March 21, 2019

A meeting of the Audubon Commission was called to order on Thursday, March 21, 2019, at Noon in the Gulf Conference Room at the Audubon Aquarium by President Duncan.

Present were: Gayle Benson, Danny Conwill, Linda Baum, Kelly Duncan, Leila Eames, Bruce Hoefler, Lex Kelso, Beth Lambert, Nicole Lewis, Freddie King, Minh Nguyen, Field Ogden, Coleman Ridley, Ravi Sangisetty, Sally Shushan, Brent Wood

Excused were: Boysisie Bollinger, Storey Charbonnet, Frances Fayard, Ashley Francis, Catherine Morrell, Olivia Manning, Norma Jane Sabiston, Charles Teamer

The minutes of the January 24, 2019 meeting were unanimously accepted as distributed.

President Duncan opened the meeting and asked the one member of the public present if he would like comment and he declined.

Finance Report

Ms. Conkerton, EVP, and CAO reviewed the January 2019 Operating Budget (in thousands):

JANUARY 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	8	(216)	224	(136)	144	6,839
Zoo & Park	(1,026)	(1,213)	187	(1,261)	235	(5,702)
Butterfly Garden & Insectarium	(30)	(60)	30	(56)	26	387
FMASSC	(5)	(15)	10	70	(75)	(828)
Louisiana Nature Center	(23)	(21)	(2)	(22)	(1)	(349)
	(\$1,076)	(\$1,525)	\$449	(\$1,405)	\$329	\$347

Excludes capital revenues and expenses.

Ms. Conkerton reported on the financial statements as of January 31, 2019, stating that net revenue is 29% greater than budgeted and 23% greater than 2018 actual. She reported that total revenue is 4% greater than budgeted and 18% greater than 2018 actual. She further reported that attendance is 6% lower than budgeted but 28% higher than in 2018. She also stated that total expenses are 8% lower than budgeted and 2% greater than 2018 actual.

Staff Reports

Mr. Forman reported that the Together for Parks Millage campaign continues with the vote scheduled for May 4, 2019. He introduced Bob Becker, President and CEO of City Park and Ann McDonald, Director of Parks and Parkways who then gave an overview of the campaign for the shared parks and recreation millage. They both

stated the importance of the millage for their entities and thanked Audubon for its participation in the redistribution of the current millage funding. Ms. Rebecca Dietz, EVP of Public Affairs and General Counsel stated that the parks coalition is working hard to inform the community of the benefits of the millage. She reviewed several outreach strategies with the board members including a website, Facebook, Instagram, yard signs and neighborhood engagement.

Dr. Kyle Burks, EVP, and COO reported on the Association of Zoo's and Aquarium's Accreditation process and the standards and best case practices that all Audubon facilities must go through to be accredited. He then reported that Panya, Audubon's beloved Asian elephant, died after her health declined sharply due to kidney disease. He further reported that the difficult decision was made to euthanize the 55-year-old elephant after it became clear her condition was irreversible and her quality of life was being impacted. Dr. Burks then reported that the Zoo has welcomed Arnold, a four-year-old male lion from Oregon and three female lions from Peoria, Illinois. The lions are currently settling in behind the scenes.

Mr. Rich Toth, VP and Managing Director of Downtown Facilities reported that Shark Touch Pool construction is making progress and that the new Escape Room is near completion. He further reported that Audubon Aquarium was selected as the recipient of the 2019 Love Your City Resource Management Award for the Aquarium's work in reducing single-use plastics.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 1:15 pm.

Linda G. Baum
Secretary