

Audubon Commission Aquarium Committee Minutes

December 8, 2016, 5:30 pm

Attending: Kelly Duncan, Commission President, Bruce Hoefer, Christopher Meeks, Beth Lambert and Field Ogden.

Mr. Duncan thanked everyone for attending the Audubon Commission Aquarium Committee meeting. He reported that this was the second in a series of meetings to gather public input on the future of the Aquarium. Kelly stated that these are important meetings to get information out to the public about Aquarium projects.

Mr. Forman, President and CEO of Audubon Nature Institute, thanked the public for attending the meeting. He stated that the Aquarium has seen great success over the past 25 years and in order to continue that success Audubon has to invest in the building. He stated that this is the second public meeting and that Audubon would take the comments from the first two meetings and have a third meeting with sketches and conceptual designs to show to the public and then take it to the full Commission for approval.

Ashley McClaran, VP of Construction, recapped what was discussed during the first public meeting. She stated that increased interaction with animals, technology, active conservation initiatives immersive exhibits, more mermaids, more sharks and making sure all guests are a part of the experience including special needs, at-risk youth, and elderly visitors were all discussed. Maximizing the Amazon exhibit space, continuing success in the penguin breeding program, possible moves of education classrooms, changing exhibits and potentially moving the Insectarium into the Aquarium were all discussed.

Ms. McClaran showed an architect diagram of the entrance to the Aquarium and spoke about possibly combining the theater and general aquarium entrance into one for better pedestrian flow. She then stated that preliminary space studies have been done and showed a diagram.

Mr. Duncan asked if there were any comments or feedback. Mr. Hoefer asked if Audubon has received any negative feedback on anything that was talked about. Mr. Forman at this stage there has been no negative comment. Mr. Hoefer asked if this meeting was advertised properly and Mr. Forman said yes and that an extra step was taken to buy ads in the local newspapers.

A member of the public present, Wendy Dumurr, stated that as a local public teacher the Insectarium has very small spaces for educational purposes and she thinks that a move to the Aquarium would serve the public well. Mr. Forman stated that the Insectarium gets great guest reviews and the entomologists are very passionate about their work. He stated that the building is a federal building and the Insectarium is isolated and the building is not a user-friendly space. He further talked about the unused space in the Aquarium and how it can be used for educational exhibitry.

Mr. Forman reminded everyone present that they can always submit comments online and that the next meeting will include some more specific drawings. Ms. Lambert asked if the building

itself would be expanding and Mr. Forman stated that there is no plan at this time to add additional space to the building.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm.