



October 25, 2010

Arts, Parks, Health, and Aging Committee
c/o Eric Villanueva, Legislative Assistant, City Clerk's Office
City Hall, Room 395
Los Angeles, CA 90012

"Nurturing
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and enriching
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John R. Lewis
Zoo Director

Dear Honorable Members:

REPORT ON C.F. #10-1619 – UPDATE ON BUDGET RELATED ISSUES

The Zoo Department submits this letter in response to the council motion (C.F.#10-1619) regarding update information relative to current budgetary issues.

Attendance and Revenue

Currently, the Zoo is on target to meet and or exceed both its projected yearly attendance and its projected yearly revenue goals. We anticipate the opening of the *Elephants of Asia* exhibit in December 2010, will continue to bring in visitors and revenue through the second half of this fiscal year.

As of September 30, 2010:

- Actual Y-T-D attendance is 366,611 that is 12.8% above the projected 325,000
- Actual Y-T-D revenue is \$2,890,322 that is 22% above the projected \$2,361,250

Staffing and Hiring

For the 2010-11 FY, the Zoo was authorized for 229 positions, the lowest number of approved positions in over 10 years; currently the department has 31 vacant positions. This department's exemption for the Managed Hiring process has allowed the filling of a few vital positions, such as Animal Keeper and Curator of Education I. The filling of these positions has allowed the Zoo Department to continue with its core functions of caring for 1,100 animals and providing a quality educational destination for the residents and visitors of the City of Los Angeles. There has been greater difficulty in securing candidates due to the department only being able to offer these positions on a lateral transfer basis. Potential candidates are also hesitant to make a transfer to the Zoo given the current discussions about privatization. The ability to fill positions is critical to maintaining operations seven days a week, reducing the potential for overtime and injuries on the job, servicing facilities and patrons, and maintaining a sufficient workforce to meet workload demands in compliance with USDA and AZA guidelines as well.

Educational Programs

The Zoo's Education Division continues to provide Summer and Winter Camps, Creature Campouts and Zoopendous Nights (overnight camping), various children's courses/programs on grounds, as well as the Zoo's popular Zoo Mobile. While these various activities provide a great experience for our visitors, this division has been forced to reduce the frequency of these programs by moving to a rotation of classes and camps by season rather than year-long programming.



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- Summer Camp (July – Aug. 2010) served 788 campers ages 4 – 12 years old
- Overnight Camps (July – Sept. 2010) served 237 campers ages 7 – adult
- CA Condor Rescue Zone (July – Sept. 2010) has served 6,781 visitors
- Classroom Programs (Sept. 2010) have served 416 children ages 2 – 17 years old

Elephants of Asia Opening December 2010

The Department anticipates opening the new Elephants of Asia exhibit at the end of this calendar year. This will be the largest exhibit opening for the Zoo since the opening of Campo Gorilla Reserve in 2007. The Zoo did not receive any additional funding in its budget to cover operations and maintenance costs or furnishings, fixtures, and equipment needed to make the exhibit fully operational. Any continued revenue surpluses at this point will be held in reserve to aid in funding these costs as well as reserved for any potential revenue shortfalls at the end of the year.

Status of Fee Based Parking

The Zoo has been working with the Department of General Services and a parking consultant to identify and recommend the most feasible parking fee collection system that would be best adapted to the configuration of the Zoo's parking lot once the Prop O Parking Lot Project has been completed. The consultant is currently surveying parking flow, patterns, and usage during our peak days to make its recommendation within the next couple of months. Infrastructure has been added during the current parking lot construction to allow for the potential for future installation of an automated parking fee collection system.

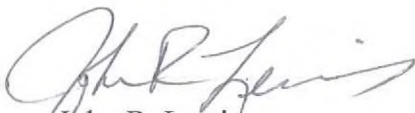
Budgetary Restraints and Current Issues

While the Zoo Department staff continue to provide quality care to our animal collection, and a didactic experience for our visitors, some noticeable service impacts have been experienced from the reduced budget and staffing. These impacts are:

- Animal Contact yard is open only for four hours, four days a week versus open all day, every day
- Landscape/Gardeners are limited to maintenance only as they have to assist the severely reduced custodial staff with their duties which include the cleaning of public pathways and restrooms
- Limited Administrative staff, especially in our financial/accounting division, have impacted this Department's ability to attend meetings, training, and to submit requested reports to the City in a timely manner
- Reduced GF contributions required the Zoo Enterprise Trust Funds to be used for operational costs
- The interactive CA Condor Rescue Zone is only open to visitors on weekends
- Elimination of Adventure Theatre and Kids Korner programming from the Winnick Family Children's Zoo

If you require any additional information, please contact me at (323) 644-4261.

Sincerely,



John R. Lewis
General Manager

JRL/MK:lg