Committee Members Present:

Karen Sisson, Acting City Administrative Officer (CAO), Chair
Lynne Ozawa, Chief Legislative Analyst's (CLA) Office
Chris Espinosa, Mayor’s Office
John Lewis, Los Angeles Zoo

Others Present:

Tricia Carey, CLA; Claudia Aguilar, Ellen Sandt, CAO; Pete Echeverria, City Attorney's Office; Stephanie Clements, Nick Pendorf, General Services Department (GSD); Connie Morgan, Greater Los Angeles Zoo Association (GLAZA); Catherine Doyle, Public; John Olinger, Public Works, Bureau of Contract Administration (BCA); Rebecca Abano, Gary Moore, Public Works Bureau of Engineering (BOE); Kyla May, Darryl Pon, Denise Verret, Los Angeles Zoo.

Ms. Karen Sisson called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

1. Minutes for Approval – Meeting of October 26, 2006

Mr. John Lewis moved to approve the Zoo Bond Oversight Committee (ZBOC) meeting minutes of October 26, 2006. Ms. Lynne Ozawa seconded and the motion passed without objection.

2. Bureau of Engineering Program Manager Status Report

Ms. Rebecca Abano reported on the progress of the Zoo's Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Overall, the CIP is progressing remarkably, particularly the projects in construction. Of the five final active projects, two are in design, two are in construction and one is in both design and construction. There is no change to the master program budget through December 2006. $85.8M has been expended of the $169M approved budget. No changes have been made to the master program schedule.

Pachyderm Forest

The exhibit expansion design is in progress; the architect is the Portico Group. Design efforts are focused on the project’s Phase Two. In order to expedite construction of the project, its six-acre parcel has been broken up into four phases. General Services Department (GSD) is doing Phase One, which is demolition and utility construction. Phase Two is construction of Yard Three and the Cambodian Viewing Structure. Phase Three is construction of the rest of the exhibit. Phase Two also encompasses the Elephant Barn remodel, so Billy the elephant can be moved to the new yard and barn.
On November 28, 2006, the Portico Group submitted 100% schematic design, including a schematic design cost estimate. The Bureau of Engineering (BOE) reviewed both, and had a cost consultant validate the cost estimate. With that review, a workshop was held on January 12, 2007, comments were given on the schematic design. Portico agreed to make changes as noted, and to resolve cost issues. Portico continues to work on the design to get the project on track in terms of budget. Phase Two design should be complete and ready for construction in June 2007. Meeting these design completion dates is contingent on Portico’s contract amendment. The Board of Public Works (BPW) approved the amendment in December 2006. The Arts, Parks, Health and Aging Committee approved it on January 10, 2007; it is scheduled to go to City Council on January 26, 2007.

BOE also continues to prepare for general construction. GSD is currently performing preliminary construction; they have completed the temporary reptile facility, so the existing Reptile House can now be demolished. The Zoo is moving out of the Reptile House this week. GSD has started the early stages of demolition and has trenched, cut and capped utilities, and started to clear and grub all landscaping to be removed.

One project issue is the Project Management/Construction Management (PM/CM) contract. The selected consultant is Psomas, and is a needed resource for this project. Psomas does the cost estimating, scheduling, and assists on construction management. BPW has approved this contract; which now requires the Mayor's approval, for which a report from the City Administrative Officer (CAO) is needed.

Mr. Gary Moore stated that he and Mr. Lewis had been working nonstop with Ms. Abano on this issue. They met with Portico on the design and continued to emphasize the importance of this project staying on schedule. Mr. Chris Espinosa asked Ms. Abano what cost difference was determined through the value engineering. Ms. Abano replied that the architect has been asked to design a $25M project to the midpoint of construction. The architect’s estimate was over, at $27M. BOE’s estimator looked at their figures and unit prices, which were low for California construction; the validation came to approximately $31M. The workshop was held with Mr. Lewis present.

The design made it difficult to construct certain things, such as a two-level basement for life support, which is very expensive even for simple things like underground parking. The value engineering has impacted mostly similar things; the experience of the exhibit has not changed. Mr. Lewis noted that these items have largely been relocated and spread out, versus housing them in one complete facility. Zoo staff raised the issue that a facility in the same location historically had flooding problems, so for operational reasons that space didn’t make sense. Mr. Espinosa asked if Mr. Lewis was fine with the value engineering actions, Mr. Lewis replied yes. Mr. Moore reiterated that any functional changes made will be openly brought before the Committee.

Ms. Sisson asked regarding the redesign necessary after the value engineering, if that activity will require additional design funds. Ms. Abano replied no, this is part of the design process. Mr. Moore agreed, this was within the scope of the budget.
Rainforest of the Americas

Ms. Abano continued. The Rainforest of the Americas design program is completed and schematic design has begun. A workshop was held on January 11, 2007 and another workshop is scheduled for January 30, 2007. Design is anticipated to be completed in Fall 2007.

Reptile and Insect Interpretative Center

The Reptile and Insect Interpretative Center is in the schematic design phase. The next workshop is scheduled for February 27, 2007; design is anticipated to be completed by Fall 2007.

Mr. Espinosa asked if the exhibit will house a green roof. Ms. Abano replied yes, a green roof is included in the project. The Committee briefly discussed the green roof within the exhibit’s design.

Gorilla Exhibit Project

The construction is making excellent progress, is 58% complete, and ahead of schedule. Current activities include installation of exhibit walls using shotcrete and rebar, and roofing installation on the holding building. Ms. Abano offered to provide progress photos at the next meeting. Mr. Moore added that BOE had a meeting with Councilmember LaBonge, who is also pushing BOE to stay on schedule.

The Golden Monkey Exhibit

Construction is 25% complete. GSD is the contractor for the project, and have completed demolition of existing moats and installation of shoring. The foundation of the holding building is currently under construction.

A project issue is that GSD has not received any funds for the project. The project was approved in July 2006; the Notice to Proceed (NTP) was issued in September 2006, but none of the funds have been transferred to GSD. Either this project will go on hold, or the Pachyderm Forest Phase One will; BOE has the funding for the Pachyderm Forest, which has gone into GSD funds. GSD has used this funding to cash flow both projects; when GSD open purchase orders to subcontractors and vendors, they need all the funding upfront. GSD has already committed $1.3M to the Golden Monkey Exhibit with zero dollars; and has spent approximately $400K on the Pachyderm Forest, from which not enough funds are left to issue a fairly large subcontract. Ms. Sisson asked where the funds are transferred from. Ms. Abano replied from various accounts. Ms. Sisson asked when the funds would be needed, outside of immediately.

Mr. Nick Pendorf replied that GSD partnered with BOE to meet with the subcontractor in order to negotiate the bid and ensure it was reasonable on all line items.
The vendor is currently going to submit a revised bid; in order to award the contract, the funds are needed. GSD is doing in-house construction, such as capping utilities, grubbing, rerouting pedestrian paths, etc., but GSD would like to award the contract within two weeks.

Ms. Ozawa asked if the CAO has an issue with the $1.3M to be transferred. Ms. Aguilar replied that the issue had not been brought forward in time for the first financial status report. Ms. Ozawa suggested to Ms. Renee Weitzer that a City Council motion could be written for Councilmember LaBonge to introduce, to be sent to Arts Committee or to be waived in order to expedite. Ms. Sisson commented that the necessary report regards a massive reallocation of funds among multiple projects, and will take time for preparation. The Committee briefly discussed the necessary steps for expedition.

Mr. Lewis asked if a recommendation could be made that such projects with time-pressures carry their own track and not wait for financial reports. Ms. Sisson replied this is okay as long as such projects are reviewed for fund transfer, but it’s preferable to not piecemeal this, as it’s hard to track. Ms. Claudia Aguilar stated that she will be working with Ms. Abano to create a schedule of required funding, in order to have time to anticipate these needs. Ms. Sisson stated it would be great to have a cash-flow drawdown schedule, which would help the CAO’s office anticipate required funding, and back up report dates to meet drawdown schedules, similarly with contract terminations or renewal dates. Such a plan would trigger the CAO’s office to make a phone call if they haven’t heard from the pertinent agency by a certain time. More information given upfront, particularly at budget time, helps the CAO’s office do forward planning, so budget issues can be dealt with before they become urgent and immediate. While reports are helpful, they don’t provide the necessary information for planning, such as drawdown schedule and contract termination dates.

Mr. Moore noted that BOE would do that, but in general, everything is urgent, because every project is wanted yesterday. The general assumption is that everything BOE is bringing forward, moves within thirty days. Ms. Sisson continued her observations on the necessity for a prioritization of funding schedules and a plan of sequencing. If the CAO’s office can receive a draw-down schedule and contract terminations, their commitment will be to get ahead of the curve and dedicate appropriate staffing resources.

Mr. Lewis stated his wholehearted support for this idea, and suggested that all steps prior to starting construction be included. Brief discussion of this concept continued.

Pachyderm Forest Phase One

Ms. Abano continued with her report. Regarding the Pachyderm Forest, BPW awarded construction for Phase One to GSD in the amount of $2,178M. The NTP was issued on July 24, 2006. To date, $445,451 has been expended on the project. The temporary reptile facility caging has been completed; also the South American pathway entrances have been done to meet exiting closed off by the Pachyderm Forest site.
All of the construction fencing and gates have been put up and the trenching, cutting and capping are currently being done. The NTP is about to be issued for the demolition contractor, so the existing Reptile House, moats and half-roundhouse on the exhibit site can be torn out.

**Front Entry Project - Children’s Discovery Center and Zoo Entry Plaza & Sea Lion Exhibit**

These projects were constructed together and are complete. The projects’ work orders have been closed out. Very small dollars are left in the projects and the Zoo would like to spend these funds for fixes. Mr. Lewis asked how much funding was left. Ms. Abano replied that the remaining CDC Proposition K funds are approximately $45K; the Zoo Entry Plaza & Sea Lion Exhibit remaining funds are just under $200K. Ms. Abano referred to Ms. Aguilar for the exact numbers. Ms. Aguilar stated that she is working with the Zoo Bond project manager to go through open encumbrances. Mr. Lewis responded that he is asking because the Zoo has not fully vetted what to spend the funds on. Ms. Aguilar replied that right now there is a $50K encumbrance that is no longer needed, so that’s more funding for the Zoo to access. Mr. Lewis responded that from the Zoo’s perspective, the sequence is relative to projects, assigning different priorities relevant to funding available. Ms. Aguilar continued to describe her process.

Ms. Abano concluded her BOE Program Manager’s Status Report.


Mr. Lewis reported that he recently attended a meeting that included all panda holders in North America, to discuss issues relative to Chinese-America wildlife relationships. Mr. Lewis reaffirmed that right now, all programs are stuck, due to the relationship between the Chinese Scientific Authority office and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. The managers in China are due to retire right after Spring Festival, so the current approach is to contact their office once the new managers have been assigned. Interestingly, some of the panda programs have their permits, but don’t have their list of projects approved by the Fish and Wildlife Service, which is a rub to the Chinese, as the U.S. government is telling them how to spend their research project funds.

The Los Angeles Zoo has their permit, has their list approved, and their agreement with China, but still don’t have the animals; and so are caught up in the argument between the two agencies. One concern is that Fish and Wildlife Service’s budget may soon be cut by 20%, which will go directly to the permit office, which will slow down all endangered animal activities the Zoo is involved in. Ms. Weitzer asked if the Zoo has its permit. Mr. Lewis replied the Zoo will need a permit from both countries, and has the import permit from the Department of the Interior, but doesn't have an export permit from China. What the Zoo has is an agreement with China to send the golden monkeys, but doesn’t have the actual Convention of International Trade of Endangered Species permit, which is issued by the Chinese government. Mr. Lewis concluded that the attitude amongst the zoo community is that the Zoo will get the animals.

Ms. Connie Morgan reported on GLAZA fundraising for the Pachyderm Forest. Since the last Committee meeting in October 2006, $485K has been received in gifts and pledges across the board from foundations, corporations, trustees and individuals. GLAZA will make the commitment to the project and look forward to closing it out.

Next Meeting: February 22, 2007

Public Comment

Ms. Catherine Doyle stated that she hopes that the elephant exhibit architect will attend a Committee meeting to address any mitigating efforts during construction to protect Billy the elephant. She asked a question regarding the size of the smallest yard in the project; from what she understands, it is the same size as Billy’s current exhibit space and doesn’t have access to the other yards. Mr. Lewis replied the yards will be interconnected; one connection will be towards the old hippo exhibit, in that direction. In the rear of this yard the connection will be through the elephant barn. Ms. Doyle stated that her understanding was that the yards could be opened to combine the space; her concern is that if the whole issue is space, why there would be a very small separate yard at the bottom.

She asked if the exhibit could be designed so the yard can be combined with other yards; she understands that it is to be a display or demonstration yard, and she feels even if elephants are in the space for short amounts of time, it is going to bring out abnormal behaviors. Mr. Lewis replied that is not the intent; this yard is segregated so that during the demonstration, the animal in the space can be controlled. In the other yards, each individual animal wouldn’t be required to stay in one space for a longer period of time. Ms. Doyle asked if having this yard for demonstration purposes is a waste of space. Mr. Lewis replied the concept is to be able to control the space while demonstrations are happening. Ms. Doyle asked if by control, Mr. Lewis meant the yard could be shut off, or separated. Mr. Lewis replied yes, each of the four yards has a gate, so the animals can be given a potential combination of yards, in order to be able to manage the individual animals. Ms. Doyle thanked Mr. Lewis for clarifying that.

Ms. Sisson adjourned the meeting at 10:40 a.m.

Minutes prepared and submitted by Ms. Kyla May of the Los Angeles Zoo’s Planning and Development Division. Reviewed by BOE, CLA, CAO and the Zoo.