Committee Members Present:

Maria Cardenas, Office of the City Administrative Officer (CAO), Chair
Gerry Miller, Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA)
Chris Espinosa, Mayor’s Office
John Lewis, Los Angeles Zoo

Others Present:

Emily Mayeda, CAO; Renee Weitzer, Council District 4; Nick Pendorf, General Services Department (GSD); Jeb Bonner, Greater Los Angeles Zoo Association (GLAZA); Rebecca Abano, Lynette Howlett, Deborah Weintraub, Public Works Bureau of Engineering (BOE); Kyla May, Darryl Pon, Los Angeles Zoo.

Ms. Maria Cardenas called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.

1. Minutes for Approval – Meeting of January 31, 2008

Mr. Gerry Miller moved to approve the Zoo Bond Oversight Committee (ZBOC) special meeting minutes of January 31, 2008. Mr. John Lewis seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Bureau of Engineering Program Manager Status Report

Ms. Rebecca Abano reported on the progress of the Zoo’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

Master Program Budget

Through the end of January 2008, $99.2M has been expended of the $169M approved budget.

The only outstanding payment left on the Gorilla Exhibit project is a $385K withhold by the Office of Contract Compliance on AKG’s construction contract. All other payments, vendors, or consultants in retaining have been paid out or are in process for payment. The total project expenditure, including the $385K which will be eventually paid out, is $17,705,209. The project has a total savings of $1,325,907.

Ms. Cardenas asked what the withhold amount was for. Ms. Abano answered the Office of Contract Compliance is withholding it for issues such as prevailing wage issues on some of AKG’s subs, and not AKG themselves.
Ms. Abano reported she had just received a payment in process from the Bureau of Contract Administration (BCA) releasing a portion of the $385K. If the contractor doesn't resolve the issues, the money would have to be sent to the state. Either way, the money is committed as an expense; it does not go back to the bond fund. Ms. Abano added that the Committee would eventually need to decide what to do with the project’s savings.

Mr. Lewis asked when the savings would be discussed. Ms. Cardenas replied that an action item would need to agendized. The Committee briefly discussed this.

**Master Program Schedule**

Ms. Abano continued: as she reported last month, delay issues were being experienced in the design delivery for the Reptile and Insect Interpretative Center and the Rainforest of the Americas projects. A draft of the Proposed Master Schedule Revision was distributed to the Committee. BOE proposed pushing out the Reptile project by four months and the Rainforest project by six months. The Reptile project would then have a completion date of September 30, 2010, and the Rainforest project a completion date of March 2011. This will add float back into the construction periods; right now the design is eating into the back end float of construction.

Ms. Cardenas asked if the projects have 100% design within budget. Ms. Abano replied, for the Reptile project, yes. The Rainforest project is waiting for the last estimate. The Reptile design is further on and in the construction document phase. The architect has just completed 50% and BOE has completed the 50% review. The architect is moving on; the project is right on track. Ms. Cardenas asked if the Reptile project budget estimate, based on the design, is now within the construction budget. Ms. Abano replied yes.

Ms. Cardenas asked about the Rainforest of the Americas project. Ms. Abano replied a few things on the drawings need to be resolved and she believes when these design issues are resolved, the project will be brought into the budget as well. Ms. Cardenas asked what the magnitude of difference was. Ms. Abano answered the last submittal turned in was a little over $1M. Ms. Cardenas asked overbudget, Ms. Abano replied overbudget.

Mr. Lewis asked what the ramifications of not changing the schedule are. Ms. Abano replied that the schedule would be blown. Mr. Lewis asked what difference it makes whether the schedule is blown by moving it, what the functional reason for this is versus just sticking to the schedule and trying to meet it. Ms. Abano replied that the schedule is not going to be met as shown. Ms. Deborah Weintraub stated that the issue could be revisited when the drawings are done and it is known when construction will start.

Ms. Cardenas asked Mr. Lewis if his question was what the problem is reporting projects behind schedule versus on schedule on a new revised schedule. Mr. Lewis responded right.
Mr. Chris Espinosa stated that his assumption is that the construction schedule is the most critical, because that’s where the most money is spent. The design dictates the construction schedule, so the adjustment is made during design, rather than while in construction, because then the wrong expectation is given to City officials, et al, that the project is on schedule.

Ms. Cardenas added the schedule is really important also, in terms of funding. If a schedule moves construction over into a new fiscal year, or close to the beginning of one, the funding can be spread out and balanced. $10M in future Municipal Improvement Corporation of Los Angeles (MICLA) funding is still needed to complete the Reptile and Rainforest projects. If a construction schedule for either of those projects moves close to the next fiscal year, then MICLA funding would not be recommended, which would be an overall help. Right now, this doesn’t affect it, because these two projects on this revised schedule would still go to construction in 2008 or 2009. If the start dates were moved further back, then funding probably wouldn’t be needed for one of them until the next fiscal year.

Mr. Lewis clarified that the answer was: a. a communication issue, and b. potentially a fiscal or financial issue as well, if the funding can be spread out. He stated that he asked because the Zoo Commission’s concern is that if the schedule is moved, it is not met. These issues will be brought up and he needs to be able to respond as to why it’s important to adjust the schedule.

The Committee briefly discussed the reasons for, and semantics of explaining, setting or resetting a project schedule. Mr. Miller suggested a decision on a revised schedule be made when design is complete and the project is ready to go out to bid. The Committee agreed with this suggestion.

Status of Active Projects

Pachyderm Forest

The Portico Group, the project’s design architect, is currently revising the documents to incorporate the Department of Building and Safety (BAS) plan check comments, as well as BOE’s constructability review comments. The documents are anticipated to be ready for bidding in late April 2008.

A Notice to Proceed (NTP) for Phase Two was issued to General Services Department (GSD). Since then, they have received bids on caging - i.e., the elephant barriers, demolition and grading, and life support systems. The bid for life support systems came in at $495K, which is substantially higher than BOE’s Class A estimate of $200K. The bid for caging came in at $829K, and BOE’s estimate was $450K. The bids for demolition and grading came in below BOE’s estimate, and because of that, GSD has begun the grading activity on the site.
Ms. Cardenas asked Ms. Abano if, overall for Phase Two, the budget does not have enough money. Ms. Abano replied, yes, the contingency is not large enough for the two overrun bids.

BOE is working on different processes. In caging, because elephant barriers are made out of structural steel with buried footings and have chains attached, this has been included in the structural steel bid package. A price comparison can be done to ensure that no gouging is being done by the sole-source. The caging only received one bid, because GSD only has one vendor that does caging. It is being given to the structural steel to compare prices and it is hoped that the pricing may come in more competitively, because they have more structural steel vendors than caging vendors.

Ms. Cardenas asked if the structural steel was part of Phase Two or Three. Ms Abano replied Phase Two. The temporary shade structure has structural steel in it, which was added as an alternate unit item as part of the structural package. Competitive bids are due on March 10, 2008.

Pricing is being obtained for the project’s life support systems. Other vendors do not have a City contract, but it’s necessary to know the pricing so to have a comparison, in order to negotiate with the single-bid vendor. BOE is in the process of trying to work out the bid within the budget. Ms. Cardenas asked if this was something GSD does or BOE. Ms. Abano replied GSD.

Ms. Renee Weitzer asked if the shade structure was for the elephant or for the people. Ms. Abano replied for the elephant. Ms. Weitzer then asked what the steel fencing was. Ms. Abano replied that was the elephant barriers. Ms. Weitzer stated that she knows in other zoos, logs are used, which seems a lot cheaper; and she asked if that’s that not good enough. Mr. Lewis stated that steel is a pretty typical application. Ms. Cardenas stated that since it was previously reported that the Gorilla Exhibit had savings, so it would probably be okay. Mr. Lewis added that Ms. Abano previously reported that the high steel bid was from one vendor, so it’s been repackaged to get a more competitive bid.

Ms. Cardenas noted the intention is to minimize cost overruns on Phase Two, but the fallback on savings doesn’t have to be used right away; two other major projects are outstanding. She asked Ms. Abano who did the Phase Three constructability review. Ms. Abano replied the Project Management/Construction Management (PM/CM) Psomas Group did the review; and then BOE’s and the Zoo’s comments were mixed in. Ms. Cardenas asked if the plans and estimates were verified as good. Ms. Abano answered yes, a Class A estimate was also done, which came in a little higher at $28M, the design was asked for $25M. Ms. Abano continued to describe the cost estimate process.

Ms. Abano continued her report.

GSD is working onsite and has started grading activity. Billy the elephant is anticipated to be moved into the new yard in May 2008. BOE is also assisting the Department of
Water and Power (DWP) with the design of TS1A. The old transformer is now sitting in the elephant barn, which can’t be demolished until the transformer is replaced. Plan check is almost done; once it is, DWP will bid out TS1A. Completion is anticipated in October 2008.

Rainforest of the Americas

Portico started the construction document phase recently, and has requested a time extension on the project design.

Reptile and Insect Interpretative Center

50% construction documents have been completed; 100% construction documents are anticipated by mid-March 2008. The architect has also asked for an extension on the construction time.

The Golden Monkey Exhibit

Construction is substantially complete, except for obtaining a Certificate of Occupancy, which can’t be issued until the project has permanent power. This involves completion of the TS14 transformer, which DWP is working on. Parts and pieces have been ordered, and completion is anticipated by April 2008. Notably, TS14 also provides power to Pachyderm Forest Phase Two.

Mr. Espinosa asked where the Golden Monkey Exhibit location was. Mr. Lewis replied by the tiger exhibit. Ms. Abano added that the new ADA walkway in that part of the Zoo connects the tiger exhibit to the snow leopard exhibit.

Ms. Abano concluded her report.


Mr. Lewis reported that since the last meeting, he has had several communications with the China Wildlife Conservation Association; a date has not been set, but it’s moving good.

Ms. Weitzer stated that her office is very close with the Chinese consulate, and offered her help. Mr. Lewis replied that the Secretary General has assigned a Vice-Secretary General to speak directly with the Zoo, so it is moving forward very rapidly after two and a half years of no communication from the previous official.

Ms. Cardenas asked if a risk existed of a completed exhibit and no monkeys. Mr. Lewis answered no; he could not give an opening date, but the Zoo will have golden monkeys.
Mr. Espinosa asked if the opening will be delayed until the animals arrive, or if other animals will be used in the exhibit. Mr. Lewis replied that if it’s known that the animals will be coming and the dates, the opening will be delayed until they come.

Ms. Abano stated that if the animals arrive and the Zoo wants to do the opening sooner than April 2008, a temporary Certificate of Occupancy can be obtained. Mr. Lewis noted that the opening would not happen before April, because the animals will have to be put through a Centers for Disease Control (CDC) quarantine.


Mr. Jeb Bonner reported since his last Committee report in January 2008, an additional $131,150 has been raised for the Pachyderm Forest. This included a $25K challenge grant from an anonymous donor, which was met and exceeded very quickly.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Next Meeting: March 27, 2008

Ms. Cardenas adjourned the meeting at 10:32 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.