Committee Members Present:

Patty Huber, Office of the City Administrative Officer (CAO), Chair
Lynne Ozawa, Chief Legislative Analyst’s (CLA) Office
John Lewis, Los Angeles Zoo

Others Present:

Claudia Aguilar, CAO; Renee Weitzer, Council District 4; Stephanie Clements, Nick Pendorf, General Services Department (GSD); Connie Morgan, Greater Los Angeles Zoo Association (GLAZA); Rebecca Abano, Lynette Howlett, Gary Moore, Deborah Weintraub, Public Works Bureau of Engineering (BOE); Kyla May, Darryl Pon, Los Angeles Zoo.

Ms. Patty Huber called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.

1. Minutes for Approval – Meeting of May 29, 2008

Ms. Lynne Ozawa moved to approve the Zoo Bond Oversight Committee (ZBOC) meeting minutes of May 29, 2008. Mr. John Lewis 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).

Revisions to Program Budget

Ms. Abano referred the Committee to the proposed program budget and its source of funds, as shown in Section 5.0-6 of the BOE July 2008 Monthly Report. She briefly outlined the changes to the existing approved budget. On all the Proposition CC funded projects, the dollars spent have been identified on every account. This was done with the help of Ms. Maria Cardenas and Ms. Claudia Aguilar. Interest earnings of $5M on Proposition CC funds were added into the program. Also, savings of approximately $2.1M were identified on the Gorilla Exhibit project, and reprogrammed within the revised program budget.

The Rainforest of the Americas project has a funding shortfall. The original budget identified over $5M of Municipal Improvement Corporation of Los Angeles (MICLA) 2008-09 funding, which was not adopted in the 2008-09 budget. BOE is working to reduce the shortfall by identifying savings within the program budget, including $1.5M to reduce the MICLA funding.
The original Proposition CC allotment towards the Rainforest project was always short; a portion of Proposition CC’s earning went towards that. The rest of the Proposition CC $5M interest earnings were placed in Program Contingency. The Pachyderm Forest project is currently out to bid. Ms. Abano would like to keep money in program contingency to cover any potential shortfalls that may occur after bids are received.

Ms. Renee Weitzer asked how long it takes to go to bid. Ms. Abano replied the bids are due September 10, 2008. Ms. Weitzer asked how long after that the bids would be awarded. Ms. Abano answered six to eight weeks. Ms. Weitzer asked when Billy the elephant would be moved. Ms. Abano replied Billy would be moved in September 2008. Ms. Weitzer asked for confirmation that the current request for bids did not affect Billy’s move. Ms. Abano confirmed.

At the request of Ms. Huber, Ms. Claudia Aguilar outlined the budget changes. Two main changes to the budget were Proposition CC and MICLA. Proposition CC funds were budgeted at $61.4M; in reality appropriations were $62.5M. The amount off was due to different management issues, such as not counting staff costs completely and costs for program management. The overall program budget has actually only changed by $2.5M, because the MICLA has been reduced for 2008-2009 overall from $33M to $29M, a $3.7M change. So with the $6.1M addition and the $3.7M change, the net difference is only $2.5M. Ms. Aguilar explained that the new detailed accounting spreadsheet tracks every penny of Proposition CC funds.

Ms. Maria Cardenas stated that if the $2.6M program contingency is needed for allocation to the Pachyderm Forest project when it goes to bid, that funding source is there. If it is not needed, it can be used for awarding the Rainforest of the Americas project, rather than requesting the not authorized $1.8M MICLA funding from the City Council. At this point, the highest priorities for program contingency are first Pachyderm Forest, second Rainforest.

Mr. Lewis asked if Ms. Cardenas meant ‘highest priorities’ as a recommendation. He explained that work is continuing on the Reptile and Insect Interpretative Center as well, so both it and the Rainforest projects need to be reviewed to determine whether it would be easier to privately fundraise for one or the other. Ms. Cardenas emphasized that three projects are still to be completed, the Pachyderm Forest Phase Three, the Rainforest of the Americas, and the Reptile and Insect Interpretative Center.

Mr. Lewis moved to approve the revised Program Budget. Ms. Ozawa seconded and the motion passed without objection.

Master Program Schedule

Ms. Abano reported on the revised Master Program Schedule, as shown in the Monthly Report.
The current Master Program Schedule is shown on Page 2.0-2, along with the proposed completion dates of each of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects. The proposed Master Program Schedule is on Page 2.0-3.

The revised Schedule features a comparison of the current approved completion dates and the proposed completion dates for each of the projects in the program. All of the changes affect the three projects still to be completed.

A letter was received from the architect in January 2008, saying that they can’t deliver design per schedule; all three projects have the same architect. Another letter from the architect was received in May 2008, further extending some of the delivery dates. At this point in time, the last phase of the Pachyderm Forest is out to bid, BOE is getting ready to bid the Reptile Center, and the only project still in design is the Rainforest of the Americas project.

Ms. Ozawa asked if all the projects’ end dates are moved out two months. Ms. Abano replied no, six months. Mr. Moore stated that the schedule shows increments of quarters, not months. The Pachyderm Forest completion date was November 13, 2009, and now shows as June 25, 2010. Ms. Abano noted that these dates vary on each of the projects. Ms. Ozawa asked if the program end would be May 23, 2011. Ms. Abano replied yes, with the Rainforest project being the last to complete.

Ms. Renee Weitzer asked if these dates would be stuck to. Ms. Abano replied that she doesn’t think the dates will go beyond those in the revised Schedule, because the program is far enough in design. BOE controls the bid and award period, and construction can be bid to the completion date. Ms. Abano noted that what caused the Pachyderm Forest delay was the time taken for Amendment Four to get through the City Council, and this slowed down the design. That delay on the Pachyderm Forest was at the front-end. Also, the architect lost some of the people working on the project. Additionally, the focus on the Pachyderm Forest slowed efforts on the other two projects. Ms. Cardenas noted that the delays are behind, so at this point of design, emphasis should be placed on quick review and turnaround of the architect’s designs.

Mr. Lewis commented that in the future, everything should be done to avoid having so many projects ongoing at one time. The Zoo is using the same staff to monitor, review, and give input for all three major projects. It would be easier on everyone to narrow the focus in the future in order to give each project its due attention.

Ms. Ozawa moved to approve the changes to the Master Schedule. Mr. Lewis seconded and the motion passed without objection.
Status of Active Projects

Pachyderm Forest

Ms. Abano continued with her report. The Pachyderm Forest is the priority project. The project was advertised for bid on June 23, 2008. The Board of Public Works (BPW) approved the advertised project and it was put on the streets the same day. The bid due date is September 10, 2008. Mr. Moore added at 10:00 a.m. at the BPW Hearing Room.

Ms. Abano continued. The mandatory pre-bid job walk is scheduled for August 5, 2008, at 10:00 a.m. at the Zoo’s Witherbee Auditorium. Right now, thirty-one firms are on the planholder list. Ms. Abano believes of the thirty-one, five are general contractors. Mr. Moore instructed Ms. Abano to personally and immediately call all the general contractors she can think of.

Ms. Abano continued her report. Key issue E in the Monthly Report regards Portico Group’s contract on the Pachyderm Forest. Portico was asked to design a $25M project, but designed a project beyond $25M, actually $1.9M over that $25M limit. The current Pachyderm Forest budget for Phase Three construction is $26.67M, which allows an actual bid of $22.67M. The money is in place, but this exceeds the design limit. BOE is asking the Committee to allow Portico to submit this design beyond the $25M limit.

Ms. Deborah Weintraub noted that the package had been put out to bid with an add alternate. Mr. Moore stated that the contract had a $25M limit, and the architect delivered a $25M design, however a couple of components are key to the Zoo. Right now, all the life support has to be a fill and draw system. The entire pumping and filtration system is an add alternate. However, it’s anticipated to be above the $25M, which is why this had to be done as an add alternate. Mr. Moore is requesting the Committee in advance to say if the base bid comes in above $25M, the extra money will be spent.

Ms. Cardenas stated that she understood that BOE had a $25M estimate from the architect, which was value engineered to decrease to $20M, and that there is an additive alternate for $2M for the life support. Ms. Abano stated, no, it is a deductive alternate. The way the bids are done, is bidding the entire Phase Three. Right now, the estimate is higher than the architect’s allowed limit for Phase Three, $1.9M over. The table discussed these figures and the reduction of the project’s scope to meet the budget.

Ms. Cardenas asked that before the next meeting, she work with Ms. Abano in order to lay out these issues so they are easy to understand: the estimate, the alternative bid, and the total funding. Ms. Ozawa asked to see a menu of the different value engineering options. Ms. Abano replied that a copy of that had been supplied.
Mr. Lewis stated that an incredible amount of value engineering has been done up to this point, so it does not leave many options. Most of the project’s decorative aspects, with a couple of exceptions, aren’t more expensive, so nothing is gained by losing them. Mr. Lewis noted that the Mayor asked that the Pachyderm Forest exhibit be one of the best, and this includes taking care of the elephants and interpreting them. Mr. Moore added that the exhibit’s trees had been downsized to get the budget to the $25M number; there is not a lot to cut. Mr. Moore stated that the details will be forwarded to the Committee members.

Ms. Abano continued with her report on the Pachyderm Forest project. General Services Department (GSD) continues with great work on Phase Two. They’ve begun installing the barriers and the temporary shade structure. Billy the elephant is anticipated to move in September 2008.

The Department of Water and Power (DWP) has just gone out to bid on the replacement transformer TS-1A, will award next week, and it will be fourteen weeks. That may go beyond October 2008 and may impact Phase Three. This transformer is a critical path item and must be replaced before the existing elephant barn is demolished. Mr. Lewis asked why the transformer had to be replaced before the barn is. Ms. Abano replied because all the power is tied to the current Transformer One in the elephant barn. Mr. Lewis asked, since the barn is built around the transformer, can’t the transformer just stay in place. Ms. Abano replied that right now, that’s not the way the architects have shown the demolition of the existing barn.

Mr. Moore asked what the drop-dead date was given to DWP to get the transformer done. Ms. Abano answered that DWP had given a due date of late October 2008. She needs to revisit when the project is awarded, to get the number of construction days and see when the demolition occurs in that construction. Mr. Moore suggested sending an addendum to delay barn demolition by one extra month, since the current wording says the barn can be demolished on Day One, so the addendum needs to add a milestone postponing demolition. Mr. Lewis asked if DWP could be asked to provide a temporary transformer while the new one is being ordered, as this has been done in the past. Ms. Abano replied okay.

Rainforest of the Americas

Portico’s 50% construction document submittal is currently being reviewed. Portico will complete design. The project may proceed to construction, or be shelved until complete funds are obtained. BOE is moving forward with design as if the project will be built in sequence with the rest of the CIP. Mr. Lewis asked if this decision could be made once the construction documents are done. Ms. Abano replied yes, because the construction documents won’t be done until at least January 2009, and the Pachyderm Forest bids will be in then.
Reptile and Insect Interpretative Center

BOE has completed the review of Portico’s 100% construction documents. Portico is revising the construction documents, and incorporating the Department of Building and Safety (DBS) plan check comments in preparation for bidding. The project is anticipated to go to bid in September or October 2008.

BOE did a Class A estimate on Portico’s first submittal, which had a lot of corrections and may be why the costs are off, shown to be $5.5M over budget. BOE is working on the documents with the architect and their estimator, and BOE’s estimator. Half of the changes are possibly because of quantities. DBS had many corrections.

A re-estimating will be done after Portico has redone the documents, and BOE is doing value engineering, similar to what was done on the Pachyderm Forest project. BOE will deliver the project within the stated budget. Mr. Lewis stated that the difference is believed to be in the $2M to $2.5M range, after all is reconciled. This is different than saying that the architects didn’t bring the project in on budget. Mr. Lewis urged that all take the burden; it’s not always the designer or contractor, sometimes part of it is us. The point is to get down to a number that everyone has a lot of confidence in, and then look for solutions.

Ms. Abano continued. Between the time construction documents were prepared and design was actually complete, there were actually changes; for instance, providing power to this exhibit, which added to the scope, which could increase the budget amount required to design to. These things are being ironed out.

Mr. Moore stated that he just wanted the Committee to know that it’s not as simple as Mr. Lewis indicated; it’s complicated. Ms. Weitzer asked if, when something is being built, it’s assumed that power will be needed. Ms. Abano replied yes, it was trying to figure out where to draw the power from as it’s a lot further than originally anticipated. Mr. Lewis noted that power has had to be drawn all the way from the Zoo’s ‘boneyard’ to the project site. Ms. Abano added that many of the Zoo’s exhibits run on old existing transformers that are single-phase versus three-phase, and not up to DBS current codes. The need to incorporate these new DBS requirements is a big part of what is changing the scope.

Ms. Weitzer asked if the architect should meet with DBS first, to figure out what is needed for the exhibit. Ms. Abano replied that this is done when the design is virtually complete, so they have something to show DBS. Ms. Weitzer noted that she regularly meets with case managers without a completed project. Based on this, DBS produces a list of considerations for the project. Ms. Weitzer suggested that in the future, BOE meet with DBS first to help move projects forward with a case manager. Ms. Abano replied that they do have a case manager, Mr. Ricardo Tres.
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Ms. Cardenas asked Ms. Weitzer for an update on the public notification issue. Ms. Weitzer replied the height variance for the Pachyderm Forest had been done in two weeks. Ms. Cardenas asked if a variance was needed for the Rainforest or Reptile Center projects. Ms. Abano replied no. Ms. Weitzer noted that now there is a way to go if another height variance is needed; it will be part of a plan approval process versus a new variance. The whole project is being used as a plan approval, which doesn’t have the same notification requirements that a new variance does. That is how this was able to be done quickly and the Zoning Department cooperated.

The Golden Monkey Exhibit

Ms. Abano stated that the project is complete. GSD has to file some necessary paperwork to obtain the Certificate of Occupancy (C/O). They hit a little hiccup with DBS; apparently a lot of permits have been pulled at the Zoo. The inspector is the same and is trying to weed out which permits belong to what, and he won’t sign off for this one. GSD is resolving this issue, and once done, the inspector will sign off and BOE will go downtown and get the C/O.

Ms. Abano concluded her report.


Mr. Lewis reported that shortly after the last Committee meeting, the Zoo got the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) import permit from the U.S. government. In June 2008, the Chinese government asked the Zoo to change the name on the permit, because they had changed the name of their animal facility, which caused having to go through the permit process again.

The U.S. government turned the permit around quickly, though. Mr. Lewis sent it to the Chinese government in the first week of July 2008, who responded that it will take thirty to sixty days for them to approve their export permit. This puts the permit at around September 2008, then the agreement says that within thirty days after the permits, the shipment of the monkeys will be arranged, which should be in late November 2008. After that, the monkeys will have to go through the quarantine process. So it will be late 2008 or early 2009 before the golden monkeys make an appearance at the Zoo. Once the export permit has been received, Mr. Lewis will be more confident of the actual schedule and start preparations for the exhibit opening.

4. Greater Los Angeles Zoo Association (GLAZA) to Report on Capital Improvement Project Fundraising Activities

Ms. Connie Morgan noted that GLAZA is closing out their portion of the Pachyderm Forest and finishing up any final work. Approximately $255K has been taken in towards that commitment since the last Committee meeting.
Ms. Weitzer asked how the Beastly Ball went this year. Ms. Morgan replied great; $1.2M was raised. Ms. Weitzer asked if this was the most that had been raised. Ms. Morgan replied that last year was the most, but this year was almost the same.

Next Meeting: Ms. Huber announced that the next meeting is August 28, 2008.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Ms. Huber adjourned the meeting at 10:51 a.m.

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