



"Creating a just and sustainable world where people and wildlife thrive, together."

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& Zoo Director

February 7, 2025

Honorable City Council
City of Los Angeles
c/o: Office of the City Clerk
City Hall, Room 395

Honorable Members of the City Council:

SUBJECT: ZOO DEPARTMENT REQUEST FOR AMENDMENTS TO THE LOS ANGELES ADMINISTRATIVE CODE TO REVISE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE AND REFLECT PROGRAM CHANGES

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Zoo Department respectfully requests that the City Council request the City Attorney to prepare and present an ordinance amending the Los Angeles Administrative Code ("LAAC") as follows:

1. Delete Sections 22.712 and 22.716 to remove all references to the City's contractual relationship with the Greater Los Angeles Zoo Association ("GLAZA");
2. Amend Subdivision (d) of Section 22.704 to remove all references to the GLAZA-appointed ex officio member of the Board of Zoo Commissioners; and
3. Delete Chapter 25 from Division 8 and Section 22.715 to remove all references to the Zoo Capital Program Oversight Committee and associated funding sources that are now exhausted.

SUMMARY

The Department of the Zoo ("Department") was created by ordinance in 1997 to independently operate, manage, maintain and control all Zoo property, which was formerly under the management and control of the Department of Recreation and Parks. Concurrent with the Zoo Department's creation, the City entered into a 25-year agreement with the Greater Los Angeles Zoo Association ("GLAZA") for fundraising and other services to support the Zoo. GLAZA is a nonprofit organization that was established in 1963 for the sole purpose of assisting the City with the development, beautification, and improvement of the Zoo.

In light of the City's long-term agreement with GLAZA, the 1997 ordinance also established that the Department receive financial assistance from and enter into memoranda of understanding with GLAZA, pursuant to the provisions of the agreement (see Los Angeles Administrative Code ("LAAC") Sections 22.712 and 22.716). The 1997 ordinance further established a GLAZA-appointed representative as an ex officio member of the advisory Board of Zoo Commissioners (see LAAC Section 22.704(d)).



As the 25-year agreement with GLAZA neared its expiration in 2022, the City Council instructed the City Administrative Officer, with assistance from the Department, the City Attorney, and the Chief Legislative Analyst, to identify options to increase the Department's revenue share from fundraising efforts (C.F. 21-0600-S72), including the feasibility of issuing a Request for Proposals ("RFP") to support the Zoo and its operations. The City ultimately determined that careful and transparent stewardship of public resources required an RFP process for future services in support of the Department. While the City was preparing the RFP, the City Council authorized the Department to execute an Interim Agreement with GLAZA to ensure continuity of fundraising and other vital support services to the Zoo during the RFP process (C.F. 23-1128). The Interim Agreement will expire on June 30, 2025.

In October 2024, GLAZA notified the City that it would not be submitting proposals to any of the Department's then-pending RFPs and that it would therefore be ending its relationship with the Zoo upon expiration of the Interim Agreement. The deadline for proposals has passed and GLAZA in fact did not respond to any of the RFPs. The City has filed a lawsuit against GLAZA to resolve asset ownership issues that have arisen as the relationship unwinds. Nevertheless, the Department is working to ensure a smooth transition of GLAZA's services while the RFP process continues. However, given that GLAZA's contractual relationship with the City will be ending on June 30, 2025, the LAAC should be amended to remove all references to GLAZA and its services and to remove the GLAZA-appointed ex officio member from the Board of Zoo Commissioners.

In further review of the LAAC relative to the Zoo, it is noted that in 1999, the Zoo Capital Program Oversight Committee was established by ordinance to coordinate and supervise a capital improvement program for the Zoo (See LAAC Sections 8.326, et al and 22.715). Funding came from various sources, including Propositions A-1, A-2, K, CC, and specific donations raised by GLAZA to support the capital program. However, the Zoo Capital Program has concluded, all related funding sources have been expended, and the committee is no longer operational. The LAAC should be amended to delete all references to the Zoo Capital Program Oversight Committee as well.

The changes to the LAAC described herein will reflect current Zoo programs and operations and revision of the governance structure as the City's contractual relationship with GLAZA unwinds.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

There is no fiscal impact to the General Fund as a result of these actions.

Respectfully transmitted,



Denise Verret, General Manager
Zoo Department

cc: Jacqueline Hamilton, Deputy Mayor of Neighborhood Services, Office of the Mayor
Steve Houchin, Office of the City Attorney