



BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

**December 14, 2022
5:15 PM
MINUTES**

Attendees: Commissioner Pointer, Commissioner Reid

Staff Support: **Marty Stump**, Deputy Director - Planning and Development; **Fred Ramey**, ZEED Asset and Facilities Services Manager; **Mary Kay Henley**, Planning Administration

Acceptance of Minutes: Minutes from the November 16, 2022, meeting were approved as written.

Discussion Item

- Marty discussed with commissioners scheduling a special CIC before the end of the year. It was agreed that a special CIC will be held December 20th at 5:00 pm.
- Marty reported that the 2023 – 24 Capital Workplan report is being prepared and will be presented on a regular basis moving forward. Commissioner Reid said this report is very helpful.

Action Items

PDZA Pacific Sea Aquarium (PSA) Baja Bay Exhibit Repairs - Contract Award to Pease Construction

- This resolution authorizes the contract award to Pease Construction for PDZA PSA Baja Bay Exhibit Repairs in the amount not to exceed \$392,792.
- Fred reported the exhibit requires maintenance work on the seals around the exhibit viewing glass, as well as repairs to the exhibit liner and coating, and concrete repair. He added that all work must be performed with water in the exhibit (due to not being able to move the hammerhead sharks) and performed by a qualified exhibit repair team working by SCUBA or surface air supply. Additionally, this project will include the construction and installation underwater of a protective barrier that will prevent this type of damage from occurring in the future due to animals interacting with the seal material in unintended ways. It was noted that Zoo staff will monitor animal behavior during this work, pausing if the animals appear stressed.
- Pease Construction was the one responsive bid received and reference checks by staff have confirmed that they are a responsible contractor and perform quality work. Fred added they have completed projects for us in the past and are currently working on the PDZA South Pacific Aquarium Exhibit Improvements. They will have qualified subcontractors on their team who have experience in this specific type of in-water work. As

a general contractor they have the ability to negotiate the types of contracts necessary to attract and employ the required subcontractor expertise needed on this project.

- It was explained that the first time this project was advertised no bids were received. To find out why, Fred contacted selected firms. He noted that only two firms in the world specialize in underwater aquarium maintenance. Because of their high demand for services, they can set firm pricing and terms. During his research he discovered: 1) the window time for repairs was too short/restrictive, 2) the bid range was under what they expect. Based on this, the new bid's range was adjusted to \$250,000 - \$490,000, with Pease's coming in mid-range.
- He added that most aquariums aren't run by governmental agencies. Georgia Aquarium is the exception, noting they have a \$60,000 yearly maintenance contract in place to help avoid major repairs like this. Metro Parks is hoping to do something similar in the future - hire annual exploratory maintenance work.
- Commissioner Pointer asked how long repairs will last. Fred stated this is hard to estimate. If all goes well with these repairs and annual maintenance repairs happen, the aquarium could last another 30 years.
- Commissioners asked about divers' safety from sharks during working. Fred explained they will dive in pairs, use scuba gear, and be instructed to not interact with animals.
- Commissioner Reid asked how long the water work will last. Fred said it is hard to estimate because repairs were designed based on video footage provided. But under the best situation, less than one month. Commissioner Reid questioned the high cost of work for such a short period of time. Fred explained this is very specialized work and it would be hard to find someone to do quality work for less. Commissioner Pointer mentioned Georgia Aquarium's \$60,000 budget. Marty explained their contract is for preventative maintenance, not major work like this project. He added in the future we would like to have a similar maintenance contract in place.
- Commissioner Reid asked if we have contacted Bangor Navy base to see if they can do the work. Yes, we have investigated this type of alternative arrangement, but commercial divers don't necessarily have the experience working with exhibit animals. It was emphasized that animal welfare is key to this project. Fred added the bid required 3 years of working around animals. Marty agreed this is expensive work, however it is a classic case of supply and demand. It was noted that funds for this project will come from the Zoo's operating budget.
- Commissioner Reid reported he is not happy with the cost, but understands the work is specialized and need to be completed. In the future he would like to secure a contract like Georgia Aquarium for annual maintenance. He also asked staff to keep a close eye on the schedule and costs.
- Commissioner Pointer asked if they guarantee their work? Fred explained underwater work is not as effective as in a dry environment. These underwater repairs buy us years until dry work can be completed. Commissioner Pointer commended Fred for finding a qualified company to do this work.
- Marty added that our new Asset Management system will help keep us on top of infrastructure maintenance like this in the future.

- This item was accepted for moving forward to the full Board with a recommendation of approval.

Meeting Adjourned