

**Minutes of the Woodley Park Community Association
Membership Meeting
July 31, 2018**

Present: Approximately 35 people were in attendance. WPCA President Carolyn Abbey gaveled the meeting to order at 7:30PM. Carolyn noted that there was only one issue on the agenda for this meeting, which was to discuss National Zoo security and traffic issues with the Acting Director of the Zoo. There was general acceptance from the membership on this agenda item.

- Carolyn thanked everyone for coming and introduced the National Zoo Acting Director, Steven Monfort.
- Monfort introduced himself and provided an overview of the security issues. Monfort opened by stating that there are no plans for permanent screening of all visitors, while leaving the possibility of seeking permission to create a screening facility that could be used for screening on an *ad hoc* basis in periods in which there is a credible threat to the Zoo.
- Matt Sellers, Landscape Architect at the National Zoo, proceeded with a visual presentation.
 - Sellers clarified that they are now proposing to reduce from 13 entrances to six entrances, mostly by consolidating entrances at Lots A and B near the western end of the Zoo. The removal of various entrances by the existing parking lots will result in a slight additional walk for some visitors (100-200 feet). They also propose to eliminate entrances at the lower end of the Zoo.
 - They are proposing additional fencing, and the fencing will look much like the existing fencing at the Zoo.
 - Sellers stated that the graphic visualization that had garnered press attention of how a permanent security screening facility might look was just undertaken for planning purposes, and a permanent screening facility isn't currently on the table. Monfort intervened, however, that such a permanent security facility, if ever built, could enhance the existing visitor entry experience and repeated his earlier remarks that actual screening of Zoo visitors would only be used in periods of a "credible threat."
- Monfort discussed the recent Smithsonian announcement that a new parking structure would not be built. Monfort explained that he could not go into details because he had entered into a non-disclosure agreement but stated that generally his understanding is that the anticipated share of revenues that the Zoo would receive under a public-private partnership with the garage builder would not be sufficient to support the garage facility and still provide sufficient funds for Zoo programming. He noted that 65% of Zoo visitors drive.
- The meeting was opened to membership questions. Monfort responded on a number of issues raised, including the following.
 - Attendance – Monfort stated that the number of days that the lot is full has not increased in recent years, and in fact overall Zoo attendance has declined.

Monfort speculated that unusual weather patterns may have had an impact, as well as the lack of a major visitor draw such as a newborn panda.

- Fencing – The fencing proposal was a recommendation by outside experts, and does not conform to any specific regulatory or accreditation requirement. Monfort also clarified that any barbed wire on the perimeter of the Zoo should not be visible to the casual visitor.
- Zoo Entrance – Members noted that the Connecticut Ave. entrance is unsafe, with no designated drop off point for taxis, Ubers and the like, and that the Circulator does not go to the Zoo. Members were also concerned that when the parking lots are full, there is no announcement of such. Monfort responded that he would look into finding additional solutions but did not commit to specific solutions such as installing a drop-off point or working with District officials to extend the Circulator to the Zoo.
- Zoo Advisory Committee – Monfort stated that he would like to create an Advisory Committee comprised at least in part of local residents, but noted his limited current authority as the Acting Director.
- Bike path – In response to questions about re-opening the bike path through the Zoo, Monfort stated that the District Department of Transportation is responsible for fixing the path.
- Gates: Many neighbors stated that they consider the Zoo a great neighborhood resource for being able to enter and exit it at various locations. In particular, it was mentioned that the gate near Amazonia is very important for neighbors using the Rock Creek walking trails who wish to enter the Zoo.
- Councilmember Cheh stated that she would urge DDOT to repair the bike path and creating an appropriate drop-off point for vehicular traffic.
- Adjourn – The meeting adjourned at 9pm.