

May 13, 1955
Dictated May 12th

Portland Zoo Commission
Portland, Oregon

Gentlemen:

Our scenic railroad committee had a meeting at the Multnomah Athletic Club for luncheon on May 12th at which time in addition to the committee we had present the architects, Mr. Lawrence and Mr. Tucker, and Zoo commissioners Don Ostensoe, Mr. Faulk, Mr. Sagner, and Mr. Carsen.

We had a fine meeting with considerable discussion concerning the railway and how to get the new Zoo going on a sound basis as soon as possible.

Due to the fact that there is some disagreement in regard to certain fundamentals of locations of certain elements of the Zoo and the Scenic Railway and overall concepts of the Zoo, Mr. Lawrence, the architect, has suggested that I write this letter outlining the position of our Scenic Railway Committee and our opinions concerning the fundamental design and concept of the Zoo. As you realize, I was chairman of the Fundamental Design Committee of the Zoo last year but as the president has not appointed any Fundamental Design Committee this year, and as the actual details of the fundamental design have just recently been submitted to us, we have gone into this matter as well as the scenic railway matter.

I have talked to each member of the Scenic Railway Committee and to several other members of the Zoo Commission, and our committee and other Zoo commissioners, I believe, are in full accord with the statements I am going to make in this letter.

We believe that the citizens of Portland are anxious that we get started on the Zoo as soon as we can reasonably do so and, more important, we believe that the citizens of Portland are depending upon us to see to it that the Zoo is a very fine Zoo and an outstanding attraction for Portland. Whether we do a good job in the fundamental lay-out of the Zoo and the designation of funds properly for the different exhibits and concessions will determine to a large extent the success that the Zoo will be in the eyes of the public.

It is certainly true that if we make the Zoo an outstanding attraction that will be enjoyable to all the people who go there, the citizens of Portland and the tourists who come here will be very thankful for our work, and the Zoo can be a financial success.

Several of us on the Zoo Commission have been hoping for and patiently waiting for a detailed budget of the cost estimate of the Zoo, which we anticipated would be furnished to us some time ago so that we could go over this budget and see if we agreed with the allocation of the funds for the different exhibits, utilities, and concessions.

To some of us who are business men it is just common ordinary business procedure that before any substantial money is spent on a job, the following things are done:

27.43

- (1) A complete outline of what is to be done is made up and approved.
- (2) A budget of individual detailed costs of each item is submitted and carefully gone over.
- (3) An allocation of priority for the different parts of the job is made up and carefully checked over.
- (4) The over-all picture of the completed undertaking is projected from the standpoint of efficiency of operation and the possible income and expense of operating the project is carefully considered.

In the case of the present undertaking to build this \$4,000,000.00 Zoo, we have not as yet had submitted any adequate information concerning any of the above mentioned four items. We believe that it is definitely important that these things be submitted and gone over carefully by all the Zoo Commissioners and the City Council as soon as possible.

Now then, I wish to take a few paragraphs to go into what some of us on the Zoo Commission feel are differences of opinion that must be resolved so that adequate business like action can be taken to get the Zoo started. In the first place, there seems to be a difference of opinion in regard to the following important points:

- (1) The need for three paved streets to the Zoo entrance.
- (2) The need for an adequate horse-shoe loop railway.
- (3) The proper location of the pavilion.
- (4) The need of making up a budget so that we can allocate the proper amount of funds for each item to be built in proportion to its importance and priority.
- (5) The economics of the Zoo and the advisability of charging admissions on four days a week.

I wish to take up these items in order.

#1: The need for three paved accesses to the Zoo. It seems to some of us commissioners that it is not advisable to build a \$4,000,000.00 gem of a Zoo in the midst of a forest retreat with only access through dark Canyon Road. We think that it is absolutely vital that there be three access roads to the Zoo. The Canyon Road access should be one, of course; but there should definitely be an access from Burnside via Fairview Street, and there definitely should be an access from Washington Park by way of the Archery Courts.

We believe that the City Council could and possibly would be willing to allocate funds from the street department to build the access road from Washington Park and to complete the road from Burnside to the Zoo via Fairview Street without dipping into the Zoo funds. If the City Council can see fit to do this, it should be settled and arranged for immediately; and if the City Council does not feel that they can afford to build these extra two access roads to the Zoo in the immediate future, they should authorize the Zoo funds

to be used to build these access roads and make some arrangements to replenish the funds from other city funds as soon as they can accumulate such funds.

This is vital, we believe, because unless we have other attractive entrances to the Zoo besides the dark Canyon Road access, we are probably going to lose a great volume of attendance.

There are many people who have a mental habit of thinking of Washington Park as the Zoo and who would like to go from Washington Park directly over to the Zoo. This is actually a short distance, not over a mile and a half, via the archery field, to the new Zoo, and insofar as Rosy's home and many other interesting things are in the Washington Park area, it is only logical that we should cater to the desires of many people who wish to be able to go to the new Zoo via Washington Park.

The access to the Zoo from Burnside is very vital because it is very probable that no bus line could make expenses by going up dark Canyon Road and going to the Zoo and turning around and coming back the same way. A profitable bus line would probably have to be able to make the loop up Canyon Road to the Zoo and on through the residential area of Fairview Street and down Burnside.

Furthermore we are hoping to get from 1,000,000 to 1,500,000 people a year to the Zoo, and considering the traffic speed and the slope on Canyon Road, many people will be deterred from going to the Zoo if they have to go only via the speedway over Canyon Road. There also will be many Saturdays and Sundays when great crowds will be at the Zoo and it would be a traffic hazard if we had to dump all these cars at one time into Canyon Road.

There also will probably be great events come into the outdoor theater that will probably be built adjoining the Zoo and in the Science and Museum Building, and we should definitely have plenty of good streets getting to the Zoo. We believe that it is vital that it be determined immediately that there be three roads into the Zoo:

- (1) Canyon Road access,
- (2) The access from Washington Park around the archery field, and
- (3) From Burnside Street via Fairview Street.

The City should advise us how these streets are to be financed so that we will know whether it is going to be necessary to take Zoo funds to pay for any of these access streets.

#2: Concerning the Scenic Railway.

The Scenic Railway in the opinion of the Railway Committee is not nearly adequate or attractive enough from the present plans as submitted to bring in the income that the railway should bring in. As the plan is now drawn the railway goes only from the entrance 1,000 feet down to where the present pavilion is marked on the plan, and back on the same track.

Such a small railway would not bring in adequate revenue, it is our belief.

Furthermore, the contours of the Zoological gardens are such that the railway could easily continue from its present terminus at the far end of the Zoo on

around the Zoo and come back as a horseshoe close to the entrance. The ride would be worth a great deal more to the public by having the railway continue on around and back to the entrance because there would be many more interesting things to see and, in fact, the people could see practically all the Zoo exhibits reasonably close up if we continue the railway on around in a horseshoe and come back to the entrance.

The grade of the Zoo is such that this is practical and can be done.

The income of the Detroit Zoo railway has been \$35,000.00 a year to \$100,000.00 a year, for many years; and every Zoo that has a railway that we have contacted is very enthusiastic about the railway and they are all making money on them. There is no possible reason why the Portland Zoo should not make good money on the railway if the railway is built adequately and travels through a scenic area; but the short run railway as now drawn by the architects is very inadequate and would jeopardize the financial success and the enjoyment success of a railroad we hope to have in the Zoo.

Also, if the railroad goes only this short distance it is going to necessitate an increase in the overhead and expense of the Zoo by having extra tractor trains and other means of transportation through the Zoo.

Someone somehow has set up a ridiculously small budget for the railroad of \$25,000.00 and yet many people considered that the railway should make \$25,000.00 a year. You surely couldn't make \$25,000.00 a year on a \$25,000 investment.

Furthermore the Detroit Zoo, which has the finest railroad and makes the most money, has engines that cost \$150,000 apiece. Furthermore these engines were donated to the Zoo. Certainly between the high expense of the Detroit Zoo and the minimum expense which has somehow been mentioned of \$25,000.00 there should be a reasonable meeting ground where we can give the fine railway that will make money as opposed to an inadequate one, which may not make money.

We, on the Railway Committee, believe that if we had \$125,000.00 budgeted for the railway, by diligent work and fortunate purchases of rails, locomotives and equipment we could get together a very satisfactory railway that would make substantial money for the Zoo; but we actually have not been able to get bids and prices together to get a fair cost estimate at the present time. But whatever the cost, it should be a good railway.

#3: Concerning the proper location of the Pavilion.

There seems to be quite a conflict of opinion concerning the proper location of the main Pavilion where the people will be able to buy food, curios, and other items from various concessions and where they can have lockers for storing their lunch baskets and clothes, and where they can sit out on the terrace and view the entire Zoo.

A considerable number of us Zoo commissioners feel that it is very vital

that this fine Pavilion be put reasonably close to the main entrance and the children's zoo. After considerable discussion all have agreed now and the architects have moved the children's zoo to a place immediately adjoining the entrance to the Zoo and close to the parking lot. A number of us feel that it is vital that the main Pavilion be put next to this children's zoo because the location where the Pavilion is now shown on the plans is over 1,000 feet from the entrance and the children's zoo and a great many people will not want to walk this distance to get to the Pavilion to sit down and rest and to enjoy the concessions and food accommodations.

By the time people have walked from the upper section of the parking lot to the entrance they are already going to be reasonably tired and certainly the older people and many of the younger people too will not want to walk another 1,000 feet to get to the main Pavilion. (It might be well to provide a second smaller pavilion and observation tower where the architects now show the pavilion 1,000 feet from the entrance).

A great percentage of the children who are brought to the Zoo will be brought by their grandparents and other relatives and the older people certainly will not want to walk this 1,000 feet to the pavilion carrying their baskets and clothing, after they get into the Zoo, and they might resent having to pay for a railway ride to get there.

I received my first copy of the plot plan of the Zoo just three days ago. This plot plan did not have on it the contours of the Zoo area, which are very important, so I have had my own engineer make the contours on the Zoo area and we have redrafted the location of the Pavilion so that it immediately adjoins the children's zoo and is within 300 feet of the entrance of the Zoo; and from the terrace of the Pavilion people will have a beautiful view of the entire Zoo. (I am enclosing copy of my suggested lay-out).

We think that the attendance at the Zoo will be tremendously increased if we put this Pavilion within 300 feet of the entrance instead of 1,000 to 1,200 feet from the entrance. Mrs. Belle Benchley of the San Diego Zoo in her letter to us stated "If you do not (plan other entrances to the Zoo) then I am sure that both the children's zoo and the picnic area, perhaps even the casino (eating place) are much too far from the entrance. People who bring their picnic lunches do not want to carry their baskets and equipment clear across the Zoo to leave them at the picnic area".

Furthermore it is expected that the concessions in the Pavilion are to pay a substantial profit to the Zoo and unless this Pavilion is built reasonably close to the entrance the profit from the concessions will be much less because there will be many less people come to the Zoo and the Pavilion.

We furthermore think that the Pavilion can be a great picnic center and we are intending to have a picnic area adjoining the Pavilion with many tables where people are able to have "A picnic at the Zoo". On my design we have shown a nice picnic area immediately adjoining the Pavilion equipped with barbecue pit, rest rooms, dishwashing area and other conveniences for picnickers. It is very possible that thousands of people will come to the Zoo just to enjoy the Pavilion and the picnic grounds and the older people will stay in the picnic area in the Pavilion while the children wander around the Zoo and into the children's zoo.

Many of the parents and the older people, when they have seen the animals in the Zoo one or two or a few times, want to be able to go to the Zoo and have some rest and pleasure without having to walk all around to see all the animals again, although the children will find no end of pleasure in viewing the animals again and again.

It is a matter of economic benefit to the Zoo not to require that people walk a thousand feet to the Pavilion, and we feel that we will possibly double the attendance at the Zoo by having the Pavilion and the picnic grounds close to the entrance because we will obtain much more repeat business.

Many of the parents should be able to sit in the Pavilion close to the children's zoo and feel that they are not too far from their children while if they have the Pavilion 1,000 feet away they might be restless and concerned to allow their children to play in the children's zoo so far from the parents.

All in all, on this point we definitely believe that the Pavilion should be put next to the Childrens' Zoo and close to the entrance adjoining a nice picnic area.

#4. The need for making up a detailed budget on the cost of the Zoo.

Many of us feel that it is very important that before we go much further we should have a detailed budget made up outlining the costs expected to be spent on the Zoo. It is very important that we do not go ahead paying a lot of expenses and find at the end that we have exceeded the money available. To spend more than has been allocated would be a violation of trust of the citizens of Portland, and to only half do the job would also be to seriously let down the people of Portland.

It is common ordinary construction business practice to very carefully and in detail make up an adequate budget encompassing all the costs of an undertaking and then if necessary scale down or cut down certain items; but to be sure that the fundamental necessities are provided for.

We Zoo Commissioners have never to this date had a detailed budget submitted to us, and we are unable to adequately determine how much money can be or should be spent on each exhibit and on each item of the Zoo until such a budget has been made up in detail. At the meeting of our committee with the architects on May 12th the architects agreed that they would submit a rough estimate of the costs of the exhibits that they are now working on. With this information, a few of us are willing to undertake the job of adding to the costs of the exhibits the costs of the grading and utilities, the cost of the railway, the cost of the Pavilion and the entrance gates, and try to set up a comprehensive cost picture for the Zoo. This is really not our job but there seems to be no one else to do it.

We understand that the architects are figuring on \$300,000.00 for the elephants' quarters. It may be that this is too much money to allocate for the elephants' quarters. In fact Rosy's Home, which I built, cost less than \$20,000.00. On the other hand, if there is adequate money and it seems advisable, maybe the \$300,000.00 would not be too much; but we

feel that it would be a shame to spend \$300,000.00 on the elephants' quarters if we sacrificed the income producing items of the Zoo, such as the Pavilion, the railway, and the concessions.

We also think it would be wrong to spend a great deal of money on some exhibits and not be sure that we had adequate streets to come into the Zoo, and adequate parking area, beautiful entrance, and other features which will be advisable for the attraction of the people. Often times careful planning can provide excellent, efficient, and charming quarters for animals at much less cost than other designs would be, and yet the lower cost designs would be adequate and just as attractive to the public.

We feel that after agreement is arrived at of the general plot plan and lay-out of the Zoo and proper approaches to the Zoo, the next thing is that an adequate and detailed budget should be made up for analysis.

#5: The economics of the Zoo and advisability of admission being charged.

There has been considerable discussion in the Zoo Commission concerning the advisability of charging an entrance fee to the Zoo.

A considerable number of us commissioners feel that an entrance fee should definitely be charged on at least three or four days a week. People who get something for nothing never appreciate it any way, and a minimum charge of say 35¢ for adults and 10¢ or 15¢ for children could offer a family the finest type of entertainment at a cost much less than they could even see a motion picture, or go roller skating, or nearly any other type of entertainment they could find.

There is not a Zoo in the United States that does not charge admission that is self-sustaining and several Zoos that do charge admissions are self-sustaining and making money. It is our purpose to make the Portland Zoo so fine and so attractive that a small initial admission fee would be gladly paid by everyone because of the tremendous value they would get for their small admission fee.

It is very possible that if we make this Zoo outstandingly attractive it will bring tourists from all over the world to Portland to see our Zoo, and we would be able to collect an admission charge from these tourists. We are planning that we should draw a million to a million and a half people per year to the Zoo, and few of the tourists and very few of the good citizens of Portland would object to paying a 35¢ fee for the privilege of enjoying the great number of fine attractions at the Zoo.

If there are any people in Portland who object to paying admission to the Zoo, they could come on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday and get into the Zoo without paying admission. Thus, we could be confident that those who expect to go to the Zoo for nothing could go to the Zoo, and yet we could also be confident that we could get enough money out of admissions, concessions and the railway to make the Zoo self-sustaining.

Mr. C. R. Schroeder, managing director of the San Diego Zoo, stated in a letter to me "As a source of income, I believe you should be permitted by the City Council to charge an admission fee".

I have received letters from other Zoo directors positively advising charging admissions; and many of us agree. It is the American way to try and have public and private businesses pay their own way and not to be Socialistic and give away a lot of things at the expense of the taxpayers.

Furthermore, in regard to the economics of the Zoo, many of us believe that the Zoo must be considered not only from the efficiency and beauty of the exhibits but from the standpoint of attracting maximum attendance to the Zoo; which requires that we carefully consider:

- (1) Adequate avenues of access so that many people can get to and from the zoo.
- (2) Adequate attractions at the Zoo in addition to just the viewing of the animals. The concessions, including curios, food, music, gifts, possible dancing and "picnic at the Zoo" will tend to greatly increase the attendance at the Zoo and the income of the Zoo.

Some of the Zoo Commission have thought that the Zoo should concentrate on the animals and not give anything else except hot dogs and a little food. Others of us are firmly convinced that the attendance of the Zoo can be doubled and maybe trebled if we provide other concessions and entertainment features in addition to just the viewing of the animals.

We want to see the Portland Zoo pointed out all over the world as an outstanding example of a beautiful Zoo...modern, efficiently equipped and wonderfully handled to attract great crowds of people, and adequately please them. Actually this Zoo, if properly designed and developed, can be a feature that can draw millions of dollars of tourist trade to Portland and certainly Portland needs new attractions to bring people to Portland.

We Zoo Commissioners realize that we are only an advisory board and that the City Council is definitely going to have to make the decisions and insofar as there is a disagreement among the Zoo Commissioners concerning the fundamental design and features of the Zoo, Mr. Lawrence, the architect, suggested that I write this letter to the Zoo Commission, giving the position of another group.

We on the Zoo Commission are definitely at a disadvantage at the present time because we have not been submitted the plot plan prior to a few days ago and we have not been submitted a detailed budget and we cannot adequately perform our function of advisors until the fundamental plan of access to the Zoo and the Zoo lay-out are submitted to us.

We believe that the architects are in good faith and Mr. Buckley is in good faith, but we feel that things should be done as outlined in this letter as soon as possible.

We would appreciate it if we could have instructions from the City Council that would help us in coming to the right decisions and more concentrated cooperation from some one in charge of the development of the Zoo should be obtained. In fact, at our last committee meeting it was the consensus of opinion that the time is ripe for us to be looking for an excellent Zoo development manager.

The superintendent of the parks, Mr. Buckley, simply does not have time enough to give this matter concentrated attention and actually we should get a development manager who has the capabilities of helping make up an adequate budget and who has good public relations and promotional capacities to organize the Zoo development program so that we will properly spend the money the citizens in Portland have voted for the Zoo; and so that when the Zoo is built it will greatly please the City Council and the citizens of Portland.

As the architect, Mr. Tucker, mentioned at our committee meeting on May 12th, the development director of the Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago has made the Zoo an outstanding success and in fact made \$120,000.00 for the Zoo in television programs alone. We need a fine promotional minded development director of our Zoo.

This letter is being written at some length because it is the feeling of a number of us Zoo Commissioners that the City Council should be acquainted with the ideas of a group of us, which ideas are not fully subscribed to by all the commissioners, and in the hopes that this information will help the City Council in determining the features of the Zoo and the policies of the Zoo that they wish to have developed and followed up on by the Zoo Commission. There are some differences of opinion concerning what features and policies are necessary to make the Zoo most successful.

It is the sincere hope of the Scenic Railway Committee and other Zoo Commissioners that the features set out in this letter will be accepted by the City Council as the features that they want to have developed and installed in Portland's new Zoo.

Very truly yours,

H. R. Ketell, Zoo Commissioner

HRK/jw