CITY OF SEATTLE

ORDINANCE ________________

COUNCIL BILL ________________

..title
AN ORDINANCE relating to the Woodland Park Zoo; adopting an acquisition and disposition policy relating to the Zoo elephants; barring the transfer of the Zoo elephants to any other zoo; requiring that if the elephants are transferred that such transfer shall be to the Performing Animal Welfare Society elephant sanctuary in San Andreas, California.

..body
WHEREAS, in 2013, the Board of Directors of the Woodland Park Zoo (WPZ) formed a Task Force on the Woodland Park Zoo Elephant Exhibit and Program for the purpose of “conducting a data-driven, objective review of the zoo’s elephant program, exhibit and current elephant welfare and to produce a report to the board;” and

WHEREAS, on October 22, 2013 the Task Force issued its written report; and

WHEREAS, among other things, the majority of the Task Force concluded that “although the elephants are healthy and staff provide good care, continuing the exhibit and program as it currently functions is not viable for the long term and changes are needed to advance the WPZ’s mission;” and

WHEREAS, the majority of the Task force found that “Overall, the behavioral health and social wellbeing of the three elephants is good. None of the elephants shows signs of significant distress, frustration, or pathology. Of some concern, however, are the social isolation of Bamboo and Watoto and moderate to mild occurrences of repetitive behaviors;” and

WHEREAS, the majority of the Task Force also found that “The Task Force concurs with the [Task Force’s Expert Review Panel] ERP finding that the social wellbeing of the current herd may be improved if Watoto and Bamboo can be safely integrated. (Watoto exhibits

Last revised April 1, 2015
aggressive behavior toward Bamboo.) The separation of these two elephants is well-intentioned, but has created significant limitations on the use of yard and barn space. These limitations would be significantly reduced if all three elephants could be managed as a single social grouping. A healthy, integrated herd could allow more flexible use of yard and barn, which would help support good foot health, exercise, weight/body condition and provide additional social and behavioral benefits.”

WHEREAS, the majority of the Task Force recommended two long-term options: 1) create a multi-generational herd with an effective breeding program at the zoo, or 2) improve the existing exhibit but allow current elephants to age out or retire at the appropriate time; and

WHEREAS, the majority of the Task Force stated that “if neither option are implemented, the Task Force believes that a closure plan should be seriously considered by the WPZ Board;” and

WHEREAS, a minority of the Task Force found that “Watoto, Chai and Bamboo cannot be ‘active’ within the confines of the existing exhibit, where the outdoor area is approximately one acre, and each elephant has access to only a part of that acre;” and

WHEREAS, a minority of the Task Force also found that “If Chai, Watoto and Bamboo cannot be safely reintegrated, WPZ should consider transferring one or more of the elephants to an elephant sanctuary with no current or recent history of active TB [tuberculosis];” and

WHEREAS, a minority of the Task Force also found that “there is insufficient evidence that creating a multi-generational herd would cure the repetitive behaviors of Chai, Watoto, or Bamboo. African elephants in the wild do live in matriarchal herds, but it is unreasonable to think natural conditions can be re-created in a zoo environment;” and
WHEREAS, the minority of the Task Force also found that “Having a larger space and an
improved enrichment program might address repetitive behaviors more effectively than
creating a multi-generational herd;” and
WHEREAS, the minority of the Task Force also found that “If improvements to the WPZ
elephant program and exhibit cannot be done expeditiously for the benefit of Watoto,
Chai and Bamboo, WPZ should consider transferring the elephants to an elephant
sanctuary without the presence of active TB.”
WHEREAS, the WPZ Board attempted to locate additional Asian elephants to implement the
first option recommended by the majority of the Task Force but concluded that creating a
multi-generational herd at the Zoo was not realistic in the near future; and
WHEREAS, the WPZ Board ultimately decided to relocate the elephants Bamboo and Chai; and
WHEREAS, the WPZ considered the Performing Animal Welfare Society (“PAWS”) facility
located in California, but as of October 2014, the female Asian herd at the PAWS facility
were under quarantine for tuberculosis (TB) and no new elephants could be introduced
into that area; and
WHEREAS, the PAWS facility at the time did not have barns or yards available for Bamboo and
Chai; and
WHEREAS, because PAWS was not suitable at the time, the WPZ Board decided against the
findings of the minority of the Task Force, and decided that Bamboo and Chai should be
transferred to the Oklahoma City Zoo, and
WHEREAS, two Asian female elephants were euthanized at PAWS, leaving only one female
Asian elephant; and
WHEREAS, on April 8, 2015, PAWS wrote a letter addressed to Councilmember Kshama Sawant, stating that PAWS currently has a 14,000 square foot barn that houses a 21-year-old Asian bull elephant which contains a training area for husbandry and veterinary care, that half of the barn could be dedicated to Chai and Bamboo, but that the half, as well as the perimeter fencing for 15 acres of wooded land, would need to be completed prior to the arrival of Chai and Bamboo or any other elephants; and

WHEREAS, PAWS indicated in its letter that it already secured $500,000 in pledges for the building project and estimated that it will take a minimum of six months to complete; and

WHEREAS, the City Council believes that if there is any doubt regarding the health, welfare and social wellbeing of the elephants, as expressed by the minority of the Task Force, all such doubt should be eliminated in favor of protecting the elephants from further harm; and

WHEREAS, the City Council believes that if there is uncertainty that creating a multi-generational herd in a zoo setting would cure the repetitive behaviors of Chai, Watoto, or Bamboo or the aggressive behavior of Watoto towards Bamboo, then the minority’s recommendation that one or more of the elephants be transferred to a sanctuary currently free of TB should be followed; and

WHEREAS, the City Council believes that the funding that PAWS has secured, along with its commitment to care for Chai and Bamboo, and the fact that it is free of TB makes it appropriate for Chai and Bamboo to be transferred to the PAWS sanctuary in San Andreas, California;

WHEREAS, in 2001, the City of Seattle entered into an Operations and Management Agreement (‘‘Agreement’’) with the Woodland Park Zoological Society (‘‘Society’’) under which the
Society agreed to take over the operation and management of the Woodland Park Zoo,
including the ownership of and care of the Zoo Animals; and

WHEREAS, Section 15.3 of the Agreement provides that “The acquisition, sale or other
disposition of Zoo Animals shall be made in strict accordance with (a) all applicable
federal, state or local laws, regulations and policies, (b) the guidelines and policies of the
AZA, and (c) existing and any adopted acquisition and disposition policies approved by
the City;” and

WHEREAS, the City Council believes it is appropriate to adopt an acquisition and disposition
policy under which the Zoo elephants should not be transferred to a zoo but rather to the
PAWS Elephant Sanctuary in San Andreas, California;

NOW, THEREFORE;

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF SEATTLE AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The City of Seattle adopts the Acquisition and Disposition Policy contained in
Attachment A to this Ordinance, pursuant to Section 15.3 of the Woodland Park Zoo Operations
and Management Agreement, dated December 17, 2001, and approved by Ordinance 120697.

Section 2. The City Attorney shall have the authority to take all appropriate legal action
to enforce and/or defend the terms of the Acquisition and Disposition Policy.

Section 3. The City Council requests that the City Attorney take any action that the City
Attorney deems appropriate to enforce the Acquisition and Disposition Policy, including the
determination of whether both civil and criminal remedies might be appropriate.

Section 4. This ordinance shall take effect and be in force 30 days after its approval by
the Mayor, but if not approved and returned by the Mayor within ten days after presentation, it
shall take effect as provided by Seattle Municipal Code Section 1.04.020.
Passed by the City Council the ____ day of ________________________, 2015, and
signed by me in open session in authentication of its passage this
_____ day of _____________________, 2015.

___________________________________________
President _________ of the City Council

Approved by me this ____ day of _____________________, 2015.

___________________________________________
Edward B. Murray, Mayor

Filed by me this ____ day of _____________________, 2015.

___________________________________________
Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

(Seal)

Attachment A