

LABOR MANAGEMENT SAFETY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, July 7, 2010

8:15-10:30am – Como Park

Present: Chris Cown, John Peter Ross, Brian Beedle, MikeDufour, Mike Dreis, Mark Cahill, Mark Pothen, Mark Pothen, Bill Gunther, Mary Jo Kiewel, Sandra Bodensteiner, Ron Hauth, Lynn Waldorf, Jean Karpe, Tom Bosman, Lorrie Brown, Cathy Grilz

1) Como Park Overview and Polar Bear Odyssey - Michelle Furrer

Michelle Furrer is the manager of the Como Campus. She was introduced by Ron Hauth, Parks Safety. Michelle provided us with a brief power point presentation about Como.

The Polar Bear Odyssey opened on June 3, 2010 and it is a World Class Exhibit which has received the three diamond ranking from Polar Bears International. It is the home of Buzz and Neil who are Polar Bears and also are brothers. Neil who weighs in at 1,000 pounds was enjoying his habitat today, while Buzz, who weighs in at 760 pounds, preferred to stay inside his habitat during our morning tour today.

The Lodge which is located in the Polar Bear Exhibit can sleep up to 28 people. The cost for the overnight stay is \$55.00 per person. There is a restroom on site. You can also rent the Lodge for birthday parties and other events.

Visitors are able to observe the polar bears inside the 1,270 square foot outpost which is climate controlled and has both underwater views and expansive views of the entire exhibit. The Polar Bear exhibit is also equipped with the necessary space and features to allow Como Zoo to breed polar bears. The new exhibit has the polar bears living in a natural, landscaped environment which is there to educate and entertain visitors.

Nature Walk is a program geared towards recruiting teenage volunteers who agree to work three days a week at the Como Zoo and Conservatory. While working at the zoo, teen volunteers learn about public speaking, nature, animal enrichment, animal habitat, and recycling.

Como Zoo's theme is to inspire our public to value the presence of living things in their lives. The Como Zoo and Conservatory is open 365 days a year. In 2009, the Como Zoo took in \$1.2 million through the voluntary donation process and had approximately 2 million visitors pass through its gates. Como is the country's last completely free metro zoo and botanical garden and welcomes around two million visitors every year to growing gardens and great new exhibits. The Zoo asks for donations of \$2.00 for adults and \$1.00 for children.

Como Zoo and Conservatory employs 84 full-time employees, 38 seasonal employees, over 1200 volunteers, and 36 interns working mainly on the butterfly exhibit.

Back in the 1880's, the facility had hot houses or outdoor gardens. Around 1897, the Como Zoo opened with a gift from someone of three deer. Shortly thereafter, they added a moose, a bison, parrots, a monkey and two buffalo. In the 1930's, work began on Monkey Island, the Bear Grotto, and the main zoo building as part of the Work Projects from the Federal Government. Monkey Island is now Seal Island. In 1976, \$8.5 million was appropriated to improve the Como Zoo.

Como Zoo covers 12 acres of land, has 156 animal species, and has 1700 animals in their collection. In 1986, the Como Zoo and Conservatory became a member of the American Zoo and Aquarium Association, and has been a member since. In 1914, work started on building the Conservatory at a cost of \$58,000. The conservatory opened in November 7, 1915. In 1925, the sunken garden opened. Last year 400 wedding ceremonies and 150 various corporate events were held at the Conservatory.

The Como Zoo and Conservatory has partnerships with: The Como Friends, Como Town – O’Neil Family, Lancer Catering, and Cafesjian’s Carousel. The mission of the Como Friends is to promote, support and enhance the Como Park Zoo and Conservatory.

Como Friends is the non-profit group whose primary goal is to support and promote the Como Zoo and Conservatory. They raise money year round and do various volunteer activities. Their first major capital campaign was for the Visitor Center and Tropical Encounters. Their second capital campaign is for the Polar Bear Exhibit and the Japanese Garden. The goal is to raise \$8.4 million of which they have already secured \$5 million. You can make donations to the Como Bear Odyssey by putting money into the “I Love Polar Bears” boxes you find around the exhibit.

There are three Como Shuttles that run from May 1 – September 30 on the weekends and from June 1 – August 8, Monday through Sunday, from 9:30am to 6:30pm. In 2009, the shuttles moved 22,000 riders to and from the Minnesota State Fairgrounds to the Como Zoo. An improved transportation plan for visitors is still in process.

2) Labor Management Safety Committee Business – Mary Jo Kiewel

The committee approved the minutes from the June 2, 2010 meeting.

The Public Works Street Maintenance Safety Committee is meeting weekly and has several issues they are working on. They will return to a monthly meeting schedule after they resolve their current issues.

The Parks Department has several safety committees that are meeting, but we do not yet have copies of their meeting minutes.

The July safety flyers look great – thank you to Sandra Bodensteiner and Sue Wegwerth for emailing them out to everyone. The winner of the four Saint Paul Saints tickets drawing from the June 8th safety message was Cecile Schurhammer from the Public Works Asphalt plant.

Parks stated that they are not recording near misses as accidents, as long as no one is hurt.

3) Walking Tour and behind the scenes tour of the Como Park Conservatory, Polar Bear Exhibit, Sunken Gardens, and outdoor animal exhibits was given. Everyone enjoyed the tour and was thankful for an opportunity to see this beautiful gem in our city! Thank you to the Como staff for the donuts and ice water!