



City of Albuquerque
Department of Arts
and Culture

**ABQ BioPark
Advisory Group
Meeting Minutes
*Draft***

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 4:00 - 5:30 pm

ABQ BioPark Zoo – Zoo Library

Members Present

Colin Barnett

Fred Whiteman-Jennings

Dr. Kristina Chongsirirwatana

Rachel Hawkins

Mike Guier

BioPark Staff Present

Brandon Gibson

Marina Tafoya

- I. Call to order – Meeting called to order by Fred Whiteman-Jennings
- II. Approval of agenda – Fred Whiteman – Jennings motion to approve agenda, Colin Barnett 2nd.
- III. Approval of minutes from April meeting – Colin motion to have Marina Tafoya noted as minutes taker. Board 2nd with no objections.
- IV. Public comment – None.
- V. Discussions and presentations – None.
- VI. Old business
 1. Neighborhood Association Meetings

Meeting minutes prepared by Marina Tafoya



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1. Unable to attend respective meetings.
2. City Councilor Aquarium/Botanic Garden Tour
 1. Tour was cancelled due to low attendance and absences. Rescheduling again for Friday September 26, 2025 at 2pm - 4pm.
- VII. Staff updates
 1. Budget – BioPark budget is still in good standing and did not receive any cuts.
 2. Attendance - The BioPark is finally seeing pre-pandemic numbers reflected in attendance.
 3. There was a discussion between the board about the parking situation for BioPark Botanic Garden concerts. Due to overload, potentially have a shuttle available to River of Lights. Also cap ticket sales at a certain number.
 4. GRT Updates
 - a) Australia Phase 2 is set to begin in August/September 2025
 - b) The Zoo Front Entry design is in the finalization phase.
 - c) Catwalk renovations underway and are on schedule to open in February 2026.
 - d) Question asked by Fred Whiteman-Jennings: “Will the Catwalk be made into the Americas?” Answer given by Brandon Gibson: “No. That will be a separate, possible GRT 2 Project”
 - e) There will be a cheetah yard added to the Catwalk. The goal is for the carnivores to have the ability to rotate habitats all around, similar to Asia exhibit.
 - f) There will be a new name since the Catwalk will house other carnivores and not just cats.
 - g) Butterfly Pavilion – There is money set aside for renovations, that will allow this exhibit to reopen.
 - h) Short discussion between board and Brandon Gibson on where some animals will be housed if they are needed to be relocated during renovations.
 - i) The GRT total is \$26.9 million.
 - j) Discussed future GRT project proposals. Question asked by Colin Barnett: “Who are the design firms for these future projects?” Answer given by Brandon Gibson:



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“CLR and DG, both were involved in the Asia GRT project. The board recognized there have been good financial decisions made by Director, Brandon Gibson for BioPark projects.

- k) Lebanon & Beyond update – Estimated September 2025 open, they are reaching substantial completion.
- l) The Aquarium/Botanic Garden will be expanded. These projects include: SHARC, Children’s Fantasy Garden, Lebanon and Beyond, Heritage Farm, Mexican Grey Wolf Refuge, Splash pad outside of Shark Reef patio.
- m) Question asked by Rachel Hawkins: “What happened to white cheeked gibbon, Makaio?” Answer given by Brandon Gibson: “He suffered from an infection.”

VIII. New business

- 1. Marina to reach out to Board resources to update membership names on the website.

IX. Next meeting date – Tuesday October 14, 2025 at 4:00pm in the Zoo Library.

IX. Adjourn – Colin Barnett move to adjourn, 2nd by Mike Guier. All in favor.