

Voice for the Animals Foundation®

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Date

Honorable Mitch O'Farrell
Chair - Arts, Entertainment, Parks and River Committee
City Hall, Room 480
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Councilmember O'Farrell and Members of the Committee

RE: CF 17-0453 - Elephant Veterinary Panel Qualifications

We are writing to offer our suggestions regarding your decision on what qualifications should be required for participation in the panel to be chosen to assess Billy's welfare, health and well-being.

In addition to any modifications you choose to make to the recommendations offered in the joint CLA/CAO report, please consider the following as additional instructions to the CLA and CAO for their selection process.

The panel's process should focus on Billy's overall welfare, not just his observable medical condition. The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) has developed what an important definition that should be central to this effort. It is presented in the AVMA's National Veterinary Accreditation Program, Module 22: Animal Welfare: A Global Definition (Content Finalized September 2012):

- Welfare is the state of the animal, and how it is coping with the conditions in which it lives.
- An animal's welfare can range from negative to positive.
- A complete assessment of welfare requires consideration of multiple facets of the animal's state.

As stated by the American Veterinary Medical Association, animal welfare means how an animal is coping with the conditions in which it lives. Although practical considerations may sometimes limit the steps that can be taken to improve an animal's welfare, these considerations *should not* affect the assessment of the animal's welfare state.



Melya Kaplan
Founder/Executive Director

Date: 10-24-18
Submitted in AEPB Committee
Council File No: 17-0453
Item No.: 5
Deputy: PUBLIC



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Honorable Mitch O'Farrell
August 20, 2018
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What is Required or Entailed for a Welfare Assessment?

Experienced wildlife veterinarians teach that to assess the welfare of a captive elephant(s), Asian (*Elephas maximus*) or African (*Loxodonta africana*), the following Welfare Inspection Procedure Guidelines and Tasks With Emphasis on Captive Elephants (excluding performing and ride elephants) are preferable:

1. Receive and review a copy of the elephant's medical and husbandry records in advance of the inspection or assessment.
2. Receive a veterinary report, verbal or written assessment of the elephant(s) health from the institution's veterinarian.
3. Is the elephant currently receiving or recently been on any medication(s)?
4. How long has the elephant's veterinarian been familiar with the elephant(s) being assessed?
5. Inspect and photograph the indoor and outdoor/exhibit spaces used by the elephant(s).
6. Examine food storage facilities and watering facilities.
7. Examine exhibit shade structures and exhibit feeding areas.
8. Examine any solid and liquid body waste of the elephant as available.
9. Observe the elephant and interactions with the handlers or keepers during a routine keeper inspection to include photographing the elephant's profiles and feet, to include toes and foot soles.
10. Discover the elephant's daily routine.
11. Observe the elephant's normal exhibit activity throughout the day(s).
12. Observe the elephant's gait for normal and abnormal function.
13. Assess body conditioning score (BCS).
14. The inspection procedure will require permission to make photographic documentation of findings during the inspection and assessment process.
15. Learn the abuse and cruelty statutes/ordinance for the inspection jurisdiction.
16. Complete and submit a report of findings and opinions.

The Committee previously has provided an extensive list of questions and topics for the panel to take into consideration. We encourage you to additionally offer the CLA and CAO the following to consider as they assess the qualifications of prospective panelists:



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What Questions Would Show That a Person Has This Kind of Experience?

1. Demonstrated history of experience in observing and examining captive elephants under free and protective contact management circumstances?
2. Demonstrated history of clinical experience in diagnosing and treating a variety of medical ailments of Asian and African elephants under free and protective contact management circumstances?
3. Demonstrated history of experience in examining the standard of care and living conditions of captive elephants?
4. Demonstrated history of experience in examining medical and husbandry/keeper records of captive elephants, and how these records reflect the standard of care and living conditions of captive elephants.
5. Inspection experience and or observational experience with captive elephants that requires a written report of findings to determine if the animal(s) inspected or observed reflect coping with an acceptable or unacceptable standard of care and living conditions.

We believe that, with the AVMA definition in hand and an independent, qualified panel doing the job, the City will get the best possible assessment of Billy's well-being. As advocates for Billy and all elephants, we ask you to settle for nothing less.

Sincerely,

VFTA

CC: Honorable David Ryu
Honorable Curren Price, Jr.
Roy Morales

CC addresses:

Honorable David Ryu
Member – Arts, Entertainment, Parks and River Committee
City Hall, Room 425
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012



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Honorable Curren Price, Jr.
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Room 420

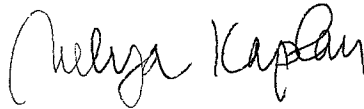
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