

DRAFT

San Francisco Animal Commission Meeting Minutes February 12, 2026

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Present: Chair Michael Angelo Torres; Vice Chair Irina Ozernoy; Commissioners: Mikaila Garfinkel; Michael Reed; Dayna Sherwood

Absent: Commissioner Nick Chapman; Department Representatives: Deputy Director Amy Corso, SF Animal Care and Control; Natural Resources Manager Christopher Campbell, SF Recreation and Parks; Officer Greg Sutherland, SF Police Department; Dr. George Han, SF Department of Public Health

2. General Public Comment

A community member shared information on a local animal murder case and expressed concerns that there would not be adequate penalty.

3. Approval of draft minutes from the January 2026 meeting [Discussion/Action Item]

Meeting minutes approved.

4. Chairperson and Commissioner reports

Commissioner Ozernoy expressed concern regarding multiple unexcused absences of Commissioner Chapman. Commissioner Torres proposed following up with Ozernoy to discuss potential next steps.

5. EcoPark SF [Discussion Item] [Commissioner Torres] Justin Barker, Founder of SF Zoo Watch, and Megan Penrose, a Bay Area animal advocate and attorney, shared a proposal for transforming the San Francisco Zoo into Eco Park SF.

Key Points from the Proposal:

- Eco Park SF, which would span 100 acres, would be a climate resilient eco park that prioritizes animal dignity and the rescue and rehabilitation of animals, as well as native habitat restoration.
- Considers the rising sea levels and includes a "climate buffer zone" that is rewilded with pedestrian walkways.
- Shifts focus from animals in captivity to nature, animal protection, and education (such as with the Ocean Lab) that is appealing to families and children.
- Invites visitors to participate in conservation and celebration of the Bay Area wildlife and ecosystem.
- Inspired by other countries' successful efforts to transform animal zoos into destination eco parks.

Commissioner Discussion:

- Commissioner Torres shared personal experiences with the Buenos Aires eco park and its popularity.
- Commissioner Garfinkel inquired about the process for building Eco Park SF. Barker shared that the first stage would be building public support and establishing a nonprofit. He also stated that the park would ideally obtain funding from donors who care about conservation

and technology.

- Commissioner Garfinkel asked what happens to the animals currently confined in the zoo. Penrose and Barker responded that it depends on the animals, but that likely would be a mix of caring for senior animals, rewilding when possible, working with sanctuaries, and returning animals that are loaned from other zoos. Commissioner Torres explained that the Buenos Aires eco park took a similar approach.
- Barker said that there is a possibility for breeding facilities focused on conservation of frogs and snakes, which are released in their native habitat.
- Commissioner Ozernoy asked about the timeline for closing of the coastal roadway and how it could impact the Eco Park SF plan.
- Commissioner Reed asked about the timeline; Barker explained that the project would take an estimated 10-12 years to complete and would be executed in phases.

Public Comments:

A community member, who previously worked at the San Francisco Zoo, shared historical stories and concerns.

6. Items to be included on the Agenda for Future Commission Meetings. The next meeting is Thursday, March 12th.

Commissioner Ozernoy proposed having a local expert provide updates on California rodenticide regulations.

8. Adjournment - 6:18 PM PT