Development Activities Meeting Report (Version: 2026)

This report created by the Neighborhood Planner and included with staff reports to City Boards and/or Commissions.

Logistics	Stakeholders
Project Name/Address: 201 Shelter House Road	**Groups Represented (e.g., specific organizations, residents, employees, etc. where this is evident):** Highland Park Community Council
Parcel Number(s): 82-H-1-02	
Building & Development Application Number:	
Meeting Location: Virtual/Zoom	
Date: November 10, 2026	
Meeting Start Time: 7 pm	
Applicant: Pittsburgh Zoo & Aquarium	**Approx. Number of Attendees:** 25
Boards and/or Commissions Request(s): Approval from the Public Art & Civic Design Commission	

How did the meeting inform the community about the development project?
Ex: Community engagement to-date, location and history of the site, demolition needs, building footprint and overall square footage, uses and activities (particularly on the ground floor), transportation needs and parking proposed, building materials, design, and other aesthetic elements of the project, community uses, amenities and programs.

The Pittsburgh Zoo & Aquarium is seeking approval from the Public Art & Civic Design Commission for the construction of a new habitat building and renovations of an existing playground and animal care buildings. More specifically, these renovations are for Kids Kingdom Animal Connections Playground, Philippines (currently known as The Islands), and Indonesia (currently known as Jungle Odyssey).

Kids Connections Playground

- Improvements to an existing playground for visibility, play, accessibility, circulation, physicality, and cohesiveness.
- Natural playground materials to feel like the space is nature-based and outdoor.
- Equipment will be bird and nature themed and will include a climber, steppers, discover wheel, log tangles, plastic slide, stilts, seat wall, step cluster, double hammock, wobble board, traverse rings, spiderweb, and a ladder grid.

Philippines (Currently the Islands)

- The exterior of buildings and existing circulation will be the same. The project is mainly focused on the landscape and outside exhibits. Animal care buildings will also see improvements.
- The main new exterior addition to the project is an amphitheater.
- A new Philippine aviary will be added. Other exhibits include babirusas, hornbills, tortoises, and crocodiles.

Indonesia (Currently Jungle Odyssey)

- The Zoo will be adding a new 15,000 sq ft building to create a new immersive outdoor orangutan habitat. This building is needed due to Pittsburgh's weather as the orangutans need a permanently tropical habitat.
- The new building will have a ETFE plastic roof which will allow more UV rays in order to replicate an orangutan's natural habitat and to grow tropical plants. Immersion for guests is also a large focus.
- There will also be natural looking stormwater retention infrastructure.

- An ADA accessible guest path will be created.
- The existing care buildings will be improved and continued to be used for animal care.
- The existing warty pig exhibit will be expanded. There will also be exhibits for tomistoma, tapirs, and clouded leopards.

Next Steps
The project will go to Public Art & Civic Design Commission for hearing and action on December 16th.

Input and Responses

Topic	Concerns
Timeline	• *Comment/concern raised:* What is the total timeline for this project? • *Who raised it:* Resident. • *Applicant response:* Hoping to go into construction early next year. Roughly will take three years. Hoping to be done by Memorial Day in 2029. • *Outcome/follow-up needed*: None.
Process	• *Comment/concern raised:* Can you explain this process and timeline? How does this relate to the permitting process? • *Who raised it:* Resident • *Applicant response:* Presenting high-level conceptual designs for exterior and layout to get community feedback. Future zoning approvals will be requested. The needed building permits are outside of the zoning approval process we are doing now. *Outcome/follow-up needed*: None
Support for Playground	• *Comment/concern raised:* As the parent of a three-year-old and I am delighted with the changes to the Kids Kingdom playground. As a mom, I really appreciate the thought given to the playground scale, with the large tall pieces toward the back and largely obscured from view of the younger kids. As someone who works in the AEC industry, I very much appreciate the reuse of existing structures, the new structures proposed to be relatively low, or the dome which is very visually light, while adding new habitats and expanding the Zoo's program. • *Who raised it:* Residents • *Outcome/follow-up needed:* None
Animals	• *Comment/concern raised:* What species will you be introducing? When will you be able to share that information? Are there ways for community to provide feedback for species? • *Who raised it:* Residents • *Applicant response:* We are bringing back Orangutans! We will also have tapirs and babirusa.

Topic	Concerns
	Some of the bird suggestions we have received include pink-necked pigeons, peacocks/pheasants, and bleeding-heart doves. We'll be having a workshop about that. While we don't have a formal engagement process for species we do look to our staff for recommendations, and animals that need conservation efforts. Sometimes we have member surveys to ask people what they would like to see. Happy to host a general meeting later on. • *Outcome/follow-up needed*: Will share information soon.
Materials	• *Comment/concern raised*: What wood are you using for the playground, we have seen wooden playground structures deteriorate. • *Who raised it:* Resident • *Applicant response:* We are using hard wood that should be able to withstand Pittsburgh weather. • *Outcome/follow-up needed*: None needed.

Planner completing report: AB