



"Wildlife Conservation through Education and Participation"

August 10, 2020

Board of County Commissioners
Brevard County, Florida

The East Coast Zoological Society of Florida dba Brevard Zoo is requesting a three-year extension to start of the grant agreement for Tourist Development Council capital funding of the Indian River Lagoon Conservation Campus and Aquarium also referred to as The Aquarium Project. This extension was unanimously approved by the Tourist Development Council at their July 22, 2020 meeting.

We are requesting this extension because of the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on the project. This crisis has affected the timing of the project in three ways. First, by demanding the attention of the leadership team running this project. Our focus since March has been the financial security of the Zoo and the physical safety of our animals, staff, volunteers and guests. This has meant very limited human capital available to work on The Aquarium Project. Second, our partners throughout the community have been dramatically impacted by Covid-19. For example, Port Canaveral has had to move their capital contribution to the project out of this year's budget. We do not know how long it will take until their primary source of funding, cruise passengers, returns to pre-covid levels. Third, and most importantly, it would be irresponsible for Brevard Zoo to seek donor and sponsorship dollars until the end of the crisis is in sight. These dollars are needed in the community right now to deal with the impacts of Covid-19.

In light of these impacts, The Aquarium Project leadership team have elected to continue the planning of the project in terms of design and fundraising, but not resume fundraising until the crisis has passed. Therefore, we are requesting a three-year extension of the date that physical work on the site must commence.

Sincerely,

Keith Winsten
Executive Director



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