

MOTION

**ARTS, PARKS, LIBRARIES, AND
COMMUNITY ENRICHMENT
RULES, ELECTIONS, AND
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS**

On April 22, 2025, following an announcement from the LA Zoo regarding their intention to relocate beloved elephants Billy and Tina to Oklahoma due to not meeting AZA standards, I introduced a Motion (25-0446) requesting the Zoo report back about relocation options with cost benefit analyses. I believed the City Council should have had the opportunity to discuss the several offers from internationally celebrated sanctuaries that were ready to welcome Billy and Tina.

After the announcement of intent, beyond a conversation during a Budget and Finance Committee hearing on May 5th where the Zoo Director refused to publicly discuss details of her plan, there was no public communication from the Zoo on this issue. Before this Motion could be scheduled, and to the dismay of generations of advocates, the LA Zoo orchestrated a midnight run that sent Billy and Tina to the Tulsa Zoo with no oversight or transparency with the City Council.

The lack of communication was alarming. My office was only privy to the imminent transfer because advocates saw moving trucks arrive at the elephant's pen. Even though the Zoo knew my office was heavily engaged on this issue, I heard nothing official until they had already been loaded onto trucks and were moved in the middle of the night on May 21, 2025.

Since then, a lot of information has come to our attention that is concerning. Mainly, that Billy was donated to the Tulsa Zoo. Unlike Tina, Billy was owned by Los Angeles and as a breeding male elephant was worth close to one million dollars. While the Zoo could have considered loaning or selling him, it appears the Zoo gave away a City-owned asset without consulting the City Council. While it remains unclear as to why, it is my understanding that the options for a loan or sale would have required a vote by the City Council. Regardless of motive, to this day, the LA Zoo has not given a transparent timeline of what occurred to Billy and Tina and how they were transferred.

While my previous motion goes in-depth regarding Billy and Tina's troubled history at the LA Zoo, previous litigation, science regarding the physical and psychological trauma of captivity versus sanctuary, and the international trend of sending municipally-owned elephants to large scale sanctuaries, this new Motion is focused on understanding what happened before, during and after Billy and Tina's relocation from the LA Zoo to Tulsa; as well as an understanding of how giving away a City asset potentially worth millions of dollars could be executed without any communication or vote between the department and Council.

Generations of advocates and leaders deserve to know what happened.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council instruct the Los Angeles Zoo, in partnership with the City Attorney, to report back within 30 days on the precise timeline and decision process that led to Billy and Tina being moved.

SEP 26 2025



I FURTHER MOVE that the City Council instruct the City Attorney, in consultation with the Los Angeles Zoo, to report back within 30 days explaining how a department can legally donate an incredibly valuable City asset to a jurisdiction without any transparency or approval from the City Council.

ORIGINAL

PRESENTED BY:


BOB BLUMENFIELD
Councilmember, 3rd District

SECONDED BY: 