



San Francisco Chronicle

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A BIG BOOST FOR SALMON



PHOTOS BY LOREN ELLIOTT/SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Juvenile coho salmon are released from a California Department of Fish and Wildlife truck into the Klamath River near Hornbrook (Siskiyou County) last week. More than 500,000 salmon were released over two days from the state's new Fall Creek Fish Hatchery into the area below the Iron Gate Dam in an effort to help restore the species' dwindling numbers.

Possible firings await Oakland's new chief

By David Hernandez

When Floyd Mitchell was introduced last month as Oakland's next police chief, he said that one of his top priorities would be to throw off the yoke of 20-plus years of federal oversight by showing that the department can hold its own officers accountable.

Yet that effort has hit another snag before Mitchell, the former chief in Lubbock, Texas, can even be

sworn in.

The city is now moving to fire or discipline four high-ranking members of the department over their handling of an internal investigation into a veteran detective who was charged criminally with lying under oath and bribing a witness in a murder case, sources familiar with the matter told the Chronicle.

Deputy Chief Drennon Lindsey and internal affairs Sgt. Mega Lee were is-

sued notices of the city's intent to fire them, while Capt. Kevin Kaney faces a 20-day suspension and Lt. Hamann Nguyen faces a demotion, said the sources, who were granted anonymity under the Chronicle's confidential source policy.

The notices were issued after a probe by the Community Police Review Agency, the investigative arm of the city's Police Commission, and an out-

side law firm, the sources said.

The officers can challenge the proposed discipline in the case, which was first reported by independent reporter Ali Winston.

"Every time we get close" to emerging from federal court oversight, "we get a new scandal," said Rashidah Grinage, a member of the nonprofit Coalition for Police Accountability, which seeks to provide

Oakland continues on A9

'Missing middle' S.F. units sit empty

Builders blame depressed rental market, convoluted city process

By J.K. Dineen

For years, San Francisco politicians and housing advocates have fought for the creation of "missing middle" housing for workers with incomes high enough to be middle class in most markets, but who are often priced out of the famously expensive city.

But developers who have recently built apartments aimed at moderate-income families in San Francisco have discovered a harsh reality: The missing middle seems to have gone missing.

Of 216 recently completed units targeting households earning between 100% and 150% of area median income, known as AMI — a range of about \$30,000 to \$95,000 for a three-person household — 182 are sitting vacant. Just 15% of those units have found takers, according to data from the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development.

Developers who are sitting on the vacant below-market-rate units, or BMRs in housing industry jargon, blame a combination of a depressed rental market that gives middle-income renters plenty of options and a city bureaucracy so convoluted that qualifying for an apartment involves a tortured and time-consuming process with as much paperwork as it would take to buy a home.

Units continues on A8

Report on safety of zoo workers fuels concerns

By Tara Duggan and Megan Fan Muncie

Members of a San Francisco Zoo advisory committee expressed surprise and concern at issues of worker safety and animal welfare raised in a recent Chronicle investigation.

In an email to the Chronicle, Larry Mazzola, chair of the city's Joint Zoo Committee, called for a full investigation into the accusations.

The Chronicle report outlined complaints raised by 20 current and former employees and detailed troubling recent incidents, including a harrowing chase of a zookeeper by a grizzly bear and the death of a young penguin that was, according to keeper logs, struck by a "guillotine" door. Employees said the zoo's upper management did not listen to their concerns.

The Joint Zoo Committee has discussed the Chronicle's findings in a meeting. The advisory group is made up of zoo representatives and members of the Recreation and Park Commission, the Commission of Animal Control and Welfare, and the San Francisco Zoological Society board, which runs the zoo.

The 95-year-old institution was in the spotlight

Zoo continues on A9

Lawyer looking to sue SFUSD over elections

Attorney challenging how voters chose board members

By Jill Tucker

A Bay Area attorney challenging the way San Francisco elects its school board members has filed the first legal fight in court, asking a judge to authorize a lawsuit that could compel a shift to district elections.

The attorney, Scott Rafferty, is also asking the judge to force the San Francisco Unified School District board to follow public meeting and re-

ords laws. He sent a demand letter to the board in February, urging a shift from citywide board elections to smaller district races by November or face a massive and expensive legal battle that could result in paying millions of dollars in legal fees.

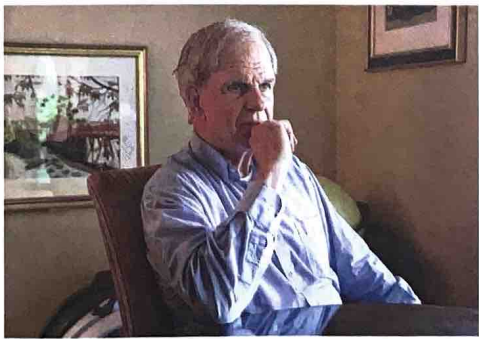
Rafferty argues the district's system fails to comply with the California Voting Rights Act.

So far, the board has resisted shifting to district elections, saying it would

study the issue and comply if necessary or even pursue alternatives, including ranked-choice voting.

A Chronicle investigation published in December documented how, for the past several years, a small group of attorneys has built a cottage industry atop the CVRA by taking advantage of generous legal and financial incentives to sue and collect millions of dollars from tax-

Schools continues on A9



Attorney Scott Rafferty argues that the San Francisco Unified School District's voting system fails to comply with the California Voting Rights Act.

Jessica Christian/The Chronicle



ZOO

From page A1

again last week when Mayor London Breed announced that China would lend giant pandas to the zoo for the first time in decades, likely by next year.

Mazzola said he was surprised to learn about most of the issues in the Chronicle's report. He said he would invite Tanya Peterson, CEO and executive director of the zoo, and Melinda Dunn, the Zoological Society's new board chair, to attend the committee's June meeting to answer questions about the article's findings.

In particular, Mazzola, a business manager with United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 38, said he was concerned about allegations regarding worker safety and training.

"I want to make sure that the workers are being heard," Mazzola said in the meeting. "Worker safety and the way that workers are being treated are the No. 1 priority, along with keeping the animals safe. That's what this is all about."

"There were some pretty serious allegations in the article," said Jane Tobin, secretary of the Commission of Animal Control and Welfare. She added, "I'm not sure about the path forward."

The zoo posted a statement on social media saying that the Chronicle's report "misrepresented information and included many inaccurate facts." The Chronicle asked the zoo to specify what facts it found to be inaccurate.

In an ensuing email, board chair Dunn said "the evidence at the time (of the penguin's death) was inconclusive as to the cause of death."

The Chronicle obtained the agenda from the July 20, 2023, Joint Zoo Committee meeting. On the report to the committee listing the five animals that died in the previous month, "head trauma" is noted next to the listing of the deceased penguin.

Much of the rest of the email details items that were mentioned in the Chronicle report, including the fact that the zoo regularly passes inspections. Said Dunn: "We also have numerous safety protocols to ensure the safety of our staff, as well as safety and welfare committees responsible for reviewing staff concerns, evaluating the situation and resolving any



Santiago Mejia/The Chronicle

A recent Chronicle report outlined complaints raised by 20 current and former San Francisco Zoo employees.



Stephen Lam/The Chronicle

The chair of the city's Joint Zoo Committee has called for a full investigation into the complaints.

issues. We are proud of the San Francisco Zoo and our teams."

While San Francisco owns the zoo and its animals, the Zoological Society is responsible for managing day-to-day opera-

tions, passing needed inspections, doing maintenance and making capital improvements, according to its lease. The Joint Zoo Committee is informed of animal deaths, gives approval to

animal acquisitions and approves the nonprofit's operating budget and capital improvements above \$50,000.

"We have to ask more questions. We have to have answers if

the public asks us, or whoever," Mazzola said in the meeting.

Corey Hallman, a representative of the zoo's labor union, said that the union would meet with the Zoological Society board soon to talk about issues raised in the Chronicle's report, many of which the union has raised previously.

Tobin suggested looking into what other zoos consider best practice. She specifically pointed to the Oakland Zoo's policy of bringing in new animals only when their habitat is complete. Former employees at the San Francisco Zoo said that a pair of orangutans were brought in to live in an exhibit for two years before it was renovated.

In a phone interview, Supervisor Myrna Melgar, whose district includes the zoo, would not comment on the Chronicle's findings, but said she welcomed the news about pandas coming to the zoo.

"I definitely see the benefits for the zoo and for the city," Melgar said. "I hope that the zoo puts its best foot forward."

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SCHOOLS

From page A1

payers. The investigation found that the law has achieved mixed results in empowering minority groups while causing a range of unintended consequences that legislators have ignored.

Rafferty said his petition filed Tuesday follows weeks of negotiations and demands for documents. He alleges the school board has failed to follow the Brown Act, which dictates open meeting laws, and has failed to provide requested public records.

"Over the past three months, the commissioners of SFOE

have used secret deliberations and have concealed public records to perpetuate this discriminatory at-large electoral system and to implement policies that disproportionately affect Latinos and middle-class neighborhoods," the petition states.

Rafferty told the Chronicle on Wednesday that after trying to work with the board over the past few months, he is now taking the next step in the legal process. He is asking a San Francisco Superior Court judge to give him the green light to sue over the California Voting Rights Act. "That is the primary purpose" of the petition, he said. "But they're not getting away with the Brown Act violations."

Board President Laimie Motamedi declined to comment on the petition.

The California Voting Rights Act, which was passed in 2002, seeks to give minority voters in the state better representation. In theory, district elections give neighborhoods the ability to choose their own elected officials, ensuring those representatives better reflect the minority communities.

The city's school board has five minority members, but that's not the only criterion used to determine whether an elected body is in violation of the act. Voter representation is the primary criterion, so it's more about whether those elected

proportionally represent the city.

The district has argued that Rafferty cannot sue because it's studying the issue and will take action if necessary, he told the Chronicle.

In February, board member Matt Alexander said he believes the district is on "safe legal ground" by communicating a desire to adhere to the voting law, even though the district will look at more than one option to do so.

"We're making it very clear we intend to initiate a transition to something that is compliant with the CVRA," Alexander said.

In his Tuesday filing, Rafferty

outlined his argument against an at-large school election, noting that San Francisco is the largest school district in the country that still elects its commissioners at large.

"At large elections cause political parties and candidates to neglect immigrant, Latino and working-class Asian neighborhoods because they have low rates of voter registration and turnout," according to the petition. "District elections provide an equal voice to immigrant and minority communities who suffer the most when public education is neglected."

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OAKLAND

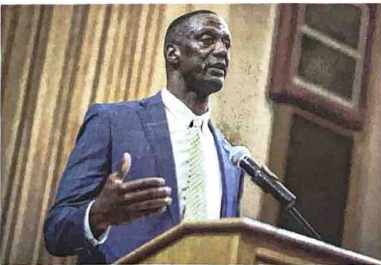
From page A1

oversight of the Oakland Police Department. "There's this pattern that appears to emerge of internal affairs investigations undermining accountability, and that leadership isn't aware of it or doesn't address it, and it takes an outside investigator to essentially look at it objectively."

She said the case will test the leadership of Mitchell, set to be the city's 13th chief in 13 years, providing an opportunity for him to make clear what is expected of department leaders.

The four officers facing discipline did not respond to requests for comment. Attempts to reach Mitchell were unsuccessful, and the mayor's office did not make him available for an interview.

Federal court oversight was required as part of a settlement in the infamous Riders case, in which four officers were accused of beating suspects and planting evidence in West Oakland. The 2003 settlement mandated a range of reforms in how the department tracks and disciplines officers, most of which the department has completed. But the new controversy could mark a setback, said Jim Chanin, an at-



Bronie Wittmann/The Chronicle

Floyd Mitchell, Oakland's next police chief, has said one of his top priorities would be ending federal oversight of the police department. Mitchell is the former chief in Lubbock, Texas.

torney for plaintiffs in the Riders case.

If there are allegations of a cover-up in the internal investigation, "that's obviously a problem," Chanin said. He said he hadn't gotten copies of any investigative reports as of Wednesday, leaving him in the dark about the details of the matter and how it might affect federal oversight.

The high-ranking officers who were issued discipline notices were faulted for actions related to the internal investigation of

Phong Tran, the sources said. In August, prosecutors charged the longtime homicide detective, who has pleaded not guilty. After the criminal case unfolded, the Alameda County District Attorney's Office said it was reviewing more than 120 cases to see if they might be tainted. The office declined to comment this past week.

Winston, the independent reporter, wrote that OPD's internal investigation cleared Tran of misconduct within a month.

Complicating matters, Lind-

sey, the deputy chief whom the city is now seeking to fire, is married to former Police Chief LeRonne Armstrong, who was terminated last year by Mayor Sheng Thao.

An outside law firm determined that Armstrong mishandled two officer misconduct cases. The cases involved a sergeant who allegedly struck a parked car in a hit-and-run and, in a separate incident, discharged his gun in an elevator at the department's headquarters. An independent arbitrator later cleared Armstrong of wrongdoing, though his bid to win his job back fell short.

As of last June, federal oversight had cost the city more than \$20 million, with the funds covering, among other things, an independent monitor who studies the police department's progress in completing reforms.

A spokesperson for Armstrong, Sam Singer, said in a statement that while Armstrong had no details of the new investigation that resulted in discipline notices, a wrongful termination lawsuit he filed in February "outlines a pattern of outside investigators reporting to the federal monitor unfairly blaming senior police leadership in a way that benefits the monitor by justifying his continued federal oversight."

The court-appointed monitor, Robert Warshaw, issued his latest report of OPD on Tuesday, indicating that the department is not yet in compliance with a mandated reform that aims to ensure the department imposes discipline in a consistent manner. The handling of the internal investigation of Detective Tran could affect the completion of this reform, Chanin said.

Warshaw ended his report by noting that a new chief will start next month. "We look forward to our interactions with him," the monitor said.

Justin Berton, a media strategist who was a spokesperson for former Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf, said the new controversy will pose a challenge as Mitchell sets up his command staff. The proposed discipline, Berton said, suggests that the leaders at the top aren't trustworthy and upheld the status quo that Mitchell, as an outsider, was hired to break up.

Then again, he noted, Armstrong was able to refute the findings against him.

"It'll be a mess that takes some time before the dust settles," he said.

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Are sex assault cases discouraged?

Client at Sonoma resort wanted to press charges against masseur — until she spoke with deputies

By Matthias Gafni

A woman sat in the lobby of the Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn spa, waiting for police. It was Sept. 7, 2022, and two days earlier, the woman would soon tell officers, a massage

therapist had sexually assaulted her at the luxury Wine Country resort. Afraid the masseur would target other women if she didn't speak up, the woman — identified in court records as Jane Doe — wanted to press charges.

But when two Sonoma County sheriff's deputies arrived that evening, they spent far less time obtaining the woman's account than they did explaining the many steps she would need to take to seek prosecution and detailing reasons that she might

not want to move forward. While Sgt. Hector Rodriguez and Deputy Fred Schmidt told the woman that they were not trying to dissuade her and supported whatever decision she made, they told her that an investigation was unlikely to re-

sult in consequences for her alleged attacker, body camera footage obtained by the Chronicle shows.

At one point, Rodriguez described the allegations as a "his word against your word" situation. "Quite honestly, the district attorney probably won't prosecute," he said. **Assault continues on A10**



2024 INFLUENCE LIST

Big-money groups seek pull in S.F. race for mayor

By J.D. Morris

As San Francisco heads into what will probably be the most expensive mayoral election in its history, an ascendant crop of moderate advocacy groups backed by wealthy donors could shift the outcome.

The organizations were founded over the past several years and broadly support building more market-rate housing, making the city friendlier to business and expanding police powers. While they've already spent millions of dollars to influence some recent city elections, November will be the first time they've thrown their weight around during a mayoral contest.

But first, the groups' leaders must decide whom to back, if anyone, amid a thicket of personal and professional ties some of them share with the leading moderate mayoral candidates: incumbent London Breed and challengers Mark Farrell and Daniel Lurie.

Take Jay Cheng, the head of Neighbors for a Better San Francisco. In recent months, he has played a role in staffing discussions for both the Farrell and Lurie campaigns, according to interviews and records seen by the Chronicle. Meanwhile, he is married to Kanishka Cheng, the head of TogetherSF Action, who used to work for both Farrell and Breed.

At another organization, **Election continues on A12**

SHAPING THE CITY

San Francisco has been thrust into the global spotlight for an array of problems that demand one of the city's most difficult transformations. With residents eager for solutions to the challenges of homelessness, drugs and affordability, the Chronicle sought to identify those with the largest roles in directing that process. The result is the Influence List — 20 people who command pronounced authority. This special section seeks to give readers insight into those who directly affect how we live, work and play — for better or worse.

SPECIAL SECTION, F1

'Is this real?' Panda plan for S.F. Zoo faces hurdles

Mayor's agreement with China just first step in process that will take years, cost millions

By Tara Duggan and Michael Barba

Henry Chang spent more than a decade of his political career trying to broker deals with China to bring pandas to the Oakland Zoo. About 20 years ago, he helped build an enclosure for the animals at the zoo, arranged a \$300,000 payment from the city of Oakland for panda research, and even garnered support from former President Bill Clinton.

But his dream never came to fruition because of tense diplo-

matic relations, he said.

"It all depends on what China wants," said Chang, a former Oakland City Council member. "The whole thing is politics."

Now San Francisco Mayor London Breed is trying her luck at bringing pandas to the Bay Area. She arrived home from a trip to China last Sunday touting a letter of intent she signed with the China Wildlife Conservation Association to send a pair of pandas to the city in 2025. It's the same organization that Chang reached a similar agreement with for Oakland in 2000.

Breed held up the deal as a major victory for San Francisco, one that would strengthen ties with China and boost tourism and the economy in a city still struggling to recover from the pandemic. Securing a pair of the playful and endearing bears would also represent a political win for Breed, who is seeking to distinguish herself from a cadre of challengers vying for her seat in November.

But past efforts to bring the bears to the Bay Area show that the agreement reached by Breed represents merely an early step in a long and costly journey. Success would require the city and zoo to pull off a major fundrais-

Pandas continues on A13



S.F. Mayor London Breed wheels a luggage cart with several panda dolls before speaking last Sunday about her trip to China.

Upcoming Events at Michaan's!

Free Appraisal Event
 Wednesday, May 8th: 10 am - 1 pm
 Wednesday, May 22nd: 10 am - 1 pm

May Gallery Auction
 Friday, May 17th: 10 am
 Preview: Saturday, May 18th: 10 am - 5 pm
 Thursday, May 16th: 10 am - 5 pm
 Friday, May 17th: 9 am - end of auction

May Annex Auction
 Monday, May 20th: 9 am
 Tuesday, May 21st: 9 am
 Wednesday, May 22nd: 9 am
 Preview: Sunday, May 19th: 10 am - 5 pm
 Thursday, May 16th: 10 am - 5 pm
 Wednesday, May 15th: 9 am - end of auction

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PANDAS

From page A1

ing effort and the zoo to clear permitting hurdles at both the local and federal levels.

Among the logistical challenges for the zoo: figuring out how to supply the ravenous bears with the hundreds of pounds of bamboo they eat each week.

Details of the plans are sparse, and it's unclear whether the expected costs — prospectively \$1 million per year to lease them from China, plus an estimated \$23 million to \$25 million to build and renovate enclosures — will be offset by the benefits, given the experiences of other North American zoos. The San Francisco Zoo faces added scrutiny over hosting such high-profile guests after complaints from 20 current and former employees about animal welfare and worker safety, detailed in a Chronicle investigation this month.

Politicians throughout the western world have long fought to obtain giant pandas from China. Those trying their hand at "panda diplomacy" have included former San Francisco Mayors Ed Lee and Dianne Feinstein, and pandas did make two monthslong tours to the San Francisco Zoo during Feinstein's tenure in the 1980s. In 1993, then-San Francisco Supervisor Angela Alioto came back from China with a letter of intent hoping to bring pandas to the city long-term, but ultimately could not secure funding.

Alioto hopes Breed will succeed, but she has her doubts. "Is this real?" Alioto said. "I'm not going to get too excited until a panda gets off the airplane."

Parisa Safarzadeh, a spokesperson for Breed, said the mayor's efforts are steps ahead of other attempts. She noted, for example, that the letter of intent Chang received for the Oakland Zoo did not include an expected date for the pandas' arrival. Breed recently hosted Chinese President Xi Jinping in San Francisco for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit and has the blessing of high-ranking Chinese leaders, including the country's vice presi-



Washington Post via Getty Images

Jenny Owens of Wilkesboro, N.C., watches the giant pandas on loan from China at Zoo Atlanta. The San Francisco Zoo estimates it could cost \$20 million to build a permanent panda habitat.

"While pandas coming to (San Francisco) isn't a new conversation, the level of engagement by Mayor Breed is."

Parisa Safarzadeh, a spokesperson for Mayor London Breed

dent, to bring pandas to San Francisco, Safarzadeh said.

"While pandas coming to (San Francisco) isn't a new conversation, the level of engagement by Mayor Breed is," Safarzadeh said in an email.

With their wide-apart eyes and roly-poly bodies that often tumble in play around zoo exhibits, the bears attract hordes of visitors, at least initially. Former diplomat Barbara Bodine, director of Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of Diplomacy and an authority on pandas' role in international relations, calls them "a perfect zoo animal."

"The nice thing about them in zoos is they just sit there munching on bamboo for hours at a stretch and move slowly," she said. The San Diego Zoo estimates giant pandas spend 12 hours a day feeding.

Despite their appeal, pandas' presence at a zoo is not always a win. Before the Toronto Zoo got a pair of pandas in 2013, a local

legislator who supported the plan said there were "millions of dollars to be made."

While the pandas drove up ticket and merchandise sales in their first year in Toronto, the gains at the zoo were offset by the millions spent leasing them and on creating a shelter for the pandas, according to a 2014 report by the Globe and Mail.

Among the costs were hundreds of thousands of dollars budgeted annually to ship 84,000 pounds of bamboo from a garden in Memphis, the publication reported. The zoo also had to pay to "transport a Jurassic Park-like canister of panda semen from China" to try and impregnate the female panda because her younger male companion was "not yet old enough to be interested."

In 2009, the director of Zoo Atlanta, one of four American zoos to have had pandas on long-term loans, successfully bargained with the Chinese government to cut its original \$1.1 mil-

lion annual panda lease almost by half and to drop a required \$50,000 per year life insurance policy paid to China, according to a report in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

The Smithsonian National Zoo in Washington, D.C., the San Diego Zoo and the Memphis Zoo have also had pandas in the past, but only Zoo Atlanta currently has them. San Diego also recently signed an agreement to host the animals again as soon as this summer. The loans, often for five to 10 years, can be extended.

Taxpayer money will not be used to pay for the pandas, Breed said in a statement Tuesday. She has proposed legislation that would allow certain city departments to help raise funds for the pandas from private groups and philanthropists.

The San Francisco Zoological Society, which operates the zoo, estimates it will cost \$3 million to \$5 million to renovate an existing facility to temporarily house the pandas before completion of a permanent one, which could cost \$20 million, said Vitus Leung, the zoo's deputy director. The China Wildlife Conservation Association is expected to guide the zoo on the enclosure

design, food supply and staffing needs, according to the letter of intent Breed signed in China. The pandas will be sent when those conditions are met, it said.

"Chinese engineers and panda experts have visited the San Francisco Zoo twice and, after a thorough review of many areas and departments of the zoo, have determined that we are ready to receive giant pandas in the near future," S.F. Zoological Society board chair Melinda Dunn said in an email. "We look forward to this exciting chapter!"

Officials from China Wildlife Conservation Association and the China National Forestry and Grassland Administration are due to visit San Francisco this week for "further negotiations to finalize lease details," Safarzadeh said.

Building the panda exhibit will require going through San Francisco's usual planning approvals and may require a coastal development permit from the city because the zoo is near the beach. But it doesn't appear that will slow down the proposed timeline, said Daniel Sider, chief of staff at San Francisco Planning, "unless they're anticipating a 50-story panda-plex."

"Human homes remain more complicated to build than panda homes," Sider said in an email.

It's unclear exactly where the proposed panda exhibit would go in the San Francisco Zoo, though Breed's legislation indicated that it would be part of a new Asian Conservation Zone in the south side of the zoo.

At the Oakland Zoo, echoes of Chang's panda campaign are still evident. Baboons now live in the exhibit originally intended for the pandas, and the bamboo planted to feed them grows wild.

Chang is hopeful that Breed will succeed in this new era, and he said he would consider it a victory for the Bay Area.

"San Francisco is a big city," Chang said. "It's probably so much easier for them to get (pandas) than Oakland."

Julie Johnson contributed to this report.

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MOTHER'S DAY

MOMS TURN LENS ON THEIR WORK



Ash Adams/The Chronicle

Ash Adams' son Elliott points to the site of his first lost tooth, which came out during his first week in kindergarten in August 2017 in Anchorage, Alaska.

"Many of my images of my experience of motherhood, all part of a long-form body of work, 'You Are the Color of Memory,' are darkly colorful. Early motherhood was a time of extremes — the world felt immediately more dangerous and more beautiful and in all ways more urgent," Adams said.

For Chronicle photo editor Ash Adams, becoming a mother changed her perspective on the meaning of her work and on its powerful possibilities. For Mother's Day, she sought out other Bay Area photographers who are mothers to share their stories.

Meet some local photographers who are navigating their creative professional landscapes while bearing and raising children. **Pages A16-17. See more online at SFChronicle.com.**

Newsom: Deficit is \$27B even after cuts

To reduce shortfall, governor wants to pull from reserves

By Sophia Bollag

California still faces a \$27.6 billion budget deficit even after the state already cut \$17 billion last month, Gov. Gavin Newsom announced Friday during a news conference on his revised state spending plan.

Newsom's 2024-25 budget proposal totals \$288 billion, significantly smaller than the \$310.8 billion budget he signed into law last year. His proposal includes a \$201 billion general fund, the part of the budget over which he and lawmakers generally have the most control.

The deficit Newsom announced Friday reflects tax revenue that has come in below projections he used to craft his initial budget plan, which he announced in January. The deficit remains stubbornly high even after he and California lawmakers approved a series of spending cuts and internal borrowing tricks to reduce the state budget deficit by about \$17 billion in April.

To close the shortfall, Newsom, a Democrat, wants to declare a budget emergency and withdraw money from the state's reserves, a move Reuters reported.

Deficit continues on A13

S.F. Zoo begins internal probe amid allegations

By Tara Duggan

The organization that runs the San Francisco Zoo is conducting an internal investigation, an action that follows a Chronicle report that detailed employee allegations of mismanagement, safety lapses and animal welfare concerns, as well as a recent vote of no confidence in CEO and executive director Tanya Peterson by the zoo's union.

The investigation comes just as San Francisco has begun preparations to host a pair of high-profile pandas from China at the zoo as soon as next year.

On Thursday, executive board members of the San Francisco Zoological Society, the nonprofit organization that runs the city-owned zoo, held a meeting with investigator Harriet Lipkin, a Washington-based former zoo director.

Zoo continues on A12

State faces crushing downturn in wine industry

Closures feared amid plummeting sales, growing competition

By Esther Mobley

Megan Bell felt certain that her winery was going bankrupt.

When she released a new batch of wines in August, only three of her 19 distributors agreed to buy any. She was running \$65,000 over budget on opening a tasting room in Santa Cruz. And she owed \$80,000 to grape growers.

Sales in the second half of the year were the worst Bell had seen since starting her small business, Margins, eight years ago.

Bell labeled 2023 "a disaster" and said she knows she wasn't the only winemaker feeling it. "If anybody's not telling you that, they're lying."

The entire \$55 billion California wine industry is, like the wine industry worldwide, experiencing an unprecedented downturn now. No sector is immune — not the luxury tier, not the big conglomerates, not the upstart natural wines. Wine consumption fell 8.7% in 2023, according to leading industry analyst the Gombert Fredrikson Report, a sobering reversal for an industry that had, for a quarter-century, taken annual growth for granted.

This year could be the breaking point, with many industry

figures predicting "a good-sized housecleaning," as put by Ian Brand, owner of I. Brand & Family Winery in Monterey County.

"A lot of brands are dead, but they don't even know it right now," echoed Michael Honig, president of Honig Vineyard & Winery in Napa Valley.

An extinction-level event has not come to pass — yet. But regardless of the winery survival rate, it's become clear in 2023 that the nature of the California wine industry has fundamentally changed. After decades of unfettered growth beginning in the 1990s, wine consumption started to flatten around 2018. Now, following what appeared to be a spike during the pandemic, it's in

Wine continues on A14



Jessica Christian/The Chronicle

Megan Bell, owner of the Margins winery, visits the vineyard she leases in unincorporated Santa Cruz County last month.

Datebook **01** Insight **F1** Obituaries **C1**
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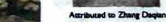
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ZOO

From page A1

ington, DC-based labor lawyer, and members of the zoo's union, according to sources familiar with the meeting. Melinda Dunn, the new chair of the Zoological Society board, has also encouraged employees to contact the investigator directly to discuss their concerns, emails obtained by the Chronicle show.

"Engaging in due diligence is a fundamental aspect of board governance and should not be misconstrued as a negative reflection of the zoo's leadership or its operational procedures," Dunn said in a statement to the Chronicle.

Exactly who or what is being investigated is unclear. It is also unclear exactly when the investigation began. When asked for details, Dunn did not answer, but said, "The Zoological Society board is dedicated to collaborating

with its leadership team and our labor partner to ensure a positive work environment for all our employees at the zoo. In alignment with this commitment and in cooperation with the union, we are utilizing several channels for gathering information."

Thursday's meeting was scheduled after 97% of the zoo's union members cast a vote of no-confidence in Peterson in early April, according to an April 17 letter that union representative Corey Hallman sent to membership and was obtained by the Chronicle. A statement accompanying the vote alleged that Peterson had created a "toxic work environment" and that the zoo suffered from staffing shortages and safety problems, such as concerns about the security of proposed housing for a new jaguar, among other issues.

Peterson, who has led the zoo since 2008, did not respond to specific allegations raised by employees,



The San Francisco Zoo's union cast a vote of no-confidence in director Tanya Peterson in early April, according to a letter from a union representative.

Paul Chinn/The Chronicle 2018

but said in a statement to the Chronicle: "I fully endorse initiatives aimed at fostering positive dialogue and communication. I take immense pride in our dedi-

icated employees and consider it an honor to collaborate with them in advancing the zoo's mission."

Hallman declined to comment when contacted for this story. But in the April 17 letter, Hallman wrote that Dunn had informed the union that it was "conducting an investigation into the issues the union has raised." The Chronicle's investigation into the zoo was published online April 17.

Separately, Larry Mazzola, the chair of an advisory group within the Recreation and Park Commission called the Joint Zoo Committee, said he is doing his own research into similar issues. After the Chronicle published its article, which detailed concerns about safety, zoo management and animal welfare from 20 current and former employees, Mazzola said he would invite Peterson and Dunn to the committee's June meeting, which is public, to discuss the matter.

Mazzola said he is "investigating these issues" in preparation for the June meeting.

"My goal is to have all of

"I ... consider it an honor to collaborate with them in advancing the zoo's mission."

Tanya Peterson, zoo CEO and executive director

the facts out on the table with reasonable solutions so we can make the S.F. Zoo the best place to work for the employees, and the best place to live for the animals," he said in an email.

The San Francisco Zoo has also been in the media spotlight since Mayor London Breed announced last month that she had secured the loan of a pair of pandas for the zoo from China, due to arrive in 2025. The zoo will spend an estimated \$25 million to build housing for the bears and potentially pay \$1 million a year for the loan of the animals.

Breed spokesperson Parisa Safarzadeh said the mayor is focused on construction preparation and fundraising for the panda's arrival, which she called a

multiagency effort. "The S.F. Zoo is one of the city's most prized attractions," Safarzadeh said in a statement. She added that the mayor "supports the process actively in play for workers to report all concerns and raise issues. This process is happening as it should, and the mayor will continue to monitor all developments."

In addition to the no-confidence union vote in early April, a group of 15 self-described nonunion staff members emailed Dunn anonymously last month to share their concerns about issues raised in the Chronicle's report and other complaints, including "many years of inadequate leadership" at the zoo, according to a copy of the email obtained by the Chronicle. Peterson did not respond to a request to comment on the letter's statement on zoo leadership or the investigation.

In response to the email, Dunn said she appreciated them sharing their views and wrote, "We want to hear your concerns, suggestions and thoughts for the future."

Dunn also wrote that Lipkin, senior counsel at DLA Piper who specializes in hospitality and leisure, was "scheduling interviews with individuals with first-hand knowledge of the allegations, as necessary to conduct her investigation. Her charge is to conduct an unbiased investigation, without revealing the identity of her reliable sources."

Earlier this year, the board also offered zoo employees a new online portal to report concerns. Dunn said that some kind of employee hotline had been in place since 2008.

The recent vote of no-confidence comes a decade after a similar one also raised concerns about Peterson's leadership.

Reach Tara Duggan: tduggan@sfchronicle.com; Twitter: @taraduggan

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Photos by Shuran Huang/Special to the Chronicle

U.S. Rep. Jennifer Wexton, D-Va., uses a text-to-speech application to speak with a reporter on Capitol Hill. She was diagnosed with a degenerative brain condition known as progressive supranuclear palsy.

Disabled lawmakers take lead on changes

New members of Congress not afraid to seek accommodations

By Shira Stein

WASHINGTON — As House floor speeches go, the subject of recent remarks by Rep. Jennifer Wexton, D-Va., was unremarkable — she proposed renaming a small-town Virginia post office. But the speech nevertheless marked a new era for people with disabilities: Wexton's words came from an app, not her own voice.

Wexton, 55, was diagnosed with a rare neurode-



Wexton said using augmentative and alternative communication, or AAC, makes it easier for her to do her job and be understood.

generative disease in September 2023, a condition she describes as "Parkinson's on steroids."

Progressive supranuclear palsy has affected the once-powerful voice she used as a trial attorney, state legislator and a candidate for the House. Now, her voice comes from a computer. Wexton, like other people who have difficulty speaking, uses an assistive app that converts written text into speech. *Changes continues on A8*

Performer made Giants' Lou Seal lovable

When Lou Seal took the field at Candlestick Park for his debut on April 4, 1997, he was an insult to mascots and seals.

The San Francisco Giants' costumed pinniped stood awkwardly, seemingly burdened by the weight of a too-big headpiece — an oversize pair of mirrored Oakley-style sunglasses completely hiding his eyes. His whiskers were a little too

PETER HARTLAUB
TOTAL SF

long, his nose a little too pointy. Dark brown fur obscured his features, except for white, fang-like teeth.

"It looks like a rat," then-San Francisco Examiner columnist Bruce Jenkins wrote three days later, the first of several poor reviews.

Lou Seal is now a be-

loved institution, front and center for thousands of games and three world championships. He roams Oracle Park with swagger, accompanied by a small entourage of attendants for crowd control and greeted like an old friend by fans young and old. With apologies to South Korean star Jung Hoo Lee and the broadcast team of Kruk and Kuy, he may be more valuable to the brand than anyone in the

building.

But forgotten in time is the painful road to the top, which included initial ridicule, a reboot and a crucial secret ingredient: a virtually unknown performer who crafted much of the mascot's personality. Hired in 1999, he has been the only person to wear the suit full time in the China Basin ballpark and will have inhabited Lou Seal for 2,093 consecutive days. *Mascot continues on A10*

Exhibit projects dragging at S.F. Zoo

Some fear focus on pandas could delay other animal habitat updates

By Tara Duggan and Michael Barba

Three years ago, the San Francisco Zoo enthusiastically shared plans to convert an old sea lion exhibit into a new habitat for a pair of Andean condors. The exhibit was supposed to open by last year, but today, a banner advertising the "future home of Andean Condor" hangs in front of an overgrown lot. While the birds were brought to the zoo eight years ago, the only sign of progress on their future home is that the sea lions' former swimming pool is now filled with concrete.

The stalled condor habitat is one of several recent infrastructure projects at the zoo that have faced delays or remain unfinished, raising questions about whether the institution is equipped to take on its most ambitious project in decades: hosting a pair of giant pandas.

Under a tentative agreement reached by Mayor London Breed last month, the zoo plans to build housing for the pandas due from China in 2025. The project comes with an estimated price tag of up to \$25 million for housing alone, including the \$3 million to \$5 million needed to construct a temporary home for the bears while a permanent enclosure is built.

While the zoo seeks to accomplish both at the same time, more than a dozen people with deep connections to the zoo, ranging from zookeepers to a major donor, told the Chronicle that the nearly century-old institution should consider fixing its aging facilities. *Zoo continues on A9*

4 men sentenced in case affected by Antioch scandal

By David Hernandez

Four men were sentenced to state prison for terms ranging from 13 to 20 years in a double-shooting case that was compromised because Antioch police officers exchanged racist text messages about the men during the investigation.

The men were sentenced last week after pleading no contest to involuntary manslaughter and attempted murder as part of a plea deal. The March 2023 shooting left Arnold Hawkins, 23, dead and another man injured.

The men were sentenced last week after pleading no contest to involuntary manslaughter and attempted murder as part of a plea deal. The March 2023 shooting left Arnold Hawkins, 23, dead and another man injured.

Contra Costa County Superior Court Judge David Goldstein sentenced 23-year-old Terrynomi Pugh to 20 years in prison, 25-year-old Eric Windon to 19 years in prison, 23-year-old Trent Allen to 19 years in prison and Keyshawn McGee to 13 years and eight months in prison.

The defendants faced life without parole before the case fell apart when a separate investigation uncovered the text messages.

Chief Assistant District Attorney Simon O'Connell said the resolution of the case "promotes public safety." *Case continues on A9*

Family feud could break up historic Napa winery

Likened to a 'soap opera,' 7 siblings fight over whether to sell Monticello

By Jess Lander

The future of a Napa family winery hangs in the balance, as a divisive family feud could end in the sale of the 54-year-old Monticello Vineyards.

Founded in 1970, Monticello isn't a household name. But the elegant estate, named and designed after Thomas Jefferson's Virginia residence, epitomizes the region's trail-

blazing generation of ambitious family-owned wineries that's rapidly shrinking. Similar wineries have been sold to national and foreign conglomerates, and while "Succession"-like family feuds are often the crux of a winery's motivation to go corporate, these conflicts rarely go public.

But Carolyn Corley, whose father founded the winery where she took

her first steps, says she is desperate.

She said she fears that several of her siblings are looking to sell Monticello to the highest bidder and will "trample" their late father's legacy in the process. She has accused the privately held winery's board of directors, and four of her brothers who she says want to sell, of misleading shareholders to support their interests.

Two of her brothers, who are Monticello's board chairman/president and CEO, have



Carolyn Corley, right, with her father, Jay Corley, in the early days of Monticello Vineyards. Corley wants to keep the winery in the family but fears some of her brothers want to sell.

Courtesy of Carolyn Corley

CASE

From page A1

ty," describing the prison terms as lengthy terms that hold the defendants accountable for the violence, even after the case was tainted. O'Connell acknowledged the police misconduct and officers' credibility was likely to be scrutinized if the case went to trial.

O'Connell said Goldstein indicated the prison terms were not light sentences.

Hawkins' mother, Brandi Griffin, said she felt the outcome of her case didn't amount to justice for her son. The defendants' prison terms aren't "much time," Griffin told ABC 7 last week.

"They pretty much did them a favor," she said of the defendants. "That's how our family feels. We paid for what the Antioch police officers did."

Evan Kuluk, a deputy public

defender with the Contra Costa County Alternate Defender's Office who represented Windom, said "there is no mathematical formula to quantify the impact that racial prejudice has had on the integrity of a criminal case for sentencing purposes," but no one should be sentenced to life in prison when racial bias taints a case.

Defense attorney Mathew Martinez, who represented Allen, said the prison terms seemed appropriate based on the officers' offensive conduct. He said he hopes law enforcement agencies work to eliminate racial bias.

"As pessimistic as I feel about the behavior exhibited by the officers," he said, "I am equally optimistic that the district attorney's office, under the current administration, is doing everything it can to rectify the past abuses and will act with fairness for all the residents of Contra Costa County going forward."

The shooting occurred on March 9, 2021. Prosecutors alleged the defendants drove from San Leandro to Antioch, where they ambushed rival gang members in a residential neighborhood. The defendants fired a volley of shots after Hawkins and another man walked out of a home and got into a vehicle, prosecutors said. Hawkins died about six months later.

Pugh, Windom, Allen and McGee were charged with murder and attempted murder, as well as special-circumstance allegations and gang and firearm enhancements. They faced life in prison without parole.

The case, however, started to fall apart last year after a separate FBI and district attorney's office joint investigation uncovered the trove of racist text messages — part of a much larger case of misconduct in the Antioch and Pittsburg police departments.

The texts showed that officers involved in the investigation of the shooting used racial slurs and made other racist remarks in messages about the defendants.

As officers surveilled the defendants at John F. Baldwin Park in Concord, Officer Eric Rombough tested another officer: "I feel like I'm at the zoo," according to an investigative report the district attorney's office released last year. The texts also showed that the officers made light of the force they used when they arrested the defendants.

The defendants challenged the case against them under California's Racial Justice Act, a law that aims to eliminate racial disparities in the criminal justice system. Based on data that showed racial disparities in the charges the district attorney's office filed over the course of a decade and the text messages, Judge Goldstein dismissed special-circumstance allegations and gang and

firearm enhancements, taking life sentences off the table.

While Hawkins' family felt there was no justice, O'Connell said the case represents an opportunity to rebuild trust in the criminal justice system.

"Through a very dark moment, there can be an opportunity to make positive change," he said.

The district attorney's office is still reviewing cases that may have been undermined by the wide-ranging text message scandal. As a result of the investigation that exposed the text messages, 12 Antioch and Pittsburg police officers were charged with federal crimes, including fraud, civil rights abuses and falsifying records. Five officers were charged in Contra Costa Superior Court, accused of violating traffic violations for friends.

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ZOO

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before taking on the internationally watched project. Some worried that getting the bears would divert attention and resources away from doing basic repairs and building exhibits for other animals, some of which have been housed in temporary facilities for years while construction is underway.

John McNellis, a longtime Zoo donor, called facilities at the zoo "sadly dilapidated."

"The \$20 million it would cost to build a new panda enclosure might be better spent in bringing our zoo back into pristine, first-class condition," McNellis wrote in an email.

McNellis hoped that the panda gift would inspire the city to increase its annual financial support of the zoo, which has been set around \$4 million since 1993, to at least \$10 million, "so that the zoo can complete the long overdue repairs and capital improvements to its buildings, landscape and infrastructure." (Such an increase could be a challenge to realize. San Francisco is expected to face a nearly \$800 million budget deficit in the coming two fiscal years.)

"Ideally, however, we would have both a first-class zoo and a wonderful panda exhibit," McNellis added.

Vivian Leung, deputy director at the nonprofit San Francisco Zoological Society, which operates the city-owned zoo, said in an email that the zoo "remains committed to supporting all of our planned projects, including improvements to some of our current animal habitats."

"We are very grateful to our donors whose funds support these ongoing efforts," Leung said. "We also look forward to adding new donors who are excited to support the San Francisco Zoo as we prepare for the momentous arrival of the giant pandas."

Parisa Safarizadeh, a spokesperson for Breed, said the mayor is working closely with officials from the city, zoo and China to ensure the zoo is ready to host the pandas next year.

The mayor "has and will remain at the core of this effort, and continues to lead across all agencies to ensure the panda's new habitat is a safe and healthy environment where they will thrive," said Safarizadeh, who said the zoo "one of the city's most prized attractions."

Ed Poole, former chair of the nonprofit board overseeing the zoo, said the zoo plans to work with the mayor's office to "ensure that fundraising initiatives bolster both the zoo's ongoing operations and existing projects while also facilitating the creation of a new habitat for pandas."

The panda enclosure would be the biggest project undertaken at the zoo in two decades, since the opening of the \$18 million African savanna habitat in 2007 and the most ambitious since Tanya Peterson, the controversial director of the zoo, took the helm in 2008.

In recent years, smaller-scale projects such as the condor exhibit have gone beyond schedule, according to timelines Zoo officials presented to the Recreation and Park Commission.

Some of those projects have also had to overcome design flaws, according to current and former employees who asked to remain anonymous. Some said they still work in the zoo or in the field and fear professional



Weeds grow out of the former sea lion pool, which is expected to house the Andean condor exhibit, at the San Francisco Zoo on May 7. The condor habitat was originally supposed to open last year.

Photos by Jessica Christian/The Chronicle



A sign informs visitors of plans for the future Andean condor exhibit. The birds were brought to the zoo eight years ago.



Old infrastructure is seen inside the empty Lipman Family Madagascar Center while construction continues on the space.

"It's a shiny new object, and directors love shiny new objects. They would rather put money into building a new exhibit and bringing a new lovable animal into the zoo, rather than putting money into an 80-year-old exhibit."

Brad Hange, a former zookeeper with the San Francisco Zoo

repercussions. The Chronicle agreed not to name them in accordance with its confidentiality sources policy.

"We already have so many projects that are halfway finished or not started," said one employee. "We barely have enough resources, and I feel like all of it will go to the pandas."

Leung attributed the delays on some projects to pandemic-related issues such as lower revenue and supply-chain disruptions, which he said led the zoo to "reassess our priorities and project timelines."

Brad Hange, a former zookeeper with the San Francisco Zoo whose 30-year career included five years at Washington D.C.'s National Zoo when it had pandas from China, said he is also concerned about San Francisco's new panda project.

"It's a shiny new object, and directors love shiny new objects," he said. "They would rather put money into building a new exhibit and bringing a new lovable animal into the zoo, rather than putting money into an 80-year-old exhibit."

One delayed improvement was the \$1.5 million expansion of the zoo's snow leopard exhibit. A month before the pandemic began, Peterson announced plans to complete the project by summer 2020, but it didn't open until early 2022.

Another delayed project is the Lipman Family Madagascar Center, underway near the center of the zoo housing animals from the island such as lemurs and a catlike carnivore called a fossa. The project, funded with a \$7 million gift to the zoo from do-

nor Barry Lipman and his family, broke ground in 2008 and is not yet completed.

As with the condors, the San Francisco Zoo recently brought in several animals from other zoos before the work on their exhibit spaces had begun; workers said this practice is not always good for the animals. Unlike San Francisco, the Oakland Zoo has a policy of receiving new animals only after their enclosures are complete, with the exception of animals in need of immediate rescue.

Construction delays have meant animals in San Francisco have spent even longer in temporary and at times subpar housing than originally intended, workers said.

Poole, the former zoo board chair, pushed back in an email. He said assertions suggesting that the zoo's exhibits, whether permanent or temporary, "fail to meet the needs of our animals are entirely unfounded."

Poole noted the zoo's regularly inspected by outside regulators.

In a recent Chronicle investigation into worker safety and animal welfare issues at the zoo, former zookeepers described how a pair of orangutans brought to the zoo in 2019 were put in a 1950s-era cement enclosure — without enough room for them to swing with their arms and with limited outdoor space, they said — for two years while the exhibit was being renovated.

Other rare animals that have remained in limbo include some brought in for the Madagascar Center. They include a male fossa that has lived in temporary

housing for the past six years. Several Malagasy amphibians and reptiles acquired for the center in 2017 — such as a Henkel's leaf-tailed gecko, day gecko and a Sambava tomato frog — died before ever being put on view, according to zoo records.

The zoo did not respond to questions about the fossa living in temporary housing or about the other animals dying before the center opened. Leung said all animals at the zoo are housed in accordance with standards set by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, an accreditation organization, regardless of whether they are recently brought to the zoo or are housed out of sight from the public.

Shortly before the pandemic, Peterson told the Recreation and Park Commission in February 2020 that she hoped to complete the Madagascar project by the time the zoo completed its reaccreditation process with the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. That process was completed in early 2022.

But the first phase of the project, which includes a giant replica baobab tree and an expanded habitat for a female fossa, wasn't completed until 2023. The second phase, which includes a 9,000-square-foot garden and a new lemur habitat, is still underway.

In his email, Leung said the Madagascar Center faced "COVID-related issues and other matters that are now resolved." He did not say when it would be completed.

Former employees said they noticed that progress on the Madagascar Center slowed

down when the zoo began focusing on other initiatives, such as renovating an indoor habitat for its chimpanzees and working on the orangutan exhibit.

"When they would start new projects, an existing project would be put on hold and they would keep redirecting attention to the new project," said a former employee.

The worker was concerned that type of situation would be repeated, with the pandas taking attention away from existing projects. Unlike those projects, though, the panda construction will be closely watched by China.

Lipman, the zoo donor whose family the center is named after, acknowledged in an interview that the Madagascar project encountered challenges. He said the zoo quickly demolished parts of an old primate center to make space for the project, leaving an "unsightly" hole in the ground, but ran into supply-chain issues during the pandemic.

Still, Lipman said he never expected the project to be completed "overnight."

Lipman said he believed the zoo is sufficiently prepared to build an enclosure for the pandas, as long as it has enough money and can find a good architect.

"It's really exciting," he said. In addition to delays, design flaws have come up in some recent projects when employees with animal-care knowledge were not consulted during planning stages, workers said.

Joe Knobbe, the zoo's manager of primate exhibits from 2016 to 2021, said the mesh that the zoo planned to use on the lemur habitat for the Madagascar Center had larger holes than recommended and could allow baby lemurs to escape, putting them at risk from predators like raccoons and seagulls.

Knobbe said he was often not included in discussions during the planning of the Madagascar Center, despite his extensive experience with lemurs.

"They had gone ahead with some design features without me, and I was not by someone who had worked with lemurs for more than 30 years," said Knobbe, now deputy director of the Lee Richardson Zoo in Garden City, Kan. "It frustrated the heck out of me."

Another exhibit design issue: After construction on the snow leopard expansion, a worker said they realized the project enclosure lacked shade or a hiding place for the animal, which had to be resolved.

The zoo did not comment on the alleged design problems on either project.

As construction for the Madagascar Center continues six years after it began, some animals that were displaced by the project are still in less than ideal housing, workers said.

In a far-off corner of the zoo, a troupe of endangered Francois' langurs that were moved in 2008 live inside an old-school concrete exhibit.

Like the primate pandas, the monkeys, which are black with distinctive white mutton chops, were originally given to the zoo by China. The zoo would not say whether the exhibit is their permanent home, or whether the monkeys will someday enjoy a new enclosure.

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