



8403 Colesville Road, Suite 710

Silver Spring, MD 20910-3314

301-562-0777 tel 301-562-0888 fax

The Clark County Board of Commissioners  
500 S. Grand Central Pkwy  
Floor 6  
Las Vegas, NV 89155  
[zoning@clarkcountynv.gov](mailto:zoning@clarkcountynv.gov)

December 15, 2021

Re: Application No. UC-21-0645, World Buddhism Association Headquarters/The Shekinah Project I, LLC/Jay Owenhouse

Dear Clark County Board of Commissioners:

The Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), of which I am President and Chief Executive Officer, strongly opposes this application. Of particular concern are the false and misleading statements that the Project somehow is an AZA-accredited institution, employing an AZA “endorsed” veterinarian, and thus qualifies for the Code exemption for an AZA-accredited institution. It is not AZA-accredited. AZA does not endorse veterinarians. Its intended use of tigers in the illusionist show by Mr. Owenhouse would never qualify for AZA accreditation under our accreditation standards.

The Association of Zoos and Aquariums accredits the best zoos, aquariums, and science centers in the profession. Whether large or small, all AZA members demonstrate exceptional animal care, conservation work, and education of visitors on wild animals and their habitat. AZA has approximately 240 accredited members representing the top 10 percent of United States facilities licensed by the federal government to hold and display wild animals. AZA is often and correctly described as the “gold standard” for modern zoological facilities. The accreditation process is rigorous with a detailed application, a multi-day inspection by animal care experts, and a hearing before an independent Accreditation Commission. Accreditation, once achieved, can be lost at any time due to non-adherence to standards, or on re-inspection every five years to verify that all accreditation standards continue to be met.

The recognition of these high AZA standards was the very reason for the AZA-accredited exemption in the Code. Conclusory promises to follow some or even most AZA standards are not the same as achieving accredited status. Hiring a veterinarian who has worked at AZA members and is an advisor to one of numerous AZA committees does not confer accreditation on the employer. There is no such position as an AZA-endorsed or an AZA-accredited veterinarian.

We denounce the applicant's claims of affiliation with AZA or ability to meet AZA standards. We strongly encourage you to reject this application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daniel M. Ashe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "A".

Daniel M. Ashe  
President and CEO  
Association of Zoos and Aquariums