

Slugline	Legislature approves new elephant exhibit
Publication	Irondequoit
Date	January 13, 2005
Section(s)	Local News

*Lilac and Genny C, Seneca Park Zoo's elephants, as well as Genny C's expected baby, will have a new home.*

**By JEREMY MOULE / [jmoule@mpnewspapers.com](mailto:jmoule@mpnewspapers.com)**

A plan to build a new African elephant exhibit at Seneca Park Zoo has been given the go-ahead by the county Legislature.

Legislators unanimously approved bonding up to \$4 million to build the exhibit north of the zoo's Rocky Coast, which is where the polar bears live. It will be home to the zoo's two elephants, Lilac and Genny C, as well as Genny C's baby, expected to arrive in March 2006. The plan leaves historic Seneca Park, which was designed by Frederick Law Olmstead as a wilderness park, as is.

The new exhibit will be 27,000 square feet and will include a 10,000-square-foot barn, 1,600 square feet of visitor space and a large yard area with a pool. On Tuesday, the Legislature also authorized a contract with Stantec Consulting Group, Inc., for engineering services for the exhibit.

The proposal steered clear of criticism from groups that criticized past zoo expansion plans. In fact, it was endorsed by The Friends and Neighbors, the Landmark Society, the Burroughs Audubon Association, Group 14621 Neighborhood Association, the National Association of Olmstead Parks and the Preservation League of New York State.

Democratic legislators commended the county administration for working with neighbors and other concerned groups to reach a compromise that suited the zoo, the park and nearby residents.

"I think that it is a major victory and one that our elephants at the zoo will truly appreciate, too, " said Stephanie Aldersley, D-Irondequoit, the Legislature's minority leader.

Edward O'Brien, D-Irondequoit, said the plan enhances the zoo. He praised County Executive Maggie Brooks for her willingness to look at parking alternatives that would prevent expansion into the lower portion of the park.

"I think that this is a good proposal, " said O'Brien.

Past zoo expansion plans drew objections largely because they called for expansion into the scenic lower park. The area was once targeted for a new parking lot and main entrance.

The county is developing a plan to provide off-site shuttle service during peak periods. The current visitor parking area, which fits 280 cars, will remain.

The county wanted to replace the current exhibit because it wouldn't be big enough for a new elephant, especially a baby, Brooks has said.

County officials hope to have the project complete by the time Genny C's baby is born.