**MINUTES OF THE FRIENDS OF THE EDWIN AND FRANCES HUNTER ARBORETUM AT PALOMAR COLLEGE**

**FEBRUARY 5, 2025**

**VIA ZOOM TELECONFERENCE**

**In attendance:**

Antonio Rangel, President Beth Pearson

Dennis Astl Kurt Parmenter

Wayne Armstrong Parag Chowdhury

May Fong Ho Pauline Riley

The meeting was called to order at 5:35. Everyone introduced themselves.

**Minutes:** There were no minutes

**Financial Report –** There was no report.

**President’s Report – Tony Rangel**

**Fire Break:** We received a quote to do weeding and maintenance on the fire break, as well as a quote to add storage tanks to the well and pumps. The College has remaining HERF funds that will fund four projects, one of which is the storage tanks that will also be part of the fire break project.

**Signage:** We are working with the Public Information Office on the “thou shalt not” signs. The plant ID labels need to be done as well as the accession data tags. We have also been in contact with the vendor that the San Diego Botanic Garden uses for signs. So there is progress and we may do some test signs.

**Arboretum Clean-Up Day:** The date is still up in the air. Beth Pearson would like to offer extra credit to her students for participating. There was a discussion of activities for Arbor Day and Earth Day. Dennis Astl commented that the Sustainability Task Force would also like to be involved and Beth agreed. Earth Day is April 22nd and Arbor Day is April 25th. Tony suggested setting the Clean-Up date for Friday, April 25th. Dennis would like the Sustainability Task force to do something big and Tony said he has trees to plant on each campus. He suggested reaching out to Juan De Val, Maintenance Supervisor at the Fallbrook campus and John Michael Allen at the Escondido campus along with Chris Miller to formulate a plan. Wayne Armstrong offered to donate a Pakistan Mulberry tree to plant. There was a motion to provide snacks for Earth Day and refreshments for students on Clean-Up Day. The motion was seconded and carried with the proviso that water will not be in plastic bottles.

**Hubbell Structure Repair:** Brendan Hubbell is working on a draft proposal to enclose the lights, hide the circuit box and do some minor repairs to the bricks. He mentioned that the arches are correct in the way James would have done them. (The structure was taken apart to transport it to the present site and then reassembled.) The water fountain just needs a pump to operable. Tony suggested around $25K to refurbish the structure but it could be more or less.

**Webmaster/Community Liaison:** Christina Fuller (Cricket) has agreed to take on this responsibility. She is going to look at Wayne’s Word to have it reposted on the Arboretum website. Wayne suggested using AI to do the conversion and Tony will ask her about that.

**By-Laws:** Tony met with Stacy Rungaitis and Cathy Splett in the Foundation before Christmas to discuss the by-laws. Stacy is checking with a lawyer re the verbiage and Tony will reach out to her.

**Plant Accession Data Tags:** As a requirement of our Arboretum Certification, we have to document our accessions in a database. We are already doing that with endangered species and especially with the Hawaiian Threatened and Endangered Species. Seeds collected in the wild are also being accessed. We need to get labels out in the field with the accession number. These labels are essentially “dog tags.”

The embossing machine can cost up to $22K. The San Diego Botanic Garden uses an engraver that costs around $7-8K. The San Diego Zoo uses the $22K machine. There is a less expensive alternative that costs around $900. But it requires inserting the dog tag and manually embossing one letter at a time, so it is labor intensive. Tony is trying to find a mid-range model. We have around $10,000 specimens that need tags. Dennis shares some screenshots of images of different types of dog tags. There are lots of options.

**Seed Bank:** Everything in the Seed Bank has been catalogued and is up to date. A volunteer spent about 10 hours on that project. Tony will need to revisit the Seed Bank refrigerator discussion.

**Hawaiian Accessions:** Tony will be visiting Hawaii this summer and has reached out to the National Botanic Garden and the Lyon Arboretum there. They support the work at the College so Tony may be able to get permits to obtain seeds and plant materials to bring back here.

**Palm Weevil:** Tony found a South American Palm Weevil on campus. The palms will need to be treated annually at a cost of around $16,000 more or less. He noted that the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle in Hawaii has the potential to drive every palm to extinction. The Hawaiian botanists want to spread out palms all over the work to forestall this happening. And this highlights the need for good accession numbers.

The meeting adjourned at 6:25.