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

**MAY 7, 2025**

**VIA ZOOM TELECONFERENCE**

**In attendance:**

Antonio Rangel, President Beth Pearson

Dennis Astl May Fong Ho

Wayne Armstrong Pauline Riley

Christina “Cricket” Fuller

The meeting was called to order at 5:30. Everyone introduced themselves.

**Minutes:** There were no minutes

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

**President’s Report – Tony Rangel**

Wayne Armstrong reported that there is ongoing research regarding the relationship between fig trees and the fig wasp. Recent observations indicate that there is both host sharing and pollinator sharing resulting in fig seeds developing on campus. It was formerly assumed that each fig type could only be pollinated by one specific wasp type, but recent research disproves this assumption. Wayne explained that most figs have both male and female parts, but are functionally either male or female, and it is incredibly complicated. The Moreton Bay Fig (Ficus Macrophylla) in the Arboretum has visible seeds. Wayne went to the San Diego Zoo and spoke with the Lead Horticulturist there. The Zoo has a huge 250-ton Strangler Fig that they moved. We have the same wasp here on campus and seedlings are appearing up in the tree, so we have the same wasp here. Tony noted that there is a mystery fig to the southwest of the Moreton Bay Fig. He checked it today and there was an Australian wasp and one other type of wasp as well. He will harvest the seed to see if it is viable. Wayne notes that the this inter-pollination will make hybrids. The entomologists at UC Riverside recommended getting input from the USDA entomologists. Wayne and Tony were both wondering how the wasps survive when the figs are not producing fruit since they have a fairly short life cycle. Possibly they stay at a different host that they can’t pollinate and then go back to the host they can pollinate. They will both continue to monitor.

**Helix Environmental Proposals – Fire Break Defensible Space**

**(There are two proposals – one for $8,640 and one for $14,390 both dated Feb. 28, 2025. Are we considering one or both of these proposals?)** Pauline Riley questioned the use of Round Up. Tony explained that it would not be used within 30 feet of the Child Development Center. May Fong Ho proposed using mulch rather than herbicide to control weeds. Tony liked the idea of mulch since it can be blown through tubes allowing for easier access. The area in question is a strip 20’ to 30’ wide between the Child Development Center and the Soccer Field. The goals of the Fire Break are to protect habitat, protect the Arboretum and protect the District property. If the proposal is approved, Tony will ask for a Purchase Order and would like the work to be started by July or August.

**Treatment of Rare Palms:**

Tony reported that the rare palms were treated to repel the Palm Weevil. The weevil can kill palms very rapidly and the treatment will have to be done twice a year.

**Hubbell Structure Repair Work:**

Brennan Hubbell sent a proposal in the $3,615to repair the Structure that includes cleaning and repairing the bricks and covering the electrical junction box. Brennan will also fabricate light covers with brackets and lenses. There was unanimous agreement to get the work done using the Hubbell Structure account. The fountain just needs a pump. Tony has one he can bring in to try.

**Dead Tree Removal:**

Tony reported that the District paid California Tree Service $14,900 for dead tree removal in the Arboretum.

**Proposal for Trail Repair - $25,000**

May would like to see where the damage is. Tony will send photos. The same areas keep washing out with the rains. One suggestion is to use rubber padding like the Child Development Center uses. That might be worth exploring but it would be expensive. Dennis suggests paving those areas that consistently erode. More research is needed.

**Earth Day:**

The event went very well. There were about 30 people at the Fallbrook campus, 25 or so at the Escondido campus and 10 at the San Marcos campus (who did the work of 30). A lot of work was accomplished and the event generated interest. The participants had some good ideas for involvement and growing the event next year.

**Arboretum Clean-Up Day:**

Unfortunately people were directed to meet at the flagpole. Five or six people showed up so that was good. They worked mostly in the Palm Garden.

**Plant Labeling / Accessioning:**

The purchase of the Metal Tag Embosser was previously approved and the District is working on the Purchase Order. This machine will emboss aluminum labels that are required per our official Arboretum status.

**Signage:**

The drafts of the “Thou Shalt Not” signs will be finished later this month. Tony will show proofs when they are available and will try to get the signs installed before Fall semester.

**Sustainability Task Force:**

Dennis has been working on the state-mandated Sustainability Task Force. The State would like to have the meeting at the Palomar College Campus. The State Chancellor may attend. This is an honor and reflects the outstanding design of the recently constructed Prop M buildings including the M & O Building.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30.